

PLURALISM, EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING OF VALUES

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In a letter to all her new teachers, an American Principal wrote:

Dear Teacher

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers.

Children poisoned by educated physicians.

Infants killed by trained nurses.

Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.

So, I am suspicious of education.

My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmans.

Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human. [1]

1. *Concept of Education*

Education is both a descriptive and an evaluative word. It describes the arrangements which are concerned with promoting learning - the institutions such as schools and universities and the activities which go on within them. But it is also an *evaluative*

word in so far as it picks out some learning activities, and not others, as worthwhile or valuable. Such activities are those which enable someone to become an educated person.

Let me explain this at greater length. We talk about the French or the Spanish or the British system of education, and by that we refer to all the arrangements whereby learning is organised in those countries. At the same time, we talk about some learning experiences being educational and others not, some indeed as mere training or *miseducational* or anti-educational. Such activities do not in themselves contain those values which make them worthy of the title 'education'.

Behind our *evaluation* of activities as 'educational' lie beliefs about 'the educated person' - the kind of knowledge and habits of mind, the skills and the attitudes, the personal qualities and the sympathies, which we see to be the achievement of the educational system. Such knowledge and understandings are acquired through learning. 'Education', therefore, is partly defined in terms of the aims and values which, we believe, characterise the educated person. In that sense educational studies must be a part of ethics, that is, part of that continuing debate about what is a worthwhile form of life and what are the valuable things to learn which make up that worthwhile form of life. The ethical dimension to educational studies explores what subjects should be on the curriculum (for example, music and art, science and history), or what should be the content of those subjects (for example, British or Islamic or world history, Christian or Islamic or Hindu or comparative religion, Shakespeare or Homer or García Lorca, the promotion of nationalism or of international understanding). In other words, what sort of literature and music, what kind of history, what practical skills should a person have learnt and acquired if he or she is to be considered 'an educated person'?

But this ethical questioning takes place within particular social contexts and cultures. Therefore, what is worthwhile learning - what is considered to be the educated person - will need constantly to be renewed. For example, the economic context will suggest special skills and knowledge. Can a person now be considered *educated* who is totally ignorant of the economic arguments which shape the social relationships within the society in which he or she lives? Is a person *educated* who, whatever the familiarity with classical literature, is deficient in those skills and knowledge which are essential for getting a job or for contributing to the economic well-being of society? Can a person be considered *educated* who is

insensitive to the moral conditions and issues (such as racism or such as the growing gap between rich and poor) which characterise modern societies? Can a person be regarded as *educated* who, in a world in which there is growing interdependence between nations and yet increasing danger of racial and national conflict, has no international perspective on the world's problems or disposition to do something to solve them? Can a person be regarded as *educated* who lacks the awareness and knowledge of the environment and of how one nation's environmental behaviour affects the quality of life in other countries and in subsequent generations?

It is very easy for the concept of 'the educated person' to be frozen in time. The 'educated person' is too often associated, within any one society, with someone who is familiar with a particular literature, a set of interests such as classical music, a range of skills, a specific bit of historical knowledge and understanding, which were relevant to a particular society (a pre-scientific or a pre-technological society) of a bygone age. A more international perspective upon how we live challenges old values - and thus the values which enter into our respective ideas of what it means to be *educated*.

Schools and universities, therefore, must constantly question what subjects, and what knowledge and skills and attitudes within those subjects, should characterise *educational* activities, what aims and goals should such activities be trying to achieve, what qualities and knowledge should be associated with the idea of an '*educated person*' within our respective societies and cultures, what values should they be seeking to impart. Particularly does this become a challenging problem when there is little consensus within society and between societies on such matters. When society, national or international, contains many different cultural traditions, it is not easy to find agreement on those values and on what counts as the worthwhile form of life to be nurtured through education. That is the problem of education within a pluralist society - and as the world gets smaller, as populations become more mobile, as the barriers to communication are broken down through improved technology, so more and more societies are clearly 'pluralist'.

2. Breakdown of Homogeneity

There is a view - often held by those who do not reflect very deeply - that our different societies, not so long ago, enjoyed some consensus on what were the values which should permeate our

educational institutions. There was agreement on what was the great literature - 'the great tradition', as it was called - that everyone in Britain should be familiar with and appreciate: the plays of Shakespeare, the novels of George Eliot and Jane Austen, the poetry of Byron, Keats, Wordsworth. There was agreement on the history that people should know - the battles and figures of British history (Trafalgar and Nelson, Waterloo and Wellington, the conquest of Quebec and General Wolfe) or the significant cultural and constitutional events (the Reformation or the Glorious Revolution of 1688 or the Great Reform Act of 1832). Science came relatively late in Britain onto the list of subjects which the *educated person* should study, and technology and practical science have until late not been regarded as the sort of things which educated persons should engage in. Furthermore, the 'educated person' did not need to be *practically* intelligent, able to address him or herself to 'doing' and to 'making'. Indeed, there has for a long time in Britain, within a dominant tradition of liberal education, been a certain disdain for the economically relevant.

Hence, education, and what counted as the educated person, depended on a consensus over a particular cultural tradition, an agreed selection from the overall culture, into which a relatively few people were initiated. But many things have happened which have disintegrated that consensus, and which therefore have brought ethical questions concerning what is worth learning to the forefront of education. What is a worthwhile form of life to be fostered through education? What sort of people ought we to be developing through education? What kind of knowledge 'liberates' the young person in a liberal education?

Briefly let me list three kinds of change.

First, it is believed that many more people can and should be educated. This no longer confines education to a small privileged elite. It brings into the educational (as opposed to the training) system many young people who have a wide range of cultural interests not necessarily recognised as *educationally* valuable by those who control their education. They have very different aspirations, and they will not readily subscribe to the authority of different (and, to them, alien) cultural traditions. Hence, there is a 'bottom up' challenge to what have traditionally been accepted as *educationally worthwhile* pursuits and as the ideal of the *educated person*.

Second, the connection between education and the economy in an increasingly competitive world is prominent in politicians' minds,

affecting the kinds of learning which the educational system should concentrate on and the kinds of qualities which the educated person should possess. Thus, technology becomes an important subject, computing skills are an essential part of the repertoire of all educated people, and *enterprise* is the new virtue of the educated entrepreneur. Can a person be regarded as *educated* in this new and competitive world who has no grasp of basic economic concepts and principles?

Third, people have entered society from different countries with different religious traditions. In parts of Britain, the majority of school children are Muslim rather than Christian, and as the world economy encourages mass movements of people, the multi-ethnic nature of our respective societies will change dramatically. Shared understandings and 'myths' in relatively homogeneous societies give way to diverse ways of looking at the world in a culturally pluralist and heterogeneous ones.

Therefore, for these three reasons (namely, widening social access, relating education to economic needs, and meeting the needs of different ethnic groups), consensus over the values and qualities to be fostered through education has been destroyed. How might we nonetheless preserve the ethical basis of education, the view that education is concerned with imparting (through learning) knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and qualities which are considered to be worthwhile?

3. *Pluralism*

It is necessary to hesitate awhile and to consider carefully what is meant by pluralism. Pluralism is frequently contrasted with a view of society where consensus prevails over those values which bind people together - a society where *differences* over what matters and over what should be learnt are very small compared with the areas of agreement. Pluralism is contrasted with a relatively homogeneous society. Of course, such homogeneity is often sought through powerful symbols such as that of the crown (and some countries go to the extremes of flag-saluting ceremonies) or through an established religion or through suppression of criticism or through ignoring contrary views or through denying to particular groups educational access.

The more one reflects, however, on this question the more sceptical one becomes of the apparent homogeneity. Britain, for example, has always been a divided country, divided particularly by

social class or gender. The value differences between a miner in a pit village in Yorkshire and a middle class stockbroker in Surrey would be greater, I suspect, than the difference between that miner and his counterpart in France or Spain or the difference between that stockbroker and a financier in Madrid. Furthermore, religious pluralism has been part of the social scene for centuries in Britain, as has been the co-existence of religion with various forms of non-belief and religious scepticism. In fact, the main education acts of Parliament (1870, 1902, 1944) were concerned with religious settlements - with ensuring a system of education which could cope with religious pluralism. That is reflected in the different kinds of school *within* the state system - the county, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided (mainly Catholic) schools.

Hence, pluralism is nothing new. There are major divisions on class and on religious lines which are reflected in different values, different aspirations, different views about the aims of education, different literatures, different views about history. Indeed, it is difficult to see how any society which encouraged freedom of thought as part of a liberal ideal, could do anything other than value pluralism in its many manifestations.

But that leaves a problem. How can education, which by its very nature is selective in what is to be learnt, respond to the wide range of aspiration and judgement concerning that which is worth learning? How can there be a 'great tradition' in literature or music where there are, in a pluralist society, so many traditions to be respected? Should the place of the trade unions in history receive greater prominence out of deference to those of working class provenance? Should the glories of the imperialist past be omitted out of respect for those ethnic minorities who were once the victim of that imperialism? Should those books be added to the canon of good literature which reflect the writings of the 'black commonwealth'? And should religious education, in deference to tolerance and understanding, reflect an indifference to the *truth* of the claims made by different religious groups - Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish? Are there particular moral views which should be promoted in a society which, in its behaviour, reflects a wide diversity of moral views on family life, the use of violence, respect for civil authority, relations between the sexes, the use and the abuse of drugs?

These surely are the most important questions we should be asking. The values and beliefs that divide people can be the source of conflict - the basis of racism and enmity towards, or contempt

for, other peoples who have learnt to value things differently. On the other hand, such values and beliefs could become a source of enrichment - a challenge to complacency and an added dimension in our search for understanding what it is to be human. The Swann Report in Britain [2], concerned with growing racism and the educational consequences of it, was called *Education for All*. Its opening chapter had the title 'The Nature of Society', thereby locating educational and curriculum issues in the wider context of society. The section on pluralism begins as follows:

We consider that a multi-racial society such as ours would in fact function most effectively and harmoniously on the basis of pluralism which enables, expects and encourages members of all ethnic groups, both minority and majority, to participate fully in the shaping of society as a whole within a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures, whilst also allowing and, where necessary, assisting the ethnic minority communities in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within this common framework.

How can we create, amidst the changing ideas of 'the educated person' and of activities to be valued as *educational*, a 'framework of commonly accepted values', whilst at the same time cherishing and respecting distinct cultural traditions which too often become a cause of division and hostility?

4. *Respect for Persons*

'Education' refers to those activities which form the educated person' - that knowledge and understanding, those skills and attitudes, those qualities and sensitivities, which are valued in people and which need to be learnt. Different people and different societies will no doubt recommend different lists of knowledge, understanding, attitudes, skills and qualities which they regard as worth acquiring and learning. But the ones which we value most must depend upon what it means to be a person - and to become one more abundantly. Bruner [3], in his *Man: a Course of Study*, asked three questions. What makes people human? How did they become so? What will make them more so? An educational system which seeks to provide something meaningful for each individual, which seeks to encourage peace where there was conflict, and which seeks to find an ethical framework within which differences might flourish in a positive way, needs to focus on such questions.

Respect for persons is central to the educational enterprise. But what then is it to be a person?

First, the concept of person picks out more than physical characteristics. It presupposes a form of consciousness and a capacity to experience the world - not merely to interact physically with it. That consciousness is shaped by forms of understanding - ways of experiencing made up of ideas, beliefs, expectations. Such ways of experiencing are learnt. They can remain at a very embryonic stage, or they can be ever more refined through learning. Indeed, all the subjects of the curriculum aim to do just that - to introduce the growing mind to forms of understanding and thus to ways of experiencing which transform one's view of the world and make it more intelligible. To that extent, all such knowledge and understanding might contribute to personal development.

Second, part of that understanding is to see some objects not simply as physical things, but as *persons* - that is, as centres of consciousness in their own right with the capacity to think and to experience in the light of those thoughts. It is to have the capacity, too, to see oneself as a person - to see oneself as able to have one's own thoughts and a point of view. A person is self-conscious - has the capacity to reflect.

Third, a person with such understandings has the capacity to relate to other persons in a distinctive way - not only as one physical object to another but as one centre of consciousness with another. Together, persons share a world of meanings, not just a physical world of space and time. However, the exercise of that capacity through various modes of communication and through the sharing of experiences requires much effort and patience.

Fourth, part of the understandings that persons have, and that they share with each other, are practical ones, concerning what one should do and the ends that one should serve. In so deliberating there is the assumption that one can exercise control over one's own life, that one can act autonomously, not being totally under the power of others or of natural forces. One can take some responsibility for one's own actions.

Fifth, a person is highly dependent on others with whom he or she interrelates both on the personal and on the institutional level, i.e. on the level of those formal relationships established to protect and to promote the public good. For example, the period of physical growth is prolonged and there is a need for a wide range of social arrangements to ensure secure upbringing and systematic learning. The quality of life depends on social relationships and

the institutional arrangement which support them (for example, in the arts or various voluntary organisations). But these social networks and institutional arrangements, so important in the shaping of oneself as a person, are not *given* - they are the product of human endeavour. Responsibility for one's own life extends to responsibility for the social context of that life, and that requires the dispositions, the skills and the knowledge to take an active part. In that sense, persons are political animals - capable of shaping the social environment that affects profoundly the quality of life.

Sixth, therefore, 'person' is a moral concept in two senses. On the one hand, it implies the capacity to take responsibility for one's own actions and one's own life. On the other hand, it indicates the desirability of being so treated - of being given the opportunity for taking on that responsibility and of respecting it in others. To be fully a person is to be held responsible for what one does and to be treated as though one is responsible. This is reflected in the moral principles concerned with 'respect for persons' and in the moral claim to be treated with a sense of dignity - not necessarily being loved or even liked. The teacher can respect someone whilst not liking them, and the pupil can be given a sense of dignity (a feeling of having worth) whilst knowing that he or she is not liked. Liking and respecting are different dispositions, with different associated feelings.

Such a characterisation of what it is to be a person stresses the various, though interrelated capacities, which may or may not be actualised - the capacity to think and to feel, to see others as persons and to relate to them as such, to be aware of oneself as a person, to engage in the moral deliberations essential to the discharge of that responsibility, to have the ideals which uplift and motivate. But there are barriers to that exercise - ignorance, false beliefs, lack of self-respect, envy and hatred of others, absence of the skills of social relationships, blindness to the goods which will arise from the exercise of that capacity, lack of vision to guide those deliberations. Above all there is boredom, the failure to take interest in things around, which renders inoperative the distinctively human capacities.

The exercise of those capacities is essentially dependent upon learning. One will remain ignorant and unempowered unless, through learning, one acquires the concepts and knowledge which dispel that ignorance and enable one to understand oneself and others, and the obligations and responsibilities that one has. Learning is essential to becoming fully a person. Through learning one

acquires the ideals which ennoble and motivate, the standards by which one might evaluate one's own performances and those of others. Adolescence is a period in which young people seek to find their distinctive identities - the sort of persons they are or might become, the ideals that are worth striving for, the qualities that they wish to be respected for, the talents that need to be developed, the kind of relationship in which they will find enrichment, the style of life that is worth pursuing.

There are, however, two things about this process of learning. First, it is shot through with values concerning the ideals worth pursuing, the direction in which the various capacities should be developed, the sort of person that one should strive to become, the standards against which one's performance should be judged. Second, those values have to be learnt, as do the skills and the dispositions required to pursue them. The understandings that dispel ignorance, and the skills and perseverance necessary to acquire those understandings, are achievements requiring guidance and promptings and examples.

To educate the 'whole person' therefore requires the following, all of which depend on learning:

- * *knowledge and understanding*: the concepts, forms of thought, beliefs through which one can make sense of the world and operate intelligently within it. In the 'smaller' and interdependent world in which we all now live, such forms of thought must include the knowledge and understanding relevant to the harmonious living together of people from different cultures and religions.
- * *intellectual virtues*: it is one thing to possess knowledge, another thing to care for and to value it. The pursuit of knowledge and the elimination of ignorance require certain dispositions - those of honesty, of not 'cooking the books', of testing out and sharing beliefs, of openness to new ideas and different cultural perspectives.
- * *imagination*: this signifies the ability to think beyond the given, to make links between the present and the past, to reinterpret experience in the light of previous and different experience or through metaphor drawn from other fields of discourse. The imagination enables one to see significance in the ordinary, excitement in the otherwise humdrum, possibilities in others' culturally different points of view. That imagination has to be fed with stories and history, with poetry and with art.

- * *intellectual skills*: there is frequently a failure to distinguish between 'having knowledge' and being able to acquire it, between knowledge handed on and knowing how to pursue it through disciplined enquiry, between knowledge as dogma and knowledge as reasoned and tested and corroborated. There are skills of reasoning, of marshalling arguments, of collecting evidence, of communicating results, which transcend cultures and provide a common base for communication and understanding.
- * *self-reflection*: 'know thyself', enjoined Socrates, and this requires more than having the right kinds of concepts through which one might think about oneself (as gentle or ambitious, as quick tempered or contemplative). It requires too the habit of self-reflection and the readiness to face one's interior thoughts. Such an ability does not come easily to young people surrounded by intrusive distractions and commercial pressures. But self-knowledge needs to be worked at and requires the skills and moral strength which have to be learnt.
- * *moral virtues and habits*: intellectual virtues dispose one to act rightly in relation to matters of truth; moral virtues dispose one to act rightly in relation to feelings towards other people, oneself and the world - such dispositions as kindness, generosity, caring for the environment, sensitivity to others' needs, humility in the face of success, courage in the face of suffering, loyalty to friends. Different cultures embody different virtues and these reflect understandings of the life worth living. Although there is and must be considerable variation between societies in the virtues cherished, the sort of person that people become cannot be a matter of indifference to society at large. For example, the more we learn about the destruction of the environment, the more important it becomes to dispose the next generation to a respect for that environment.
- * *social and political involvement*: social, political and economic knowledge are part of the intellectual achievements referred to above. However, there is a danger of stressing the 'knowing about' at the expense of the 'knowing how'. To be a person is to be able to participate in and to influence social activities that affect the quality of one's life.
- * *integrity and authenticity*: education is a constant battle between the perceptions of the learner and the public meanings which are mediated by the teacher. A major problem which besets education is the lack of consensus over so many of the

values which are the foundation of the curriculum - the literary canon, the style of music or art, the moral virtues, the sort of society to be promoted, the life style to be adopted. People think and live in different moral frameworks. Therein lies the dilemma. Education is based on the values which are connected with personal formation in its widest sense but that formation is to be understood within different and competing moral traditions. There cannot be the confidence, which once there was, in the specific values and qualities that identify the educated person. That does not invalidate the aim of opening to the young the 'best that has been thought and said'. It does, however, make one a little more tentative about it and open to a wider range of possibilities. In respecting learners as persons one must give them credit for the personal search for a meaningful and significant life within the range of possibilities. Recognition of oneself as a person is a recognition of one's own ultimate responsibility for the values that one espouses and for the relationships that one enters into. An important part of education lies in this aspect of personal formation - becoming a person of a particular sort with particular beliefs, values and loyalties. There is a need to reconcile within oneself the different and often contradictory messages about 'the good life', and to relate these to one's own ability. To engage in this integrating process - to be authentic as opposed to taking on board whatever passing passions and pressures are about - is a daunting and often painful task. It means often the breaking with loyalties and cherished views. But it is part of that seriousness of living - not the games playing, not the dilettantism - that one would wish to associate with the educated person. And that seriousness is by no means confined to the academically able. Nor does it depend on intellectual excellence. It lies behind the voice of many who want to be taken seriously but who are not because what they say is discounted by those whose concept of the educated person is confined to academic achievement.

I have very briefly outlined what it means to be a person and then the consequent kinds of knowledge and understanding, dispositions and skills which provide the framework which Swann referred to, in which the different values of a culturally pluralist society might be allowed to develop (see Pring, 1995, for a development of this argument) [4]. But are those values so very different that they cannot possibly be taught except through separate provision, ghetto schools and colleges which accentuate cultural differences rather than our common humanity?

5. *Teaching Values*

Recognition of what it is to be a person, and what is required to be a person more abundantly, provides an ethical framework within which one might examine how one might teach what is valuable within the kind of pluralist society I have earlier described. To respect young people is to help them acquire the knowledge and understanding, the skills and dispositions, the social and economic awareness, the respect for others and for the good of the wider society, which will enable them to treat both themselves and others as persons in a full and fulfilling sense. That surely must be the central aim of education. Moreover, because there is an integral link between being a person and living in society harmoniously with other persons, social and moral learning is crucial. However, how can that be promoted where there remain such important cultural differences between people? How can we each relevant values in such a pluralist society?

I wish to illustrate the problems and a possible way forward. Central to education is the promotion, through learning, of a worthwhile form of life. And yet, as I have shown, there is little consensus over that form of life. Particularly is that reflected in the answers to those social and moral questions which most concern young people. Such questions concern matters of justice, sexual relations, the use of violence to resolve disputes, respect for authority where one disagrees with decisions made, the acceptance of poverty, the use of drugs, the tolerance of and respect for people of different ethnic backgrounds. As a *person* I may have definite views on these matters. But, as a *teacher*, what authority do I have, in a divided and pluralist society, for promoting one set of values rather than another? These differences become more acute when one lives in a society where different religious and secular traditions have to live together.

Controversial issues are those which divide society. That is, they are issues on which people, who are serious and of 'good will', hold views which contradict each other. For example, there is no consensus in British society on such important issues as the sanctity of marriage, on abortion, on the just war, on the causes and significance of poverty, on immigration, on animal rights, on environmental protection, on the role of women within the family. One could go on. In matters of value, we live within a pluralist society, and that pluralism will increase as our society increases access to information and argument, and increases the capacity of people to benefit from that access. Gone are the days of the hegemony of the

government or political party or indeed the Church which could legitimate the answer to controversial issues or could conceal the disagreements which lie beneath the apparent consensus. How might we deal educationally with this pluralism? How can we cling on to the idea of an 'educated person' - one who has a familiarity with, if not mastery of, that which is judged to be worthwhile, when there is this unavoidable pluralism?

There are several distinctions to be made.

The most important one is that between *the personal convictions* of the teacher and those beliefs or conclusions which arise from the mediation of a cultural tradition. By 'cultural tradition' I mean a set of values, understandings, beliefs, attitudes which are shared, which have evolved as a result of criticism over a period of time and which are embodied in literature and social practices. Thus, there are, on the one hand, cheap and superficial beliefs and feelings about sexual relations or about the justice of war or about the use of violence or about racism, and these beliefs and feelings find expression in social and personal practice and in the popular media. But, on the other hand, there is on such matters a serious and reflective literature, a tradition of moral and theological argument, an articulation of ideas and values through art and music and dance, which have survived criticism or been built upon as a result of criticism. The teacher, as the mediator of that culture, represents those traditions to the learner. The aim of the teacher is to get the young person on the inside of those traditions in which such controversial issues are debated, articulated and analysed. There will remain differences, but they will be differences *engaged in seriously*.

A second major distinction, essential to the notion of 'seriousness', is that between principles and rules of behaviour. Very often the controversy - and the difference of view - can be at the level of fairly specific rules of behaviour, whilst preserving agreement at the level of principle. For example, in the case of sexual relations, it is conceivable that there will be differences with respect to behavioural rules (whether or not, for instance, physical relations should take place only within marriage) whilst there remains agreement on those general principles concerned with respect for persons or personal integrity. Or, again, there can be general agreement on humanity's stewardship for (rather than control of) nature, at the same time as moral disagreement over the application of that stewardship - for instance, in the use of animals or in the preservation of species. Pluralism is conceivable within a moral framework of agreed principles in which that pluralism can be both

debated and tolerated. And in those deliberations, within multi-ethnic and pluralist societies, the teacher will introduce the learner to 'the best that has been thought and said' within their respective religious and literary traditions to help them support their beliefs.

The third distinction is between substantive and procedural principles. Thus, there can be significant disagreements, which, however, might be tackled in a way which encourages those disagreements to be explored responsibly, which values the appeal to evidence, which respects differences of belief. Such values are concerned with objectivity in approach and impartiality vis-à-vis alternative views. Such impartial *procedural* values are best reflected in the chairmanship of committees where each person or group expects fair and just treatment - where argument and evidence and reasons prevail rather than the exercise of power. It is not the case that such impartial treatment of controversial issues or such tolerance of opposite views, even when one finds them disagreeable, is a commitment to relativism. Far from it. It does itself entail a commitment to certain values - the respect for persons whatever the cultural differences which divide us and the commitment to the intellectual virtues which I outlined earlier.

6. Conclusion

Pluralism within society is manifested in the different values which affect personal and social life. On the surface it would seem to undermine the shared tradition which once prevailed, and which formed the base on which the teacher might teach with authority. It is my view that such consensus or shared tradition rarely prevailed, but reflected the dominance of particular groups and concealed differences which went unacknowledged.

Of course, the nature of that pluralism changes from age to age and from society to society. But the distinctions I made remain crucial to an understanding of education (the forming of the 'educated person') in a pluralist society.

First, the educated person participates in a tradition of literature, of morality, of theology, of science, of history, of the arts in which issues of human nature and of human behaviour are explored and made sense of. The job of the teacher is to mediate those cultural traditions so that the learning can be shaped by them -

and to make them aware of the range of traditions through which these issues have been explored. The teacher's job is *not*, on the basis of personal conviction, to reach conclusions on behalf of the learner.

Second, those different traditions reflect differences of outcome arrived at by people who have seriously addressed the problems which I have referred to. To that extent there is not consensus in society. On the other hand, those differences in specific values or rules of behaviour, if seriously arrived at, might be understood within a shared tradition of respect for persons, for the truth and for personal integrity.

Third, in mediating those different traditions, the teacher, though not promulgating specific outcomes, is by no means neutral about the processes through which the exploration is conducted. To be educated is not simply to have certain underlying attitudes and beliefs - it is to have come to them through the process of argument, discussion, reasoning, evidence.

The implications of this for classroom practice are considerable. They affect the role of the teacher, the ethos of the school, the place in the classroom of discussion and appeal to evidence, and the respect for the deliberations of the learner.

Above all, however, these considerations have implications for the promotion of tolerance. 'Tolerance' is a rather weak concept and it smells too much of letting things go even when they deserve critical scrutiny. Rather is it the case that in promoting a worthwhile life in a pluralist society, we must tolerate differences where they are engaged in seriously but be *intolerant* of lack of argument or lack of seriousness, of sloppiness or of indifference to evidence. Persons must be respected, not merely tolerated, and the cultural and value differences which separate people taken seriously.

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