EDUCATING FOR HUMANITY IN TODAY'S WORLD:

Towards a new model of education to meet the challenge

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I, John Bernard Marshall confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information is derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

It is generally accepted that schools should be concerned not just with imparting particular intellectual or technical skills, but also with the wider character development of children, including their moral and social growth. However, after decades of well-meant but rather scattered initiatives (often launched in response to the unsettling effect of widespread social change) this study reviews the whole rationale for and feasibility of work in this area, and tries to set it onto firmer foundations. After looking at how the curriculum in most state systems is organised, and why there is frequently a gap between the reality and the rhetoric here, it is argued that if education is to play a more meaningful part, a rather different perspective on the main forms of human knowledge and experience that schools usually address is needed: a more radical breakdown which does justice both to traditional curriculum subjects and the more amorphous, but vitally important, 'base' of life. Three ways in which the human engagement with the world does appear to separate into its more primary modes are identified: direct experience in the everyday lifeworld (including social interaction); particular bodies of knowledge and skill; and the evaluative or wider meaning-making aspects of our functioning. The significance of each is explored, and in so far as they appear to be central to our human way of being, it is suggested that these might in themselves provide some solid ground on which to base the whole business of educating the young. It is argued that, if schools are to engage more constructively with this wider area of human development, they will have to contribute far more effectively to the first, in particular, of these dimensions of our functioning. Realistic possibilities for such work are explored along with the considerable challenges that can arise.

Impact Statement

In this study I suggest a radical approach that schools may need to adopt if provision for the wider character development of children (including their social and moral development) is to be put onto a firmer footing, with practitioners able to gain a sense that they are basing their work on solid foundations and able to justify what they are doing in the face of what has been seen (particularly in Britain and the USA) as a narrowing of the curriculum in favour of a more exclusive focus on driving up standards of academic attainment.

Each chapter explores fundamental issues which need to be understood and addressed if schools are to come to terms more effectively with this area of provision - a task which, in view of the weakening or breakdown of many once strong social and moral structures in society at large, appears to be one of the most urgent, if difficult, that education faces, both in Britain and now increasingly across the world.

In view of this, besides Britain and the USA, I have also addressed challenges that China and other countries in the Far East face in this respect, as their schools continue to rely solely on academic results as the criterion of educational success in systems which stress memorisation, repetition and testing, often at the expense of promoting what might be seen as the ethical underpinnings of human life (including, for instance, such qualities as courage, honesty and integrity; kindness, compassion and tolerance; and a sense of justice and fair-play).

Given the present rather uncertain status of this type of educational endeavour, and the generally patchy, variable and sometimes perfunctory nature of provision, the content is relevant not only to academics, educational policy makers and school administrators, but also to teachers and other practitioners working directly with young people – in fact it is hoped it will be of interest to anyone concerned with the way young people develop as social and moral beings.

I hope to disseminate my work by contributing articles to relevant journals, by submitting papers to conferences concerned with this area of educational work, and by keeping in touch with the research community at the Institute of Education in London.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The general theme of this work is relevant to what appears to be a growing number of initiatives being launched in schools across the world, which are variously designated 'values education', 'emotional literacy', 'character education' (USA), 'dou toku' (Japan), 'deyu' (China) – both usually translated as 'moral education'- , 'Personal, Social and Health Education' and/or 'Citizenship' in Britain, etc. I have resisted the temptation to limit the focus of attention here to just one or two of these 'brand-names', as it were, because essentially they all seem to be catering for the same sort of educational concern, to be facing similar problems, and to be in a similar state of fluctuation and experimentation. Three features in particular of this common ground seem to stand out.

Firstly, they all point to a realization that school education should be concerned not just with imparting particular intellectual of technical skills, but also with the wider character of the child – with how (s)he is more generally disposed towards the world and towards others in particular: with social and moral attitudes, and the formation of a sense of right and wrong. As a 'lowest common denominator' here, one can perhaps say that these approaches would all be concerned to foster the development of (among other things) a basic 'humanity', defined as 'the quality of being humane' (Penguin English Dictionary); and this is, perhaps, best expressed in terms of a maxim found in many cultures – and which came out well ahead of the rest in a large poll conducted in Britain a some years ago to find a new set of 'commandments' to live by: "treat others as you would like others to treat you" (cited in Snow, 2005).

Secondly, there seems to be a growing sense that this sort of task is becoming more pressing now, in view of the apparent breakdown of many of the traditional agents of socialization which were once operating in society at large. With former ways of living and patterns of family life being disrupted, the school is being left, increasingly it seems, to pick up the pieces. This is a trend I shall expand on shortly, but for the moment we may note that, if this is a problem which has most markedly affected the affluent West, the same sort of trend seems to be increasingly affecting societies around

the rest of the world as the tide of globalization, and the market-driven forces frequently accompanying this phenomenon, take hold.

Finally, it seems sensible to look at these areas together because, in spite of educational systems frequently having such broad aims which in theory cater for the wider personality development of their charges, whether they can actually be said to be getting to grips with such aims - in the sense of making provision which is at all equal to the task – is another matter. If it was true in 1997 that "during the past decade there has been a world-wide surge of interest in moral education" (Damon and Gregory p.119), with, as these authors pointed out, a rich diversity of approaches and theoretical perspectives, it is also true that, as they themselves imply, and as John Wilson pointed out long ago (and Kat Arney more recently), our difficulty lies not in devising educational packages claiming to deal with 'living', 'relating', 'citizenship', 'values', etc. - there was already an abundance of them - but in the fact that we do not, in general, know what all these various approaches actually achieve (Wilson (1974, p.140; Arney 2016).   In fact one suspects that there may be something rather cavalier about the way many of them are adopted, as though one were to rush in to construct a building by seizing on likely-looking pieces of material and erecting them here and there, without understanding the nature of the site on which one is to work, or whether the materials and methods are suitable for the task in the first place (cf. Kristjansson 2004, p.214 on certain best-selling works in this field).

To see these developments in a wider context, we should remember that, although there has been this flurry of recent activity, most educational systems can point to a long history of attempts to make provision in this general area. And, on the face of it, there are good reasons for doing so. What, one might ask, is the point of enabling a child to acquire certain intellectual abilities or technical skills if those parts of the personality which will determine whether these abilities are put to constructive or destructive use are left out of the picture? Nor need one necessarily be deterred by reservations about 'tampering' with a child's basic temperament or by qualms about unhealthy 'conditioning'. Assuming that there *are* differences in basic temperament such as may be found to exist between an introvert, for instance, and an extravert, the orientation of educational provision in this area need only be towards allowing space for, 'bringing up' or 'out' (educere/educare), and making the most of, what 'is', rather than trying to

impose on or overlay such a temperament. I am aware that this rather bland statement hardly does justice to the issues involved here, and that such provision *could* be slanted towards a more controlling or doctrinaire purpose. It is also true that the literature on this topic is enormous. However, while I shall look at certain aspects of this danger later on, I believe that nothing in such a wider role need detract from working towards a relatively 'liberal' goal such as personal autonomy or 'self-formation' (Bildung), as well as towards more communal or social ends such as responsible citizenship or 'the common good'.

If, however, one can approach this area of work with a clear conscience, and society is increasingly looking to schools to rise to the challenge, doubts may remain about whether it is really feasible for education to take on such a role. It still seems only too easy to veer between a romantic optimism of the sort which might be inspired by Livingstone's classic statement that:

> The remarkable thing is how easy it is to train character. Indeed it is alarmingly easy…Consider what Hitler who has been called the 'arch-educationalist' did….or consider what Thomas Arnold did at Rugby partly by the force of his character, partly by means deliberately chosen, but without any elaborate study of the problems (1946, p.34);

and, on the other hand, the sort of disillusioned realism shown by Brian Davies who in 1983 remarked that:

> It appears to me to be the overwhelming characteristic of educational organizations that they are marked by the weakest of all technologies that characterize people-changing institutions (1983, p.126).

In all this uncertainty can we take this whole field of work by the 'scruff of the neck', as it were, and put it onto a firmer footing?

If this, put simply, is what this work is hoping to tackle, some the issues which confront us on the way are anything but simple. Behind the manifest problems one meets with in schools every day lie a whole layer of deeper issues which may be

continually with us as a sort of constant 'drag' in the background, but which, it seems, we have yet to come to terms with explicitly in the educational world. There is, for instance, the whole question of how one views the changes which have been taking place in society at large on an increasingly global scale, the effect these are having on the lives of children, and how education should respond. There are questions about how and why modern educational systems have come to be the way they are; the way they have, almost like a bell, become 'cast' over the last one hundred years or so, something which, in itself, may be drastically affecting work in this area. Then, looking at the principle forms of human knowledge or experience that schools set themselves to address, one can ask, with an almost ingenuous naivety, if a rather different perspective on the main forms of human experience is needed for educational purposes – a perspective which gets beyond the usual divisions and subdivisions of 'knowledge', 'culture', etc., and brings out some more underlying dimensions of our human existence. One can then ask how one might view the basic building blocks of the curriculum in this light, and whether this sort of second-order framework – in so far as it brings into relief underlying dimensions of our functioning which are central to our growth and development as human beings – might in itself give us an essential base, a crucial foundation, from which to approach the whole business of educating the child.

If the above introduces some of the issues dealt with, the following gives a brief but more structured breakdown of this project overall.

In chapter 1 I try to bring a larger perspective to bear on the widespread social changes which have been taking place, not only in the West, but increasingly across the world in recent years. Many of them can be seen as just the latest manifestation of a powerful impulse which was originally unleashed in Europe about four centuries ago, which still has considerable momentum all across the world, and which perhaps we have not yet fully come to terms with. As for what this implies for education: in an environment in which many traditional patterns of living and relating have been breaking down, and society looks increasingly to schools themselves to make provision for the moral and social development of the child, one may have doubts about whether this is really a feasible proposition or is asking too much. Is it, indeed, a "do-able job", as Lickona

has confidently asserted, in these circumstances? (1991, p.22.) In the end it is concluded that schools could and should be playing a more active and constructive part here. But to understand how this might be achieved we need to look first at the larger structure of provision the child is subject to, and the way the system as a whole has come into being and operates – something which, in itself, may be having a powerful, if largely unacknowledged, effect on this area of work.

In the next chapter I look at some fundamental impulses which have historically undergirded the pattern of school education. These are: to provide a basic 'general education' including, among other things, the 'three Rs' (reading, writing and arithmetic) mainly for younger students; to provide more specialist academic, technical or vocational fields of learning for students after a certain age; and throughout (but often more particularly with younger students) to promote the healthy development of wider aspects of the personality, including the child's social and moral functioning. I argue that the way these basic impulses in practice generally take on flesh and evolve into an overall structure of provision, in itself tends to leave schools ill-equipped to tackle the third wider area of provision. It inevitably seems to end up severely squeezed and marginalised.

Chapter 3 goes further into some of the more practical factors at work here, looking in greater detail at the actual mechanics of curriculum construction. It is argued that the sort of strategies commonly in use for this purpose and the underlying assumptions it is only too easy to make, are themselves acting, albeit unwittingly, to perpetuate the marginalisation of provision for the wider social and moral development of the child. All this leads to the conclusion that if education is to make more effective provision for this area, we may need to pull back from these usual strategies and ask some radical questions about the way human 'knowledge', 'experience' or 'culture', etc. are looked at and divided up for curriculum purposes. Are there some more fundamental strata in the architecture of human experience which might better accommodate and ground work in this area, while at the same time enabling one to see the point and purpose of the more traditional subjects in this wider scheme of things? It is proposed that there is, indeed, some basic ground we can usefully get back to here, and that in this wider context the more specialist subject areas, although generally taking up the lion's share of the educational curriculum, clearly represent but one (admittedly important)

dimension of human life, while the place and importance of other ways we engage with the world are brought into sharper focus and shown to be crucial to the development of the wider personality.

In chapter 4 attention is drawn to three fundamental ways in which our engagement with life does seem to separate out in this way. These are:

1) General day-to-day 'life-world' experience consisting of first-hand encounters with others and the physical world in which potentially any facet of the personality may find expression in , or become prey to, the give and take, the unexpected twist of the moment. Here one can encounter the full range of psychic forces at work as we interact with others in situations where interests do not always coincide, and where, in the ups and downs of such interaction, we are largely forged as social and moral beings.

2) Organised bodies of knowledge or skill which usually form the staple fare of the school curriculum. These generally narrow down and concentrate the focus of attention so that one can acquire a deeper understanding of and mastery over very particular aspects of life and the world.

3) The overall 'sense-making' or evaluative dimension of one's functioning, reflecting a desire to make some inner 'sense' of what one experiences in 1) or 2) above. Here one is concerned with assessing, evaluating, and integrating such experience with one's basic dispositions and aspirations.

These basic modalities seem to be central to our human way of being and to underlie the many activities we find ourselves taking up. In fact in so far as they appear to provide basic parameters within which the human spirit can unfold and develop, it is suggested that they might in themselves provide some solid ground on which to base the whole business of education, as well as giving a useful second-order framework within which to locate, and judge the significance of, the variety of activities which at present take place under that heading. Finally, it is claimed that, in the light of these more overarching parameters, one might be able to set many of the activities which contribute directly to the moral and social development of the child onto a firmer footing, and so enable those working in this area to gain a greater sense of purpose and direction.

I have now already strayed into some of the territory of chapter 5 where there is further consideration of the role and significance of each of these underlying dimensions of life, and where the nature of the relationship between them is more fully explored. In this light it is argued that schools will have to cater much more effectively for the first of these basic dimensions if they are to engage more fully with that formidable bundle of energy which we call the child – particularly with the (frequently rough-hewn) behavioural, social, affective and moral aspects of his or her functioning. In this light one might see provision in this area as at least as important as the school's more conventional academic objectives.

In the three following chapters (6-8) some of the more down-to-earth practical implications of work in this area are discussed along with some of the real problems that will inevitably arise and should be prepared for.   In this light one may see more clearly the real nature and implications of the task if education is ever to 'get down to business' here. This might serve both as a reality check to any presumption of an easy way forward, while at the same time giving a real indication of what needs to be done if schools *are* to become more effective providers in this area.

More specifically, in chapter 6 I try to tease out, put the spotlight on, and schematize those aspects of a school's institutional life which seem particularly important in this respect: i.e. settings within the school which might well be pivotal for such learning; which readily afford (or seriously restrict) opportunities for building up a rich body of social interaction, and which one should, therefore, be particularly attentive to. I suggest what I hope is a useful overarching framework for considering the real possibilities and overall scope for work in this area.

Chapter 7 considers the implications of the often fraught dynamics generated as the burgeoning powers of the young become subject to such raw interaction - a process so easy to refer to as 'socialization', but which lies at the heart of our very formation as human(e) beings, and which is often something of a 'bumpy ride' for the individual. I then look at whether, in the light of the potent forces at work here, one can discern some fundamental principles – the basic lineaments of an approach most likely to result in a positive outcome, not just for the child in the school setting, but also, perhaps, more widely across this whole problematic field of human endeavour, since the same

fundamental issues are likely to arise for *any* human institution which seeks to impose particular norms or its own culture on those within it.

In chapter 8 I look at the implications of the fact that, while provision and learning in this area, however educative, can not be expected to conform to well-structured formats typical of our organised bodies of knowledge and skill, it nevertheless merits a recognition and status of its own. Here we may need to recover the ancient idea of a rather different type of human 'discipline' which is directly concerned with developing the basic capacities needed to live well amid the frequent uncertainties and unexpected contingencies that seem to beset everyday human existence – a discipline which engages with the psychic base of the individual, and which might thus form a foundation for our lives that undergirds any more specialist areas of endeavour we may wish to pursue.

The concluding chapter (9) deals with some practical objections to the approach I have taken, but overall brings the main themes of my argument together in a way that I hope reinforces the underlying point throughout: that, given the parlous state of morality and any sense of a common humanity in many societies across the world today, schools now need to engage more effectively with, and in effect 'bring in from the cold', the third wider strand of educational endeavour that I have described. To do this they should focus principally on promoting, managing and sustaining a rich body of interpersonal experience for children within their everyday environment – a challenging but, as I have tried to show, ultimately a worthwhile task.

Finally, some very general points concerning the approach and style I am adopting:

It may already have become apparent that, although dealing with some problems that seem to be such a feature of life today, many of these are the result of trends which have been building for some time. I have therefore felt free to refer frequently to thinkers and movements of the past as well as contemporary commentators in order to see things in a wider historical context and get the true measure of what has been going on. This is particularly the case with regard to certain trends in education which may be 'hot' issues today, but which in fact may go back much further than a surface knowledge of the present scene might suggest. Seeing such issues over a longer time

frame may help one gain a deeper understanding of the deep roots and often complex nature of such issues.

Secondly, if I have taken a comparatively long view historically, I have also tried to take a wide view globally. The problems discussed seem to be manifesting themselves increasingly on every continent across the world. I have, admittedly, tended to draw on sources and examples from Britain and the USA in the first instance, but I see this work as having very much a global frame of reference – something which I hope will be apparent from the wider references, particularly to China and the Far East in chapters 1, 2 and 7.

As for how strictly 'philosophical' my approach is: I am taking the view that philosophy can have a synoptic role, taking in insights from other disciplines and weaving things together to get a more overall view which then clarifies certain issues central to these disciplines, and in this case has particular implications for education. But I have not felt I should be totally restricted to this sort of analytical work, and I have at points (particularly in chapters 6 to 8) moved on to deal with the more practical implications, the nitty-gritty of implementing the larger perspective I am bringing to bear. In this I am, I think, only following the spirit of Dewey. Referring to the "philosophy of education" – which he saw as inevitably involving consideration of the big questions of life that had traditionally been tackled by philosophy as such – he wrote that unless it is to remain merely "symbolic – or verbal – or a sentimental indulgence for a few…..[it] must take effect in conduct" (1916, p.328).

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Making sense of turbulent times: the pressure on schools.

In the introductory section I raised the question of whether, in spite of numerous initiatives, in fact a veritable flurry of activity over recent years, schools are any nearer to getting to grips with the task of making effective provision for the wider character development of the child, and particularly for the moral and social aspects of this development. While one may embark on this area of work with a clear conscience, and society is increasingly looking to schools to rise to the challenge, doubts may remain about whether it is really feasible for education to take on such a role, at least to any effect, when the rest of society is, as seems increasingly the case, failing in this respect. Here, in order to gain an understanding of the real nature and depth of the problem that schools are faced with, we need to take stock of the wider historical and social trends which form the background against which they are having to operate, and which at the same time as they are making it more difficult for schools to take on such a task in the first place, have the effect of thrusting it onto them ever more insistently.

The brief account which follows does not pretend to be a comprehensive analysis, and I have no wish to add to the abundance of critiques of society, of 'modernity' and 'post-modernity' already on the market. But since we still seem to be coming to terms with many of these developments, and it can be difficult to gain an overall perspective on them, and since, in education in particular, one tends to be directly confronted by the cumulative effects of what can seem a bewildering constellation of forces on the life-world of the child, I intend to draw briefly but widely from some of these critiques, and, going back a little into history, present a picture that is sufficient: (a) to bring home something of the challenge that these wider developments pose for education; and (b) to set the scene for, and add force to, what I wish to say later about the way we may need, in the light of these trends, to generally re-think what we are doing in education now: that we may need a rather different approach to the basic building blocks of the curriculum if schools are to get to grips more effectively with this area.

Breaking with the past: the seeds of change

In the West we are living with the legacy of two major waves of intellectual and social upheaval which have overtaken us in (comparatively) recent times. I shall say something about both since the first, in a sense, just sets the scene for the second, and because in many of the 'developing' countries today it appears to be a combination of elements from both which are sweeping over them and drastically affecting the fabric of their societies.

The seeds of the first are to be found in the twin forces unleashed firstly by Renaissance humanism, and then by the fresh impetus given to advancing human knowledge by the more strictly methodical and scientific approaches to understanding the world which were being ushered in around the turn of the sixteenth century. On the one hand, the Renaissance ideal of 'man', inspired by a renewed interest in the thought and achievements of the Greeks and Romans, sought to reveal his inherent 'dignity' and potential for development. (This contrasted with the more ambivalent mediaeval view of which was inclined to see a more lowly, fallen creature in relation to an all-powerful creator God.) On the other hand, by the early 1600s a more rigorously rational and scientific approach to the study of natural phenomena – in fact to the acquisition of verifiable knowledge in general – was in the air and being actively promoted by such figures as Bacon, Galileo and Descartes. Through this sort of approach, it seemed, the secrets of the universe might at last be unlocked, and gaining an understanding of the laws of nature in this way might enable humankind to put the forces so discovered to work for the benefit of all and thus change the world for the better.

Such frameworks of thinking, as they gradually took hold, were never likely to respect tradition and custom just because they had become sanctified by longstanding use. And during the European 'Enlightenment', a century or more later, when these two impulses tended to combine in a powerful way and really capture the imagination of increasing numbers of people, hallowed traditions and the close-knit community structures in which individuals were embedded – and which, if they socialized them, it was often into restricted horizons – were increasingly questioned. If the ideal was a new social order based on reason, it seemed eminently sensible to men like Condorcet, Rousseau and Bentham that the 'partial associations' (Rousseau's term) and the 'ramshackle institutions' (Tocqueville's) which they saw most of the population still

embedded in acted as barriers to freedom and to the release of human potential generally. While the effect of such 'Enlightenment' thinkers was uneven (compare the Revolution in France with England's more gradual reform process), one of the offshoots of the same underlying impetus was the Industrial Revolution which rapidly spread from England to Europe and which certainly did result in mass social upheaval, as millions migrated from the countryside to new urban centres, often to live in appalling conditions.

Nevertheless, in spite of such massive dislocation, it seems that in Europe and America between about 1850 – 1950 things tended to stabilize. Those who had been uprooted by the Industrial Revolution were creating their own urban communities, a process helped in Britain by the promotion of the so-called 'civic gospel' (Under this impulse town councillors often saw it as their duty to create libraries, parks, bath-houses, hospitals and schools, etc to improve the lives of their burgeoning populations.); by the host of grass-roots 'co-operative', 'friendly', 'mutual' and other self-help societies which sprang up all over the country; and by the continuing role of the churches, which often ran their own schools and charitable institutions. Of course the picture here is complex, with different nations having their own ways of coping with such upheaval. By and large, however, the fears that Tocqueville had raised when he wrote that:

> In our days, men see that all constituted powers are crumbling on every side;
> . They see all ancient authority dying out…… and they imagine that mankind
> is about to fall into perpetual anarchy (cited in Nisbet,1970, p.107)

had not been realized. It can be said that foundations had been shaken, with many traditions loosened or re-ordered; but that, apart from the intelligentsia, people by and large could still live their lives embedded in a wider pattern of communal tradition.

A second major phase of dislocation appears to have come upon us in the 1960s, and I will focus here particularly on the period from the sixties until roughly 2005, although obviously there have been further technical and cultural developments affecting society since then. However it was during this period that a number of trends arose and converged in a powerful way, with results that seemed to some commentators to change fundamentally the character of society throughout the western world; and then

to have global consequences which we are still attempting to come to terms with. Certainly in the West, to judge by some comments at the time, one might be forgiven for thinking that the state of affairs described by Tocqueville above had finally come to pass. In the words of Jonathan Sacks:

> A whole series of developments in America and Western Europe shattered the idea of a single public culture (1991, p.62).

His thesis here was reflecting the (by then) quite widespread view that, where once a cluster of powerful and widely shared values held sway in society, which had tended to emphasise self-restraint, responsibility to others and being part of a greater whole, now a more permissive ethos was on the ascendant – one that put the emphasis on desire satisfaction, individual self expression, and the quest for personal fulfilment (cf. Bellah et al.1985; and Fukuyama 1997 & 1999).

If one is looking for a single concept which captures the underlying momentum of the period, perhaps one can widen the application of a term used by Giddens (1990)   and talk of the 'disembedding' of the individual from society. If the basic impulse here was unleashed during the 'first wave of dislocation' (as I have described it), but then controlled, this impetus seems to have taken on a new lease of life from the 1960s onwards when many of the previous constraints were being swept away and, as Sacks and others were pointing out, it seemed that attitudes previously available to an intellectual and artistic elite were becoming available to all (cf. Lasch 1984, p.200; and Himmelfarb 1995, p.217ff)

To attempt to analyse in depth the many and varied elements contributing to this second wave of general dislocation would be to risk losing sight of the wider narrative I am engaged in here. But I think one can identify three phases or waves over this period as particularly significant (**i-iii** below). Each consisted of a cluster of factors, and together they appear to have had a strong cumulative effect.

   (**i**) The first phase was marked by: a general increase in affluence (in Europe) after post-war austerity, which meant that the young could more easily escape old communal ties and live independently; the emergence of television as a major new influence in

people's lives, exposing them to worlds beyond their immediate horizons in a very vivid way; the rise of a distinctive youth culture with a strong 'do your own thing' ethic (and which was often critical of tradition and authority); and a pervasive sense that we were about to enter a brave new world where the rapid advances being made in science and technology would finally provide the means to overcome the want and deprivation that have traditionally beset humankind. This was particularly strong in the 60s and early 70s in a way which may be hard to appreciate now (cf. Harold Wilson cited in Green 1999, p.53). What need, then, for old ways and traditions when this bold new vision of a technological utopia was beckoning?

   (ii) If these trends set the scene for a loosening of social ties in the 60s and 70s, it was in the 80s and 90s that the effect on society became more marked as they worked themselves out, reinforced by another wave of what might be termed 'disestablishing' impulses in the realm of ideas. Now that the heyday of some of these movements seems to have passed, and we may be becoming disillusioned with what was once so strongly in vogue, it can be difficult to think oneself back into the spirit of the times. Nevertheless, we are now living in the wake of these trends, and it seems important to take the measure of them in order to understand the many challenges we are facing at present, particularly with regard to the moral and social landscape that now confronts us.

The *intellectual climate* of the time was marked by a growing scepticism towards 'grand narratives' – i.e. large-scale frameworks of thought or ideologies that have traditionally provided the individual with some sense of place in a wider scheme of things, and often with a clear sense of the direction in which things should be going in order to improve the human condition. (Socialism and the belief in scientific progress spring to mind.) Lyotard (1984) defined the era of 'postmodernity' itself as a condition marked by a loss of faith in such grand narratives. These, the suspicion was, could too easily develop into 'totalizing systems', which inevitably marginalized or violated any area of life which could not be accommodated within the thrust and focus their individual perspectives (cf.Wain 1999, p.303).

Dovetailing with this distrust of large-scale systematizing, was a *sociological climate* in which there was a growing awareness of, and sensitivity to, social and cultural

diversity. Different ways of life together with their value systems were felt to be simply a reflection of the contingent customs of a particular society and could not pretend to have any more universal validity. Writing in 1995, Steven Lukes neatly described the attractions of the view that:

> each culture is valid in its own terms….its norms and principles are only applicable within….[and] to understand means not to criticise……..Such views are very popular these days and have many motivational sources: hostility to or guilt about ethnocentrism, especially of the imperialist variety,…[and]…a romantic hostility to what is seen as abstract rationalism (p.178).

As a result of such tendencies, an almost heady fascination with plurality developed in certain circles, where respect for 'difference' reigned supreme. As Lyotard had put it, very much in the spirit of the time:

> Let us wage war on totality; let us activate the differences (1984, p.82).

In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that a *moral climate* arose in which, as many were released from relatively close horizons and found themselves in a milieu exposed to a variety of conflicting viewpoints, ethical confidence could slump. There was much talk, particularly in Britain, of a crumbling of consensus as, in the face of an apparent collapse of wider value frameworks and an increasing awareness of the diversity found in other cultures, commitment to any substantial system of values could seem to be problematic. It might be thought that if everyone has the right to live their own way of life based on a personal sense of what is of real significance or value, this should result in a flowering multitude of ethical blooms. In practice however, where any objectivity in this area is felt to be problematic precisely because of the proliferation of diverse viewpoints in a situation where no one can be considered superior to another, the whole sense that there is something of real and substantial value that is worth striving for would seem to be undercut. Back in 1981 MacIntyre (p.21) had noted that in the Western world we seemed to be losing any capacity for constructive moral discourse, and that we were living our moral lives as if 'emotivism' were true – as though our moral judgements were merely expressions of personal approval but could not be justified beyond that. (In fact as time went on, it became almost de rigueur in some circles not to take a formal ethical stance in order not to

offend this or that cultural group. As a person quoted by Mary Midgely put it, very much in the spirit of the time, even if betraying some confusion: "Surely it is always wrong to make moral judgements" (cited in Haydon, 1999 p.91).

By the mid nineties expressions of concern were being raised by those who considered that society was becoming increasingly fragmented and 'de-moralized'. One religious leader writing in The Times described British society as:

> Morally reticent, even inarticulate ….a society disfigured by widespread
> moral confusion and false theories of a privatized morality (Carey 1997).

In a similar vein, James Wilson writing mainly of the USA, had stated that:

> Man [sic] is now adrift on an uncharted sea, left to find his own moral bearings
> with no compass and no pole star, and so able to do little more than utter personal
> preferences (Wilson 1993, p.4).

Nevertheless, from the mid seventies to at least the early nineties these interlocking cultural elements could be viewed as a powerful, even intoxicating combination of potentially liberating forces whose time had come. People were now being released from the confining and suffocating expectations and norms which had once dominated life and which could appear to some to be no more than the means by which the ruling elite and/or vested interests had exercised power over the masses.

   (iii) However one views the climate of ideas prevailing at the time, during these years things were being further shaken up by a third wave of more concrete material changes taking place in the worlds of work, of leisure, and in the structure of family life.

In an economic climate which favoured the increasing deregulation of markets, traditional patterns of employment in many industries were being upset. Where, as Charles Handy has put it:

> Governments have decided that the market, the mechanism of choice,
> liberates individual initiative and penalizes inefficiency, they are tempted
> to leave all to self-regulating choice (Handy 1991, p.207).

So, as industries were exposed to the harsh realities of more open competition, and 're-structuring', 'shake-out' and 'down-sizing' became management buzz-words, many firms underwent considerable transformation in the process of becoming 'leaner' or collapsed if they did not. In such circumstances any sense of permanence or security in the work situation tended to disappear, and in many sectors employment became increasingly precarious, and sometimes short-term or part-time. Such developments can in themselves, as Richard Sennet (1999) has pointed out, result in a 'corrosion of character' as qualities such as trust, loyalty, and personal integrity come to seem out of place in a work-place situation where, in the name of increasing efficiency, everything has to be measured in terms of specific 'performance indicators', quantifiable outcomes, and the attainment of ever more ambitious 'targets'.

In the world of leisure, during these years the average time spent watching the television (including videos) expanded to a point where a number of commentators saw this in itself as a threat to family and communal life (cf. Kilpatrick, 1992, p.264; and Putnam, 2000, chapt.13), especially when a child was given his own TV to watch in a bedroom. More generally, David Putnam detected a change in the nature of our leisure and voluntary activities, which have become more individually orientated with nothing like the width of human contact which once marked these activities. In this respect, once again a more traditional sense of community with one's fellows was (and is) being diminished (Putnam, 2000).

Finally, perhaps the most significant indication of this shake-up of tradition could be seen in the changing pattern of family life and personal relationships. During the eighties and nineties, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, there was a sharp increase in rates of divorce, in the number of extra-marital births, in the proportion of one-parent (usually single-mother) families, and in more informal 'living-together –arrangements' generally. It would seem that, in a milieu without firm expectations and norms, sustaining commitment to anything requiring perseverance and patience becomes a lonely, fraught and difficult process – and this includes commitment in the area of personal relationships. At any rate a number of writers commented on the way relationships seemed to have become more tenuous and revocable (Taylor 1992, p.76; Bauman 2003). In fact in Britain Theodore Zeldin has described this as "the most

important issue of our time", and called for a new agenda to look at "how we sustain love and inject longevity into relationships" (cited in Roberts 2002, p.31).

The wider transformation of the moral landscape

Amidst these phases of upheaval, if there was a particular manifestation of the general ambience I would pick out as significant, it was a shift of emphasis, involving what one might term a general 'lowering of sights' which seemed to affect the whole area of value formation in all spheres of life. If there was, as I have suggested, a loss of confidence in this area, the result was not just a more tentative and diffident approach, but also, it seems, a general retreat from a commitment to higher aspirations and ideals (at least publicly), and a shift of focus onto relatively 'safe' lowest-common-denominator ground. Three aspects of this tendency became increasingly prevalent.

In the first place it is not surprising, perhaps, that with a loss of faith in substantive ideals and large-scale perspectives, what has been called a 'new materialism' filled the gap. Fukuyama made the point that:

> If men are unable to affirm that any particular way of life is superior to an-
> other, they will fall back on the affirmation of life itself; that is, the body,
> its needs and fears (1992, p.305).

One can see this reflected in, among other things, the whole tendency to become preoccupied with those bodily comforts which are satisfied by what has become known as 'conspicuous consumption'. A number of writers have commented on the way consumer values were now tending to fill people's horizons to the extent that, particularly for the young, the acquisition of goods and wealth was sometimes becoming "the primary means for the construction of self" (O'Dea 2001, p.25).

At the same time, this lowering of sights to the tangible and material in the absence of other agreed touchstones of value, was also invading the world of work where, as part of the shake-up previously mentioned, the assessment of an individual's performance has tended to limit itself to those aspects which are readily susceptible to being quantified and precisely measured, with any more intangible and qualitatively rich but less quantifiable contributions falling outside of such a focus. Yet the whole

paraphernalia of 'performance indicators', 'measurable outcomes' and specific 'targets' was spreading rapidly from industry to state-run services such as health and education, particularly in English-speaking countries. As a number of critics were pointing out, this sort of stress on "performativity" enables those involved to concentrate on "processes" – on the most efficient means to attain the targets that are set – and "to avoid value questions about what is good", or about what one is doing it all *for* in the first place (Lawson 1998, p.41). In fact at its extreme, as Richard Smith has pointed out in a striking image, such concentration on efficiency and effectiveness can lead to a situation where "the means appear to have kicked free of ends altogether and whirl, beatified, in a technological utopia" of their own (1999, p.319) – a situation which, I suggest, is only too recognisable to those who have been subject to such a target-obsessed regime.

Finally, in the wider realm of ethical and political thought, in the wake of an apparent loss of faith in and an 'inarticulacy' about more substantive ideals and visions, the retreat to less vulnerable positions took the form of a concern with what has been called "morality in the narrow sense" – with what is needed for men to live together, to survive, to engage in basic social interaction, and to be able to pursue their individual bents (Haydon 1999, p.25ff). But if in theory the search has been for what Newey (2001 p.10) has called "non-partisan ground-rules within which ethical ideals and individual conceptions of the good can compete", in practice, as Bernard Williams and Charles Taylor have pointed out, there has been a tendency to lose sight of the whole wider field of 'ethics' (regarded as the realm of higher aspirations and ideals, questions concerning the 'good life', the place of the heroic and the supererogatory, etc), and to focus largely on a more basic 'morality' of the sort described above (Williams 1985, ch.10; Taylor 1995, ch.2).

The global impact of these changes.

If they originated largely in the West, the forces unleashed by the general collapse of grand political ideologies, the freeing up of global markets, and the freer exchange of ideas made possible by ready access to global communication systems such as the internet, meant that powerful elements of these movements were spreading rapidly to other parts of the world. George Soros (2000) observed that what he called a 'market

fundamentalism' was increasingly taking hold internationally, which, in the absence of convincing alternatives, was inclined to see free-market forces and the consumer-based culture they encouraged as themselves generating the only way to economic prosperity.

Whatever the long-term effects of these forces, as they took hold, traditional patterns of life were often being disrupted both materially - as local economies were upset or collapsed in the face of cheaper goods imported from elsewhere - and psychologically as, with the collapse of old certainties and with increasing exposure to visual images portraying glamorous ways of life based on the acquisition of material goods, an obsession with consumer values tended to fill any spiritual void. Some years ago one observer described China as being "at a point of transition where the old beliefs have disappeared and we have no new beliefs to follow" (cited in Reed 1995, p.110). A few years later Limin Bai was noting that a widespread "obsession with money" had arisen which "combat[s] not only political control but moral forces" (1998, pp.525; 535). And in a sentence which sums up a deep concern Booth (2000) drew attention to "the risk of losing national identity in a wave of westernisation; and an undermining of the traditional Confucian ideals that underpin [Chinese] society". Even Singapore, a more uniformly prosperous and compact nation, felt a need to combat what was seen as an undesirable erosion of its Asian identity by "decadent Western influences", and to "oppose the trends among the young for developing Western-orientated life styles" (Tan Tai Wei 1994, p.63);   while from Japan there were reports that the once strong extended family was showing signs of decline; that the young were increasingly adopting Western "hedonistic" life-styles; that there were incidents of violence in schools, and increasing signs of a lack of respect being shown to teachers by their pupils (MacLeod 2000; Fitzpatrick 2000; Neill (2001). One finds a similar picture reflecting the disruption of traditional ways of life in many other parts of the world, including Russia and the former countries of the Soviet Union, and over much of the African and South American continents, although naturally the situation has varied from country to country. In particular, the process of 'urbanization' (involving a mass movement from countryside to town) seems to have been accelerating in parts of Asia, Latin America and Africa as small-scale local economies collapse in the face of more open international competition. This dislocation has, of course, been profoundly unsettling for the millions involved.

Taking stock of these developments

So much for this rather headlong gallop through some of the key trends of the recent past. It could be argued that the way I have described the wave of forces sweeping through societies is rather labouring the point. It is true that in any such condensed account one can only take a series of 'snapshots', as it were, to illustrate the point and there *is* a danger here of simplification.   In any complex society such trends as I have described will meet with counter- currents and face some resistance, or may even be absorbed in certain sectors without much adverse effect. It is out of this whole imbroglio that the future emerges. However the general tendencies I have described do seem to have been in the ascendant, and, judging by the wealth of literature on the subject[1], to have had increasing effect on the fabric of society, and thus, as we shall see, on the general environment within which schools have to operate.

It would probably be premature to come to any final verdict on this complex series of developments when in many ways we are still trying to come to terms with the consequences of them. There have been those who have welcomed the greater individual freedom that has come from the loosening of traditional structures, who have celebrated the ability to be different, and rejoiced in the great variety of life-style perspectives that opened up. Others have been less than sanguine, regretting the apparent loss of social cohesion, and pointing to the dangers of rampant and irresponsible individualism and the increasing fragility of relationships, etc.

 It is easy to say that both sides have a point. Inveterate tradition can be stultifying and may operate as a cover for semi-feudal or other vested interests. While personal freedom outside a framework of communal responsibility or wider horizons of significance can lead to a free-floating and impulsive hedonism. It is also easy to say that, in a sense, this whole problem is no more than the latest manifestation of a tension in the relationship between the individual and society which has exercised minds since at least the time of Plato. But the problems this poses may have come upon us in a particularly acute and unprecedented form at present when, probably for the first time

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[1] Accounts of this "Great Disruption" (Fukuyama's term) were to be found in a wide variety of sources ranging from the academic to the popular, describing various aspect of what Hobsbawm (1995) saw as "the triumph of the individual over society", detailing the erosion of more traditional social structures, and attesting to the emergence of a new more "liquid" form of modernity (Bauman 2000).

in history, such a large proportion of the general population world-wide have been living through such a loosening of social ties, a freeing up of horizons, and, as has been noted, can now adopt attitudes previously only available to a more privileged elite, with all that that implies. [2]

The effect on the young

It is, perhaps, cruelly ironic that, while such forces hardly take account of what is conducive to the healthy development of children, the cumulative effect of such changes may bear down most heavily on the lives of the young, particularly where the child's need for physical and/or emotional stability may be undermined.

At any rate, if above I have run through a number of particular developments that took place during this crucial period, soon afterwards several more broadly–based and extensively researched reports were published in Britain which appeared to confirm that the cumulative effect, particularly on the lives of children, was profound and likely to be long-term. In particular an IPPR report of 2006 tellingly entitled 'Freedom's Orphans' pointed out that, due to changes to the jobs market, personal and social skills were becoming increasingly important for young people entering the workplace, but that they were now *less* likely to develop these skills because of the failure of families "to effectively socialise" the young (p.ix). The report actually concluded that "We have failed to replace the basic building blocks of socialization…. the family, religion, and rigid employment structures - with any coherent alternative" (Margo et al. 2006, p.135). A few years later another wide-ranging report, "A Good Childhood" (Layard and Dunn, 2009) concluded that almost all the problems that young people were facing stemmed from the "excessive individualism" (p.4 ff.) that had taken root over the previous four decades. This "aggressive pursuit" of personal fulfilment and individual

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[2] Since these waves took hold, of course, there has been plenty of opportunity to reflect on the outcome of such changes; and from the once fashionable position of Waldron (1996, p.92) – a cultural theorist who celebrated what he termed the "many fragments" model of culture where an individual is exposed to a "veritable sea of cultural materials" coming from "an incommensurable variety of sources….. that have little more to bind them together than that they are the ones that in fact impinge upon us" - the social environment seems to have settled and stabilized somewhat. The very rise of more communitarian approaches in philosophy and politics in the West more recently may indicate that the pendulum is beginning to swing back from what Alibhai Brown (2001) called the excesses of a "distressed" and "atomised" society. But if we are now trying to come to terms with the aftermath of such trends, this seems to be very much still 'work in progress'.

success had, it said, "filled the vacuum created by the decline of religious belief and community spirit"[3]

The impact of social media

If such reports largely confirm the profound effect of the series of changes mentioned above, perhaps the most significant new factor to come upon the scene since that time – a factor which may well prove to be reinforcing some of these socially fragmenting trends – has been the advent and latterly the spectacular growth of such social media as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

It seems that, to say the least, the effect of these media on the social life of their users has not been uniformly positive. The Legatum Report (Stroud and Brien 2018) cites mounting evidence from numerous studies to the effect that the vast expansion of such 'indirect' or 'virtual' communication, particularly among the young, has not encouraged 'real life' interaction but rather has taken place at the expense of it. When using such media it is easy, often under the cloak of anonymity, to give vent to one's feelings about a person or an issue (whether justified or not) untroubled by any 'comeback' which live interaction might involve. Rather than engaging in face-to-face dialogue, one can just block or 'mute' whoever is inclined to disagree with one's views. In fact the above report concludes that "social media has [sic] been shown to increase social isolation" (p.31), and that, in general, online friendships are no substitute for real ones. The resulting situation has been further explored by Matthew Syed (2020) who has argued that one may well think that these media networks encourage diversity because of the potential range of viewpoints available within such wide internet connectivity. But in fact we see the emergence of a series of closed 'echo-chambers' where we only interact with those who agree with us. He concludes that, as a result, society in general is becoming more polarised, divided and 'tribal' – certainly not more interconnected in any wider human sense.

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[3] More recently the continuing effect of these trends on the lives of children appears to be reflected in the Legatum report of 2018 (mentioned in the following section) whose authors have expressed concern that "Today's young people are growing up in increasingly fractured families" (p.23); and contend that because of the potentially confusing "great acceleration" of change taking place in the 21st century generally, the young "will continue to need – indeed they will need more than ever - a grounding in the accumulated values and wisdom of our culture" - although they themselves may well play a greater part than the young of previous generation in helping "the rest of us adjust to the bewildering possibilities of the future"(p.13). (In chapter 7 I look further at the implications of this sort of two-fold approach.)

Perhaps it is to Sacks, a thinker whose public career has spanned the whole period from the sixties to the present that we should look to put into context and bring out the significance this latter development. "Half a century ago", he has said:

> The West embarked on a great experiment, a move away from 'We' to 'I'; from 'we are all in this together' to 'I'm free to be myself'. Recently there has been a reaction against individualism in favour of the group. But what has returned isn't a sense of society as a whole but rather *subgroups*.... (Sacks 2018).

What we have lost, he argues, is any wider sense of collective belonging and the common good. (He was speaking at the start of a BBC programme with the title 'Is Society a Myth?' which also featured contributions from Jonathan Haidt and Robert Plomin.)

The role of the school in these circumstances

Over these years it seems that the more such socially dissolving forces have taken hold in society at large, the more is demanded of education *by* society. In the face of failings in the wider social environment it is generally expected that the school itself should play a more effective part in the child's moral and social development. In the crucial period I have focussed on above where, as in Britain, the support of once close-knit local communities all but disappeared, where parental bonds themselves had been subject to the same socially dissolving forces, where there was a proliferation of media images entering the home portraying a kaleidoscope of life-styles, and where, as Marianne Talbot had put it, there was a pervasive attitude in society that "values are not to be thought of as better or worse, just different" (1997), it is perhaps not surprising that many parents seemed reluctant or unable to lay down a stable pattern of norms and expectations for their children; and, to judge by frequent expressions of concern voiced over the years in the Times Educational Supplement, have been tempted to "shift all responsibility onto the school to train young people in manners and discipline" (Quarrie 1998; cf. Wilce 2002).

While this may appear to be fairly recent phenomenon, it can in fact be seen as the culmination of a much longer-term trend, the considerable implications of which we are still, it seems, attempting to understand and get to grips with. As a typical illustration of what appears to be a longstanding and almost instinctive reaction on the part of educators here, back in 1976 Lisa Kuhmerker (writing in the Journal of Moral

Education) made the point that many parents appeared to be so preoccupied with problems of their own that opportunities for giving children the informal learning about personal relationships that they need were being simply overlooked. She continued:

> For lots of children good things do not happen unless they happen in schools. For many children school is a haven from adult neglect and impulsive behaviour (Kuhmerker 1976 p.263).

In the same year Joyce Skinner was stating that it was being left to the school system, and increasingly only the school system, to initiate children into society. After mentioning that in the past it shared this function with the church, a "rigid social establishment" and an easily identifiable local community, she went on to say that:

> In our day, it is often expected to do it without the effective support of the church in moral and religious education, without the effective support of the local community in social education and often without the effective support of the family either (Skinner 1976).

The statements of both these writers are, if anything, even more relevant today. Skinner was writing in the Times Educational Supplement and she put in a nutshell what, again, has been strongly echoed in the same journal ever since. Thomas Sobol, for example, education commissioner for New York State, was quoted by Diane Hofkins expressing similar thoughts in the edition of 9.3.90 (p.8); and in this journal one hears periodically from teachers remarking on, and occasionally complaining about, the fact they were expected to take on more of a 'social work' role. Over the years one finds the same theme treated at greater length in a number of books, from Hurn (1978), Hargreaves (1982) and Fletcher (1988) onwards. If Bruner had noted back in 1974 (p.151) that there was a "fundamental shift" taking place in the relative roles of the family and school, and Lasch had pointed out that this was a long-term trend quoting two leading educationalists of 1918 (!) to the effect that:

> Once the school had to teach students the elements of knowledge. Now it is charged with the physical, mental and social training of the child as well…..
> responsibilities formerly laid upon the home… (1979, p.268),

the process seems to have accelerated in recent years, particularly in the Anglophone world.

Naturally enough, such a shift in role tends to put additional pressure on the school and can cause confusion about its educational direction and priorities. Some years ago a

BBC Radio Four documentary looked at the pressures in this regard faced by a comprehensive school in England and found a tension which now, it seems, would be all too familiar in schools across Britain. The school (in Banbury) was not serving a particularly deprived area, and had an average social mix. It was pointed out that, on the one hand, it was attempting to cater for a growing number of children with behavioural, emotional or literacy problems while, on the other, it was expected to deliver good academic results. As the Head of Special Needs put it:

> There is so much pressure put at both ends. We're stretching, we're stretching, and the resources aren't there! (in Pennington 1997).

Commenting on this, Chris Woodhead, the government's Chief Inspector for schools at the time, said that:

> There is a confusion about the purposes of education…..It's not just within schools……..it's within the whole of society (ibid).

He went on to mention in particular a confusion between an academic and a pastoral focus for education. In fact, echoing the terms in which it continues to be expressed, he asked bluntly: "Should teachers teach, or should they be social workers?"

An impossible task for schools?

Since it is so central to whether education can make meaningful provision for the wider social and moral development of the child, perhaps we should ponder more deeply on the irony of the situation schools find themselves in here – something I have already alluded to, but which seems to have escaped much comment more widely.

At a time of widespread social change and upheaval we look increasingly to schools to rise to the challenge and cater more effectively for the wider personality development of the child, although the very erosion of supportive structures in society at large would appear to make such a task far more difficult than it would be in a more socially cohesive society. If the life-world of the child is increasingly bereft of the sort of experiences which would once have provided a basic foundation for the child's moral and social development, how is education to make up for this? Are we not expecting too much of the system? Should it be taking on any such role? And in these circumstances can it amount to anything more than making token gestures in response

to the expectations of society? Or is it a matter of soberly facing up to the implications of a task that schools should be trying to get the measure of more effectively?

There is a whole complex of issues here to do with: **(a)** the general point and purpose of education; **(b)** down-to-earth practical objections; and **(c)** the wider issue of how one might engage with such a task. The central part of this work is, in effect, given over to issues surrounding **(c)** above: how schools might get to get to grips with this area of work more effectively; and I suggest that we need a fresh approach to the principal dimensions of human learning that schools are expected to address - something which has implications for both theory and practice. In the remainder of this chapter, however, I look at some of the issues implicit in **(a)** and **(b)** to do with whether education should be attempting to take on such a role in the first place. So far I have set the scene for, but skirted around, facing this issue directly.

 (a) On the face of it such a task is in accordance with a powerful impulse running through educational philosophy and which one can trace back at least to the time of Plato and Aristotle. This is well reflected in John Dewey's words that "what the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children"(1900a, p.7) which implies (as Plato and Aristotle saw) that education should indeed have broad aims, and these will include promoting the moral and social development of its charges. In fact, as I have indicated, when Government bodies have formulated explicit aims for their national systems of education, these are often replete with well-meaning statements encompassing the widest of objectives.   The National Curriculum in England (2014) is typical (and fairly traditional) in this respect, desirous as it is of promoting the "spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils"….and preparing them "for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life" (para. 2.1). As one means of working towards this end, it continues: "All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice" (para. 2.5) More recently, in designating the topics which should be included within the latter, the Department for Education (2019) has issued more substantial guidance for 'Relationships and Sex Education' and for 'Character Education'. The latter makes clear that schools should actively promote "discipline and good behaviour", "consideration and respect towards others" (para10),

and 'virtues' such as "courage, honesty, generosity, integrity, humility, and a sense of justice" (para.14).

In any such list of desirable qualities one might quibble or call for clarification at some points, but the general impulse to have a positive effect on the wider character and moral development of children is clear, and it is one which figures strongly throughout the world of education today.

However, there have been dissenters. Some of those who have reservations about schools having such a wide brief are concerned that this might give them free rein to 'indoctrinate' their students into a particular set of attitudes or beliefs which are, in reality, one-sided or partisan. Back in 1996 McLaughlin, for example, voiced concerns about attempts to educate the 'whole child' because this might imply promoting some substantive or 'thick' set of values – something which could not be justified in the sort of pluralist society in which we were now living where diversity was to be respected.

At points in this study, particularly in chapters 5 to 7, the issues raised are certainly relevant to the whole question of what sort of values or ideals one should expect schools to promote while having due regard to cultural difference. But since a full discussion of this controversial area would require more extended treatment than I can give here, below I will just indicate the line of approach which informs much of my thinking on this subject.

In a climate in which former social norms have broken down, leading to a general loss of moral confidence, there is always a danger of losing sight of the fact that, as Kristjansson has put it:

> Human beings wherever they live share roughly the same psychological
> make-up and a propensity to similar moral virtues and vices (2004 p.209).

Given this, there is likely to be a substantial layer of basic values which, on the one hand, are needed to underpin and sustain secure and harmonious social interaction in any society, and, on the other hand, will tend to underlie and contribute to the healthy

psychological development of the individual[4]. Further, such values appear to be called for at a level of our engagement with the world which is more basic and universal than can be accounted for solely by social or cultural differences, although the latter may influence, inform and colour them. In so far as such value-laden qualities (I am here talking about such basic 'virtues' as fairness, self-control, patience, and courage) appear to be central to our everyday social intercourse and to the psychological health of the individual, and in so far as one is trying to foster such qualities in education, one will inevitably be dealing in a real sense with the 'whole child'. It may not be the whole child in the sense that such basic qualities may not supply a set of more particular ideals or amount to a comprehensive philosophy of life. But just in dealing with such fundamental life-preserving and life-enhancing values one will inevitably be engaging a broad rather than narrow spectrum of the individual's basic capacities.

(b) But some of those who are critical of schools' attempts to take on such a wide brief have more practical objections. Among them has been Chris Woodhead in Britain who, reflecting on the many initiatives which were being introduced in this area, came to the conclusion that the whole enterprise was basically misguided. It is one which:

> wants teachers to save the world. As a view of education this is both absurdly grandiose and dangerously diminishing. Grandiose because utopian goals can never be realized, and diminishing because it hammers one more nail into the conception of the teacher as an authority in a particular subject whose job it is to teach it (2001).

In other words, the idea seems to be, we are in danger of saddling education with an impossibly grandiose task, and will end-up diffusing effort in a multitude of directions, doing nothing very well in any one (cf. Tooley 2000).

Here a strong case can be made for the view that, if the fabric of society at large is coming apart, there needs to be a wider regeneration of 'civil society' – a renewal of a sense of community and social responsibility more generally. Without this, is it not asking too much of schools to cope with the results of this wider breakdown? On this point some of those who advocate re-creating a more 'communitarian' dimension to

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[4] This is a position which Randall Curren (2017), among others, has argued for, drawing on a tradition of moral realism together with more recent work which appears to show that there are some basic psychological needs which are universal. He concludes that one can find a rational basis for a common morality "in the necessities of wellbeing entailed by human nature …. and general aspects of the human condition". (p.27)

our public life might be inclined to agree. And such a state of affairs may well represent the most desirable scenario. In fact over the past twenty-five years or so in the West, communitarian perspectives *have* come more to the fore, there has been a questioning of the 'atomistic' conception of the individual, and of any impulse for individual self-fulfilment outside of wider "horizons of significance" (Taylor 1992, p.35ff). However, any ultimate re-balancing in this respect has, it seems, yet to work itself out in public policy terms, and such a fundamental issue tends to get bogged down very easily in the intricate convolutions of practical politics.

In the meantime, however, while looking for a more favourable social climate in which to operate, one cannot escape the fact that schools are, in a very real sense, landed with and find themselves 'fielding' the problems resulting from this breakdown of the wider social fabric; and are often struggling to cope. In these circumstances, one can ask whether it is a practical possibility for them to give up on this area and retreat to a sort of Woodheadian position, particularly when a child's academic work may be drastically affected by a deficit in his or her social and moral development.

The case for a positive response

To appreciate something of the thorny problems that schools face in this area, but at the same time to grasp that they are not necessarily engaged in a lost cause or up against totally insuperable odds, perhaps we should look at three overlapping groups of children who, in their own way will be making demands on, and posing problems for the system.

Firstly, to amplify what I have already alluded to, at one end of the scale, if a child is lacking a certain level of moral or social awareness, teachers cannot just set this on one side and concentrate on technical skills or academic learning, because the lack of progress in such basic areas of the personality's development may well affect the child's attitudes across the board and disrupt learning generally.

Moving on from this growing number of children (who are often considered to have 'special needs') one encounters what is, perhaps, a larger number whose moral and social attitudes may not interfere drastically with their academic progress, but who are inclined to exhibit a sort of moral or social blindness in certain respects. They may, for instance, be flippant, ill mannered, complacent, or bad-tempered, etc. Here, while their

conventional learning may not be greatly affected, the wider philosophical impulse already mentioned comes into play. If one encounters a child who lacks trust, for example, or is inclined to be intolerant and hardhearted, or another who is lacking in the courage to break new ground or stand up for what (s)he senses is right, can one be said to be engaging in the 'education' of that child in any real sense if those aspects of a youngster's life are ignored? (And teachers *are* brought face to face with such attitudes in numerous settings – in group projects demanding give and take, in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, in sport, in disciplinary situations, in more formal 'emotional literacy' or 'values education' sessions, etc.)

And moving on from the latter group, we encounter young people who are attempting, consciously or not, to form their own social and moral identity (something which appears to be at the heart of the formation of identity itself) in a new, more 'liquid' and relatively unstable form of modernity, often without the comfort of traditional social structures and preordained roles. They can see and experience a wide range of life-styles and belief systems and there may be much uncertainty about values beyond the basic physical pleasures and material comforts I referred to earlier. If, as one writer has put it:

> it is existentialism that shows us the ruins of our former security, of the …. standards that make us feel safe and sheltered [and]understands human beings as being thrown into a world of insecurity unshielded from the misery of their own limitations and mortality, seeking recourse [only] in themselves (Steinbauer 2001, p.6),

then this sort of existentialist 'angst' seems to be an growing feature in the lives of the young. In these circumstances is it not the educator's duty to do what he or she can to assist such youngsters, who may be actively searching for values they can identify with?

Looking at actual groups of children like this in their down-to-earth situations rather than in the abstract, what may have seemed a hopeless task for education in the face of adverse social conditions begins to appear more open and amenable – if not to unimpeded progress, at least to some positive educational input. When one encounters children in their particular circumstances actually living through, and frequently struggling with, their own personal predicaments, it does appear more possible that something meaningful might be done: that some constructive provision could be made

for each of the three groups identified above. In fact in chapter 6 I delineate what appear to be the principal settings within the school where such work can gain a strong foothold and be most productive.

As regards what is happening in the rest of society, while one might like to see progress on many fronts, education is itself one of the many fronts on which one can work. That it is possible to do something worthwhile may appear all the more plausible now that there has been a general move away from seeing society as a block-like, more monolithic system where everything tends to be a reflection of an all-determining base, and towards seeing it rather as a complex and plural organism consisting of different parts jostling together, each of which tends to develop its own dynamic which can influence, as well be influenced by, the other parts. (See, for example, Williams (1976), Habermas (in Dews (1986, and Blacker (2001) on this). One might add that it may even be easier to influence and change things in education than in certain other social settings such as the workplace or family.

If, then, education can justifiably claim such a wide brief, and while faced by social forces which are not always favourable, is not totally vulnerable and helpless, schools should surely be making a serious and sustained effort to do what they can, even where, perhaps especially where, much of the rest of society is failing. It can be argued that, amidst these difficulties, it is, if anything, *more* incumbent on schools to face up to such a task and take steps to 'get down to business' rather than, for instance, being equivocal in view of what is happening in society, or floundering about in a veritable sea of different initiatives and perhaps seizing on a handful in the hope that something will work..

The problem of finding a way forward

However, while it may be easy to make such a statement of principle, in practice doubts may remain about just how to proceed. As I have indicated, one comes across a multitude of ambitious sounding statements of intent both in national policy documents and at the level of the individual school. In fact one sometimes has the impression that, internationally, those engaged in this sort of exercise believe that the main task is to formulate such objectives, and then, once they are adopted as part of an educational policy, the rest will somehow follow automatically.

But what will it take for education to 'get down to business' in this area? What approaches are most effective? Can schools in practice make a meaningful contribution? In the end, will it all amount to much more than gesturing in the right direction in order to appease public expectations? As I have pointed out, there has been an abundance of initiatives for well over forty years now in the Western world, but are we any further forward? The whole field still seems to be shrouded in a haze of uncertainty, if not confusion.

In the next chapters I will take a look at how the very way educational provision tends to be organized and structured at present may in itself be leaving schools ill-equipped to take on this area of work effectively. For, whatever the expressed aims of the overall policy, the way things come to be broken down for pedagogic purposes and then put together to form an overall curriculum package, may in itself be having an effect which seriously detracts from the broad educational aims that are so readily espoused. It is suggested that a rather different approach to the way in which we go about formulating and schematizing the main strands of educational provision may be called for if work in this area is not to end up continually squeezed and marginalized – in effect a hostage to forces inherent in the very way the system as a whole is set up and operates.

But to appreciate this, we need to take a hard look at the present pattern of educational provision. How has it come to be as it is? In the following chapter, I will try to tease out the some of the basic forces which have given rise to, and are still animating, the sort of system commonly in operation.

2

The shaping of education in schools: what happens to the best of intentions.

If one looks through many of the documents which, over the past twenty or so years, have set out a policy for schools in the area of moral, social, character or civic education, they have tended to convey a tone of plausibly authoritative optimism, with an implicit message something like the following: "Yes, we face serious problems both of attitude and behaviour on the part of a growing number of our young people, and we need to put in place measures which will address the problem. This we will do with the following sort of programme." There follows a breakdown of the task into more particular aspects, with suggested themes or modules, which may amount to an overall package so apparently impressive and wide-ranging in scope that it might seem that, once implemented, it is bound to have the desired effect and bring about change.

However the larger (and often constraining) context here is that the elements of such a programme will generally be tacked onto, or inserted into some larger pattern of educational provision which naturally has a dynamic of its own; a dynamic moreover which normally tends to pull away and detract from, if not actually to subvert, these additional inputs - whether the latter are introduced as 'add-ons' to supplement the rest of the curriculum or put into operation in a more integrated manner (for instance through a cross-curricular or 'whole-school' approach). As I hope to substantiate in this and the next chapter, the way the curriculum in general is structured, and the various elements come to be set within it, tends to ensure that, in practice, educational endeavour is overwhelmingly geared in a certain way, with the result that whatever lies outside the main direction of this thrust will tend to be pushed to the sidelines and left struggling for space and recognition.

To understand just what is going on we need to remind ourselves of some of the fundamental impulses which underlie the present pattern of provision and look at how in practice they have taken flesh and evolved into an overall curriculum structure. Getting back to such basic ground, besides enabling us to appreciate that the latest

fashionable initiative may sometimes be no more than a rediscovery or reworking of a longstanding leitmotif, may serve to shed some interesting light on just how the present system is, as it were, 'cast', and perhaps bring out something of its deep-seated but problematic emphases.

There is no attempt here to present a comprehensive account of the character of educational provision on a global scale. That would be impossible in a short space in view of the variation between systems. But I think one can discern three basic impulses giving rise to corresponding areas of provision which seem inevitably to manifest themselves as different educational systems grapple with what may appear to be problems of their own, but which - given the circumstances leading to the very institution of schooling, the tension between human commonalities and individual uniqueness, and the international character of much educational theory - turn out to be more common and universal.

These basic 'areas' or 'strands' of provision (as I shall call them) may appear to some to be so obvious as to be hardly worth mentioning. For others, however, preoccupied with the particular problems they are faced with in education (or educational research) on a daily basis, it may be easy to lose sight of the cardinal concerns that lie behind the overall pattern of provision they are caught up in.

I will describe each strand, and then, to show something of its full scope, and to avoid the charge I am presenting a picture of educational provision that is far too simplistic, I shall point out there are three main forms of approach (which I shall generally refer to as 'orientations') which can colour them. If the fundamental areas or strands seem to arise from the very nature of educational endeavour given the kind of universal factors just mentioned, the actual form they take, the particular twist or bias they can be given, will depend more on the wider general aims, underlying philosophy, or indeed, the latest official directive which is brought to bear on them, and this is clearly more subject to the shifting sands of fashion.

I am not claiming that this is the only way to analyse educational provision as we find it, but that for present purposes it does give us a useful general perspective from which to view the overall scene. It may be easy to forget that beneath the rich and prodigious

diversity of perspectives that have arisen in educational theory over the years there are some stubbornly constant issues which, it seems, always need to be recognised and addressed.

To return to the basic impulses giving rise to particular areas of provision we find:

1: a concern to provide a basic 'general education' (allgemeine Bildung)

This is in practice largely concerned with a crucial aspect of human development and flourishing which one might call the 'education of the mind' or to borrow the words of Alan Ryan "a general intellectual training" (1999, p.86) Here one is particularly concerned to develop the child's powers of understanding and rational thought as one finds these exemplified in various fields of human endeavour. As for what these 'various fields' are, it is generally felt that the child should have access to what Eisner (1975 p.245) has called "the major intellectual and artistic disciplines that have historically been part of our culture". In fact he has stated that "becoming educated requires an understanding and appreciation of the ideas and methods which these various fields provide". (I acknowledge that this may not take into account all that 'general education' as a term can embrace, but at any rate in the English speaking world it is often used in this sense, and is, I think, justified by what it normally tends to cover in everyday parlance. Certainly it has been used in this sense early on in England in official reports by, for instance, Morant in1904 and Hadow in 1926 (both concerned with the 'secondary' (11plus) age group, and both documented in Maclure (1973)).

A typical impulse here is well expressed in the words of a carpenter interviewed in 1861 by a Commissioner of Education in England on the subject of what he would like his son to be taught:

> 'Reading, writing, ciphering, drawing, algebra, Euclid, - anything he can learn until he knows his trade.' 'But', I said, 'what can be the use of such knowledge to your son if he means to be a working man?' To which the man answered......'How do I know, Sir, what my son may become?' (in Hamilton 1990, p.57).

At the risk of begging some questions, perhaps one could sum up the general point by saying that one is attempting to equip the student with the knowledge and skills which

will enable him or her to make better sense of the world around them and to 'get on' in it.

In fact this strand of provision operates at two main levels. On the one hand, where there are severe financial constraints as is often the case in developing countries, effort may be confined largely to providing 'the basics': a platform of literacy, numeracy, and perhaps a grounding in some other subjects, giving some basic general knowledge and mental training which could assist the child as (s)he copes with the immediate environment. Laurie Lee, remembering his schooling in England in the 1920s has given us a picture of this type of elementary education:

> Our village school was poor and crowded, but in the end I relished
> it……We learned nothing abstract or tenuous there – just simple
> patterns of facts, portable tricks of calculation, no more than was needed
> to measure a shed, write out a bill, [or] read a swine-disease warning.
> (Lee, 1962 p.53; cf. Wajid 2006).

On the other hand, in its more developed form, this impulse tends towards a more extensive general (or, one might say 'liberal') education whereby the student is initiated more deeply into a range of different fields in a systematic way. The aim here is to extend the child's horizons beyond the parochialism of the immediate environment so that (s)he can gain an understanding of the more advanced scientific, literary and artistic achievements of humankind. Perhaps the original list of ten 'foundation subjects' which formed the cornerstone of the National Curriculum for England and Wales introduced in 1988 provides us with a good example of this more extended programme. These subjects, which still form the basis around which the present National Curriculum (albeit with the addition of citizenship and computing) is built, were: English, maths, science, a foreign language, design and technology, history, geography, art and design, music, and physical education (Education Reform Act, 1988).

This, both in its breadth and in the particular fields it attempts to cover, appears to be a typical blueprint for a 'general education' in its more extended form. In fact its constituents are very similar to those forming the bulk of the curriculum in operation in

most other relatively affluent nations. *At its best* it appears that such an education can indeed transform the lives of those it affects, as one writer has observed:

> While researching these schools [in the ghettoes of New York City or in Kentucky] I heard stories of young people who had grown up in the worst conditions imaginable winding up as teachers, lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, writers and musicians, in large part because the teachers took it upon themselves to wage a Faustian battle for their souls and minds – and won (Klein, 1999 p.59).

As I have suggested, however, this element of provision (along with the others I will draw attention to) can be orientated in different ways, which I will discuss under *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)* below.

(a) The attitude taken by the nineteenth century craftsman above, although not totally clear, can certainly be taken to imply what has been variously termed a *'humanist'*, *'liberal education'* or *'liberationist'* approach to this area. This has for nearly 150 years been regarded by significant figures as the finest ideal to which education could aspire; and in a tradition going back to the ancient Greeks, as providing the only sort of education that was fit for a 'free man' – that is, one who is neither a slave as such, nor otherwise constrained by circumstances to a life that was not his own. Here the intention is to provide the student with a sound basis for answering the age-old question: What sort of life should I lead? Joseph Raz appeared to be adopting such a 'liberationist' stance in arguing that we have a duty to "help in creating the various capacities required for the conduct of an autonomous life" (Raz 1986, p.408). More recently Clare Jarmy (2019), commenting Michael Young's notion of, 'powerful knowledge' (as oppose to 'knowledge of the powerful'), has suggested that such an approach can, indeed, unlock doors to understanding and enable students to interact with our inheritance in a positive way.

In what seems to have become the mainstream version of this approach it is understood that the child should be initiated into (or at least meaningfully introduced to) a range of different fields systematically in order to develop the mind as fully as possible. In fact the carefully analysed and structured approach to the basic ways in which we

understand the world of the kind that has been advocated by Hirst (1965) with his seven (later eight) 'forms of knowledge' became quite widely accepted for a time in the West in the latter half of the twentieth century. It was argued that each of these 'forms of knowledge' or 'ways of understanding' etc, would generate its own window of understanding on the world, along with its own particular cluster of intellectual skills, and so certainly needed to be experienced by the student. (Eisner (op.cit.) refers to "Hutchins, Bestor, Koerner, Phenix, and others" who expressed similar ideas.)

However, while there has been this concern for a carefully analysed and structured approach to the major elements of knowledge felt to be necessary here, some would not want to rule out a less structured and formulaic route to the same end. If the aim is, in the words of Alan Ryan, to:

> give students a chance to discern what humanity had been up to for the past several millennia and to stock the mind with the skills and knowledge to enable them to make sense of their lives (Ryan 2003),

then one can imagine that there might be looser and more flexible ways of working towards this. There is, for example, the whole question of the extent to which intellectual or other skills are transferable which could mean that, in going into any one field or form of knowledge in any depth, one might acquire certain abilities or skills which were at the heart of them all. (This is essentially the position taken by Elliott (1975) against Hirst.)

Finally, in order to distinguish this whole 'liberal' orientation adequately from the other two I shall discuss, we should note that there are two further general expectations which those working towards this end usually have.

The first is that it is hoped that the student will take an interest in whatever is studied *for its own sake*, for the intrinsic satisfactions to be gained through mastering a particular field which (at any rate at the time of such an experience) may have little to do with future utilitarian or instrumental, including financial, considerations. Soltis gives a strong flavour of this sort of ideal:

> The liberationist teacher is one for whom the subject is first love, and is a model for his or her students of how one thinks and feels when totally engrossed in a form of knowledge….[or] engaged in a joint enterprise which has its own internal standards of excellence(1993, p.157).

The second is that the student, through becoming acquainted with the more enduring and significant concerns which are part of the wider cultural heritage, will eventually be able to bring a discerning and critical perspective to bear both on human life and the world in general. Reflecting Oakeshott's view that:

> the business of the teacher is to release his pupils from servitude to the current dominant …images, ideas, beliefs, and even skills….by making available to him that which approximates more closely to the whole of his inheritance (1967 p.161-2),

Abbs (1993) has argued powerfully that the past has the potential to liberate us from the limitations of the present, pointing that when we come into contact with the works of great literary and artistic figures:

> we find ourselves and our daily ephemeral assumptions challenged by the power of their individual and collective voices.

One might note that both these expectations are clearly present in Matthew Arnold's expansive idea of a *liberal* type of education in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869); but neither is necessarily implied by the notion of a *general* education as such.

The other two main orientations, which are probably easier to understand and do justice to in summary form, tend to polarise into mutually opposing positions:

(b) On the one hand, there is what one might think of primarily as an *'instrumental'* approach – which has also been called *'utilitarian'*, *'executive'*, *'mimetic'* or *'technicist'*. Here, learning is geared more directly towards enabling students to fit into the social and economic system of society by meeting its need for certain types of skill or other professional qualifications, particularly those that are felt to be necessary to economic success in a globally competitive market place. Again, this sort of tradition, like the previous one, is longstanding, going back at least to the nineteenth century

when , as Raymond Williams has pointed out, the 'industrial trainers' were lobbying for this approach in schools (Williams 1961, pp.161-2).

Compared with *(a)* above, the purpose of a general education here is not primarily to educate the mind in the broadest sense, but to provide the skills and qualifications that are felt to be necessary both for a successful working life and to aid the nation's economy. A corollary of this approach is that as nations become increasingly preoccupied with how their own educational systems appear to be performing in comparison with their competitors, with "rates and levels of student achievement reported and compared world-wide" (Soltis, op cit.p.153), education becomes increasingly geared to the setting and attainment of specific targets for particular groups of students to meet, with the consequent danger that the teacher becomes more like a mere technician applying the 'best proven' means to achieve whatever the target is. In fact at its extreme, as Soltis (p.154) has pointed out, the school dominated by this sort of 'executive' style of teaching can take on a factory-like aspect, "seeking to increase the productivity and quality of its products". Commenting on the increasing prevalence of this tendency in education, another commentator has stated that:

> We seem to have travelled from the purist view of education as a public
> interest whose objectives should be insulated from particular pressures
> and lobbies, to a view in which the educational system is regarded as a
> servant of business to be colonized by business values and needs…
> (Hutton 2001).

As John White (2017. p.9) has argued, citing Joseph Fishkin, this approach:

> [C]ontributes to a narrowing of perspectives about what constitutes
> human flourishing, putting huge emphasis on life as a single race in
> which it is in one's interests to do as well as possible.

Similarly Deresiewicz has pointed to the danger that, given this exclusive notion of excellence, behind a polite and pleasant façade, even students at elite universities in the USA tend to lose any authentic sense of inner purpose, becoming little more than "excellent sheep" (2014 ch.1).

(c) On the other hand, perhaps more directly opposed to *(b)* is the third main orientation I wish to draw attention to. This can be broadly described as '*child-centred'*, but has also been referred to as *'developmentalist', 'progressive'*, or

'*therapeutic*'; while a more recent umbrella term often used, rightly or wrongly, in this sense is *'constructivist'*. Here, there is often an emphasis on using 'self-discovery' methods, a concern to 'facilitate' rather than direct or impose learning, and generally this approach would give greater scope for children to develop and build on their own particular strengths and interests. Like the other two, this orientation has a similar long history, going back to Montaigne and Rousseau although, as Soltis has pointed out, it has probably become less popular and prevalent in schools since the 1980s than at certain earlier periods in the 20th century.(op.cit. pp.154and 157) Elaborating on the general approach, he explains that:

> To the teacher as therapist, the student's authenticity is not achieved by acquiring remote knowledge that is unrelated to the quest for personal meaning and identity….[This] separates the student from himself by forcing him to attend, not to his own feelings, thoughts, and ideas, but to the sterile thoughts, images, and attitudes of others (pp.154-5).

And as if to sum up, he writes, perhaps at the risk of oversimplifying, that for such an approach, "content…..is secondary to the goal of developing individuals….." (p.155).

In fact there are a number of different strains within this overall approach, some of which would be content to use child-centred methods to foster learning which contributes to a broad 'general education' discussed above - for example Rousseau (at least on some interpretations of him), John Dewey, and Steiner's Waldorf schools. One could argue that a later version of this in the English–speaking world has been the vogue for discovering and then exploiting a student's individual 'learning style' – based in part on the apparent implications of Howard Gardner's work (1983) on different types of 'intelligence'. For others, this child-centred approach sits uneasily with any more extensive form of general education, since it implies more scope for the child to express and follow up his or her own interests than would normally be permitted by the latter. In practice, however, while this whole impulse can be in fruitful tension with, and may act to modify, a fully prescriptive curriculum, it is generally accepted that the children should not just be left to pursue whatever existing interests they may already have, but should at least be *introduced* to a range of other possibilities which, left to their own devices, they may not become acquainted with.

So much for these different 'orientations' as they might operate within the overall framework of a 'general education'. There is obviously much more that could be said for and against each one. There is also the question of the extent to which in reality they are bound to conflict, or depending on the particular teaching situation, can be drawn on to complement each in a mutually supportive way. However all I am concerned to do here is to illustrate something of the potential scope and complexity inherent within each of the main strands of provision I will be describing. Having, I hope, illustrated this within the general education area, I will now pass on to two other main strands, assuming that the reader will understand the basic thrust of things if I refer to, but do not dwell so much on, these different orientations in what follows.

2 : a recognition that some degree of individual specialization is desirable

If there is felt to be a need for a fairly broad 'general education' as described above, there is also universally, it seems, the expectation that the students will want to specialize at least to some extent at some point in their educational careers. The general consensus here seems to be still much as a set of regulations for British secondary schools put it back in 1904:

> Specialization in any direction should only begin after the general
> education has been carried to a point at which the habit of exercising all
> the faculties has been formed…. [and] a certain solid basis for life has
> been laid. (Morant quoted in Maclure, 1973, p.157).

In Britain and other more affluent countries this usually takes place at or around the age of fourteen. In France, for example, some pupils are placed into vocationally orientated classes, while others prepare for the more prestigious lycee or professional training institutions at this age. In Italy at the time of writing such a division takes place at thirteen.

As this implies, in some countries, particularly in Europe and the Far East, such specialist provision has crystallized into a settled tradition of separate vocational and academic tracks. In others, for instance Britain and the USA, the situation is more

complex with many recent initiatives and experiments in this area. Generally, however, any individual specialization tends to operate within a framework that still has strong elements of a wider general education in it, since the dangers that can result from one-sided and unbalanced development, or from turning out students who will be fit for nothing but "factory fodder", are usually recognized. Thus, even after the age of fourteen, any more specialist elements tend to be kept within bounds, with students still expected to study a range of more general subjects, although if they are on a vocational courses this may well be in less depth than their more academic peers.

Again, one can discern the same types of 'orientation' at work in this area. Most readily associated with it, in fact sometimes confused with it, is the child-centred approach, given that a major feature of the latter is to allow scope for the particular aptitude or bent of the individual student. However a more utilitarian or instrumental approach, which would focus rather on producing students with the skills or qualifications that meet the needs of industry is perhaps more likely here. As for the more 'liberal' or 'liberationist' orientation, the situation is more complex and the possibilities may not be so obvious. In view of this I will look briefly at three lines of approach which might show something of how this orientation *can* be brought to bear.

Firstly, to expand on what was said about the need for a more 'general' input to continue as some specialization takes place: if, for some, the prime motivation here is basically humanist – to prevent students becoming mere factory fodder – for others such an 'enlightened' approach is likely to bring benefits to the world of trade and industry itself. They point out, for instance, that a skilled workforce with broad abilities will be able to contribute much more to a firm's development and productivity than one with a narrowly focussed, task driven and drone-like mentality (cf. Morris 2005). Alan Ryan has argued a strong case here. After pointing out that vocational skills date fast and may be best learned on the job, he continues:

> The broader ability to think analytically doesn't date; it improves with
> use, and it is in short supply. It's an ability best acquired by trying it out
> on historical, political and economic data…. The best way to gain an
> ability to think cogently is to write a lot, and on different subjects:
> historical, literary, philosophical (Ryan, 2003).

Secondly, and perhaps more radically, one notes that for Dewey, the content of the curriculum, whether specialist or not, always mattered less than the mode of learning. Vocational subjects, he felt, could be taught in such a way that they themselves could contribute to a liberal education (1916, p.196ff). The implication here is that if, for example, one encouraged a problem-solving and experimental approach in a particular field and in this way fostered the development of an open and enquiring mind, this might in itself enable something of what Ryan is after to take root within, rather than outside of, this more specialist strand of provision.

Finally, Dewey reminds us that a yet wider dimension of this area of provision might also be considered. He had a critical rather than docile approach to the whole world of industry and commerce, seeing aspects of the industrial machine, even the late 1920s, developing in a way which could threaten the future wellbeing of society (1927, p.98). Obviously, taking this on board, while it might be in the best traditions of a liberal education, might be looked at askance by certain sections of industry.

I now pass on to the third main area of provision which stems from:

3*:* a recognition of the need to provide for the child's wider personal development

As I mentioned previously, it is generally felt that developing particular intellectual capacities or specialist skills without paying attention to the child's wider emotional, social and moral development would be to leave him or her with an education that is incomplete in important respects. Perhaps it is Kant who has stated the central point here most clearly when he wrote that:

> Intelligence, wit, judgement, and any other talents of the mind we care to
> name …..are without doubt good and desirable in many respects; but
> they can also be extremely bad and hurtful when the will which has to
> make use of these gifts …. is not good (Kant, 1947/1958 p.59).

(He goes on to say that it is this basic 'quality' of the will that we refer to principally when we talk of a person's 'character'.) It may be that today we would be more inclined to see this in terms of a person's basic disposition, spirit or heart rather than

'will'; but the underlying point remains. However we see it – and that is indeed a problematic issue which I explore further in chapter 4 – this underlying disposition or quality of being which can affect one's whole approach to life, appears to be crucial both to a person's very identity and the development of any sense of humanity.

As I have indicated, the importance of making provision for these wider aspects of the child's development has long been recognised by educational thinkers, and generally national systems of education have attempted to build this in as a specific part of their brief. In Britain, for example, in a preface to the 'Elementary Code' of 1904, we read that:

> The purpose of the Public Elementary School is to form and strengthen the character…to develop the intelligence of the children……and to… [assist] both boys and girls, according to their different needs, to fit themselves …for the work of life (Maclure, op cit. p.154).

As far as I am aware, this is the first time that the three strands of provision as I have described them are clearly prefigured in an official publication. (In the Hadow report of 1926 there seems to have been a rather confused attempt to revise them, but "the forming and strengthening of character" was still seen as one of the "three great ends of human life ….which we trust that our scheme will help to promote" (ibid p.182)). The preface above also points out that there is a whole raft of measures schools and teachers can put in place to "lay the foundations of (good) conduct" many of which lie outside the formally taught curriculum (p.155: my bracketed insertion). Such an impulse has been more recently reflected in those National Curriculum publications (mentioned in the previous chapter) which give guidance to schools on PSHE provision along with 'Sex and Relationship Education' and 'Character Education'. Other countries too have normally regarded some such provision as an essential part of their educational remit, and one can trace a long history of sometimes patchy and intermittent attempts to get to grips with this area in, for instance, the USA, France, and Japan. More recently, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, there appears to have been a revival of interest here on a world-wide scale, with many countries seeing a need to make more effective educational provision due mainly, it seems, to the breakdown of more traditional patterns of socialisation in society at large. What has been written of China, that:

> The many rapid changes in the socio-economic aspects of Chinese
> society have become a challenge to the traditional value system, and this
> has led to a rather widespread disorientation in the matter of morals
> (Maosen, 2001 p.400 (cf. Beech/Wuhan 2015, p.37))

could equally well apply to nations on every continent now.

As for the three orientations here, the 'liberationist' would, ideally, attempt to provide a sound basis of knowledge and experience so that the students would be given the means to make their own decisions in life. Just how this is achieved, however, just what sort of knowledge and/or experience it is feasible to provide in the educational setting, is far from being a settled matter.

A more utilitarian or instrumental approach, on the other hand, would be more inclined to emphasize the need to renew (or re-create) the 'social capital' (the norms, customs and attitudes) that society or industry may need in order to sustain itself as a cohesive entity or competitive force. In this case things would be geared towards more socially conformist ends. (This is, in fact, how this area of provision tended to be approached in Europe and the USA in the late 19th and early 20th century)

The third, more 'child-centred' orientation would probably, in the area of moral education, be sympathetic to what has become known as a 'values-clarification' approach (Simon et al. 1972) which in theory allows the child to develop and clarify his or her own system of values, with no set direction laid down or end result prescribed. In principle there would be greater scope for self-expression and individual experiment.

The reality on the ground

Having looked at these basic educational impulses and the forms they can take, it is clear that the task of catering for the wider social and moral development of the child has (along with providing a broad 'general education' and allowing for some degree of specialization) long been one of the main concerns of education. But while these impulses *as* impulses, might start off, if not exactly equal, as complementary and mutually supporting cornerstones of educational provision, if one looks at what happens when they become translated into actual curriculum provision and take on

form and substance, any such rough equivalence seems to have completely disappeared - with this third area virtually marginalised, while the others have mushroomed out and become the main focus of attention.

Here, we need to look at some of the factors involved in this process, which appears to be a world-wide phenomenon. This may enable us to appreciate just how entrenched and routine this way of patterning provision has become, and at the same time allow us to see that the whole imposing edifice, if it has deep-seated and time-honoured roots, can also be viewed as historically contingent and ultimately problematic.

I shall look at two critical factors currently affecting the situation (**i** and **ii**) below, and then, to get more to the heart of the matter, suggest that in reality these are just the recent manifestations or symptoms of a more fundamental pedagogic trend – one which has deep roots in the European psyche, but which has now taken hold more widely across the world.

(i) The first is a matter which inevitably seems to confront one as soon as one looks at the state and status of the subject matter in these different areas of educational endeavour. Within the first two areas of provision that I have portrayed teachers can, by and large, stay on the apparently well-trodden and secure ground represented by well-defined 'subjects' organized into well structured systems of knowledge or skill. This generally means that the material is (or can be) graded into different levels of complexity or difficulty in a hierarchical way for the student to master; progress can be readily monitored by tests and examination; and the teacher can gauge the success of his or her own methods in terms of such well recognized criteria. Further, there are, usually, well established traditions and bodies of practice within a particular field for practitioners to draw on, and plenty to keep them mentally stimulated (including ongoing debates for and against any particular 'orientation'). Finally such subjects are usually designed to extend the student's horizons beyond the confines of the immediate environment and give an insight into more universal human accomplishments. They are, in this respect, ideal material for the classroom setting, where, removed from the exigencies of everyday life, the mind can, in principal, feel free to open up to new worlds, expanding its horizons in a safe and secure environment.

The tenacious and enduring hold of such subject fields can be gauged by the fact that the original list of the basic 'foundation subjects' laid down for the curriculum in England and Wales in 1988 and 2000 was, as Bramall and White (2000, pp.7-8) have pointed out, not so very different from that prescribed for English secondary schools in 1904; and there has certainly been a long history of schools across the world achieving considerable success with their students in such subject areas. A great deal of prestige obviously attaches to such work - in fact the reputation of a school usually rests on such 'academic achievement'.

Contrast this with the more murky, less well defined, less easily assessed, and more experimental and exploratory nature of provision which seems to go with the territory when it comes to catering for the third main strand of educational endeavour. Here there is no such well established body of practices to draw on; rather, a variety of sometimes conflicting theoretical perspectives and practical initiatives. The situation referred to by Wilson and then Arney (p.7 above) appears to be a constant and longstanding feature of such work. Discussing 'character education' in 2000 for example, Williams et al. listed ten approaches proposed over the previous decade and reported that, at the practical level:

> Only about 5% of current character education programs to date take place in high (i.e. secondary) schools, while 80% focus on elementary age children (2003, p.4).

A few years before, Boyd (1996, p.21) commenting on the general state of 'moral education', wrote of "the flowering of accounts that is remarkable in its diversity" – a diversity that Damon and Gregory attempted to illustrate a little later by way of the following:

> Values clarification, prosocial...skill and negotiation training, Aristotelian ethics,Deweyesque participation in democratic governance, Durkheimian efforts to create orderly school climates, Kohlbergian moral dilemmas and 'just community' procedures, feminist and critical theory reflection sessions, narrative exemplifications of public virtue through literature and history, and in vivo demonstrations of personal virtue through teacher action…(1997, p.120).

These, they pointed out, were all part of the "rich mix" available.

This rather messy scene right across the field can hardly help when it comes to making effective practical provision, and indeed can be reflected in poorly conceived statements of policy from official sources. In Britain, for example, Haydon observed that official statements about the role of PSHE (Personal, Social, and Health Education) in schools were:

> Sometimes almost vacuously broad, sometimes frustratingly specific in giving a list [of requirements] without any underlying rationale (2005, p.10).

In fact one finds numerous more recent comments about the generally poor and uneven state of both PSHE and 'citizenship' in British schools, which might suggest that we are only just beginning (if at all) to remedy the situation as it was in 1996 when it was reported that in teacher education institutions:

> there was no common understanding of what constitutes 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural' development and of the competencies needed by teachers to promote it (Patel 1996).

In these circumstances perhaps one should not be surprised that the first two strands of provision that I have outlined have maintained their considerable hold over educational systems, with the third often struggling to establish itself securely or make much of an impression.

(ii) If the situation regarding the status of subject matter here represents a longstanding problem, more recently another major factor appears to have gained increasing momentum and, coming to dominate the educational scene, to have reinforced this problematic position. Due both to the collapse of more traditional frameworks of value and the general rise of free-market economic systems, increasingly states have seen it not just as an educational priority, but often an overriding one, to create a work force which is capable of competing in the global market place and can meet the demands of the 'knowledge economy'. In the wake of this, a particularly strong form of the instrumental/utilitarian orientation seems to have taken hold, with the curriculum increasingly geared to students gaining the qualifications in academic and technical fields that will, it is hoped, fulfil this purpose.

All of this may ring particular bells in Britain where since the mid 1980s a whole statistical industry has arisen to measure the test and examination results of individual schools whose performances were compared through 'league tables' of such indicators. What Christina Hardyment wrote in 1998 has been echoed in the criticism of numerous commentators ever since.

> Today, academic achievement, vital to success in a globally competitive world, has become the first objective. Primary schools are returning to drilling techniques…. Both they and secondary schools are now measured by success as hot-houses for academic achievement (1998 p.35; cf. Russell, 2005 p.28, Pelletier 2008, and Stuchbery 2015).

More recently the British government's inspection regime appears to be rowing back somewhat from what some might see as the extreme tunnel-vision of this stance (Dorrell (2019). But this general instrumental tendency has already, it seems, spread its tentacles worldwide. From Singapore, for instance, it has been reported that:

> Increasingly, school leaders and teachers are expected to …. us[e] improved educational resources to produce highly skilled and trainable school leavers and citizens for the nation's economic growth in the 21st century (Chew 1998 p.522);

Similarly in China the same sort of stance had been steadily gaining ground. According to Maosen et al. (2004, pp.418-419):

> primary and secondary education has become a tool for school competition, the only bench mark of which are the scores students obtain in the examinations.

In this situation it is, again, hardly surprising that subjects like moral or social education have tended to flounder in spite of official concern. It is true that for some time in the early 2000s China was attempting to reform this whole area of provision; but in 2004 an editorial comment on a series of articles on the situation in that country concluded that:

> Moral education permeates the whole education system, but its success is doubtful….(and)… Reflection on the complexity of current moral education shows that the responsible teacher, deeply committed to the cause, is overburdened by the task (Maosen et al., 2004 pp. 418 and 419).

Further evidence, if needed, that this state of affairs had indeed become prevalent across the world came from a wide-ranging survey of education in 23 countries. One of the themes running through all six volumes of this study was the way education was increasingly becoming viewed as a sort of commodity in a competitive world, promoted, according to one reviewer, "as a means of entering the world of work rather than as a means of developing each person's potential to the full" (Cox, 2000, p.34, reviewing Leceister et al. 2000).

More recently one hears from a variety of sources, including, for instance, Hyman (2017) that a number of countries including Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, and Hong Kong have been attempting to reform either the school curriculum in general and/or the way moral education is approached within it in order to encourage such qualities as creativity, flexibility, responsible decision-making and team work. Generally, the intention is to promote the wider aspects of a child's understanding and development rather than rely so exclusively on a traditional didactic unquestioning approach to subject matter. This, it is felt, too often stifles originality and any personally authentic approach to what is learned. Whether these comparatively new policies will be successful, however, in view of what is often well entrenched practice, remains to be seen.

In general, it seems that many educational systems across the world seem to have been caught between two different sets of expectations which may not be easy to reconcile. On the one hand, there has been widespread concern about the degree to which materialistic consumerism and a preoccupation with 'free-market values' have permeated national cultures, fostering an ethic of individualism and personal gain at the expense of social responsibility and common values. Such attitudes are seen to be eroding the moral and social fabric of society, and, to address this, governments have been paying renewed attention to this third strand of educational provision. At the same time, however, in order to survive in the global marketplace, they are continuing to put pressure on schools to turn out students who can participate and perform well in this competitive world - which implies that they will learn to operate according to its values. And this, on the face of it, goes against the grain of much that their moral education programmes may have be trying to achieve (cf. Bai, 1998; and Ping et al, 2004).

Certainly, at the time of this general strengthening of an instrumental stance there was much comment on this sort of disjunction in England where, at the very time that that Prime Minister had been calling for "a new moral purpose in Britain" (cited in Jones, 1999) and his education secretary was making 'citizenship' a compulsory part of the curriculum, the effect of the government's more general preoccupation with raising academic standards and school league tables meant that in many schools interactive social activities were being "choked off" as the curriculum was narrowed (Skillen, 1997, p.387); another critic pointed out that emotional literacy was "being neglected" while "great emphasis is placed on academic achievement" (Rumbelow, 1999); and yet another that very little time was left for "the crucial business of establishing community awareness and the moral sense, the things parents once used to teach…" (Hardyment, 1998, p.35). This state of affairs has caused similar expressions of concern over the years since. (Compare Okin and Reich (1999, pp.294-5) and Pope (2001) on the same sort of concerns surfacing in the USA; and Dutaut (2018) on the situation more recently in Britain.

The wider sweep of historical forces

So much for the state of affairs as we see it, as it were, confronting us on the ground. If, however, these factors represent the obvious immediate causes of why provision for the wider social and moral development of children remains something of a 'Cinderella' area, we may have to look more deeply into our historical background for the origin of a whole climate of ideas which have, in effect, prepared the ground in which such developments could flourish. And here, once again, it is necessary to go back to the alluring vision, which was stirring in the minds of so many of the leading thinkers around the start of the seventeenth century, of a brave new world which could come into being as a result of setting knowledge at last onto a secure and rational footing.

To enlarge a little on my previous thumbnail sketch in the previous chapter, this new movement sensed the immense possibilities which could be opened up if old frameworks of thinking, largely based on tradition and revered authority, could be discarded, and the intellect was free to operate in a more open, empirical, and

rigorously rational way when seeking to understand the world and the forces at work in it. It is, perhaps, in Bacon's thought that we catch an early (and perhaps startling) glimpse of the full implications of this vision.

Compared to the largely literary/humanist (or 'rhetorical') tradition of education of his day, he wanted more emphasis put on a strictly methodical and logical training for the intellect which could be put to use making detailed observations of natural phenomena and rigorously analysing the resultant data. In a letter to the headmaster of Eton written around 1600, he made the following point:

> As touching the …..seasoning of youth to moral virtues, [the philosophers] handle it; but touching the improvement of the intellectual powers, as of conceit, memory and judgement, they say nothing. (Boyd and King 1968, p.235).

He went on to say that there should be definite exercises for the intellect just as there were (at the time) for the will and body. One of the fruits he expected of such intellectual development was that humankind would, by attending closely to and experimenting with the phenomena of nature, gain power over it. In his ideal society (depicted in 'The Advancement of Learning and the New Atlantis') teams of scientists would work to solve problems in refrigeration, agriculture and longevity; would study light, music, sound and mathematics; and develop furnaces, engines, telescopes, microscopes, submarines and flying machines. By these means, he thought, the 'condition' of man could be substantially improved.

This visionary impulse has, of course, been gathering momentum and working itself out over the centuries ever since. It appears to have been substantially realised through the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, and through the spectacular growth of specialist fields of knowledge of all kinds which has taken place over the last 150 years. In fact the basic impulse here seems to have set the scene for a significant shift of emphasis in the direction of man's quest for knowledge and understanding which, if it is very much in line with what Bacon was calling for in his letter above, has now probably gone beyond what Bacon himself had anticipated or (considering that he still respected the literary tradition) would have thought desirable. The effect of this 'new' way of thinking has been to shift the whole focus of human learning and forward

endeavour away from the tradition going back to Greek and Roman times, (which was as much, if not more, concerned with a person's ethical life – with the promotion of virtue, good conduct, and the attainment of some mastery over a potentially wayward self – as it was with more speculative and technical knowledge) and towards an increasing preoccupation with a mastery over the external world . In fact it could be said that one of the defining features of Western civilisation is the level of scientific knowledge and technical sophistication it has achieved through this sort of 'Baconian turn'.

While this impulse and the methods associated with it have come to dominate much of the mental landscape we inhabit now, there has over the years been some considerable tension between this more scientific approach to things, together with the new knowledge that was emerging as a result, and other apparently less scientific types of knowledge, typically associated with the humanities, which were thought to embody a more traditional kind of wisdom. Jonathan Swift's 'Battle of the Books', published in 1704, depicts a vicious fight between the forces of the old and new learning. (The outcome was indecisive, which may say something about the strength of the debate at the time.) And there have been a succession of respected figures, among them Locke and Pestalozzi who have stressed the importance of the practical and moral dimension in man's education, as against the acquisition of mere knowledge as such, scientific or otherwise. However, with the overwhelming thrust of the age - the sense of where the real possibilities for human progress lay – set in the general direction I have indicated, education could hardly expect to remain immune from this.

Again, it can be argued that, with regard to the radical emancipatory thrust of this movement, there appears to have been some retrenchment for about a hundred years between 1850 and 1950. This was a time when schools were, at any rate on the face of it, very much concerned with inculcating moral catechisms, and fostering 'gentlemanly conduct', etc, (although often, it has to be said, in a rather artless and heavy-handed way: compare the comments of Mill cited in Garforth, 1979, p.148). But once the conditions I described in the last chapter were unleashed, with an apparent breakdown of consensus about values and an increasing inarticulateness about them at the personal level, in the latter half of the 20th century there seems to have been a general loss of confidence in this whole area (cf. Axworthy, 2005 pp.13-14); and this appears to have

been accompanied by a tendency to take refuge in the apparently safe and secure ground offered by a more 'objective' scientific approach to human phenomena in general in the hope of avoiding 'subjective' value judgements and so gaining greater academic respectability.

This is all the more compelling if one bears in mind that the sort of influence I am referring to has been felt less in the actual amount of time devoted to particular subject areas (for instance the sciences as opposed to the humanities), but more in the whole strictly methodical, empirically verifiable 'scientific' approach which has increasingly been brought to bear on subject matter in general (cf.Polanyi (1959), Gadamer (1975 &1979), and Lyotard (1984) on the wider tendency here). But this, if it heightens one's awareness of some of the more patently observable and 'objective' aspects of the material being studied, may, in sharpening that very focus, cause one to neglect other aspects to do with, for example, intimations of meaning and value, which may be intensely illuminating for a particular individual and enlighten a whole way of being – but which are not easily reduced to the objectively measurable and scientifically verifiable. (This is something I will take up again in chapters 3 and 8.)

Coming to terms with this underlying trend

From this perspective one can see that the present rather insecure and uncertain status of this third area of educational provision also reflects a more underlying directional thrust that the Western world has been actively pursuing for the past 400 years - with its face set more towards gaining an understanding of the concrete physical world (and pressing the intellectual tools that have proved so successful there into wider service) rather than to cultivating and breathing new life into any capacity to manage our more personal moral and social life, to promote virtue and a feeling for the common good.

This is, of course, a very sweeping view. I am not seeking to deny that, since humankind is diverse, there will have been many who have had other and sometimes wider interests, including such major figures as Kant, Weber and Husserl who have themselves tried to make sense of the role of this great trend within a larger picture of human life and man's place in it. But it certainly seems to be the case that the main visionary energy during this time, the dream which has excited and inspired countless

self-taught enthusiasts and innovators as well as many of the more formally educated, has been very much to do with realizing this ambitious, down-to-earth, and comparatively novel aspiration – one which has been responsible for so much of the world we find ourselves in today.

Looking at things in this light, we can see that, from a situation some four centuries ago when Bacon was calling for a new type of education to develop a more outward-looking and scientific spirit - while, as regards "the seasoning of youth to moral virtues", this was (by implication) taken care of – we have now come full circle and are facing a situation which seems to be just the reverse, a mirror image, of that which he confronted. One feature of the modern world often commented on is the way our intellectual and technical powers are in danger of running far ahead of our emotional and moral development, with potentially catastrophic consequences. (One could cite a host of warnings here, from Churchill (1932/1990, p.202), through Barrett (1958, p.57) and Lasch (1985, p.222), to Lu Jie (cited in Jianjun 2004, p.607)). In fact it is possible that the very concentration on intellectual and technical skills has been accompanied by a forgetfulness of what it means to "season youth to moral virtues" and a general waning of the moral sense. (One is reminded here of Bergson's complaint that consciousness, in conquering matter, has had to exhaust the best part of its power (1944, p.149)) In these circumstances we might appreciate that there could indeed be a case, if not for completely reversing Bacon's emphasis, at least for reviewing it in the light of the present situation. And perhaps we should become more generally aware of this longstanding directional thrust we have been caught up in, with all its 'pros and cons'. This now constitutes a large part of what Gadamer (1979) has termed our "effective history": a part of our (psychic) heritage we may not be consciously aware of, but which nevertheless can have a considerable effect on a whole way of being.

To return to the perspective of the three strands of educational provision I have outlined: In circumstances where a coherent social fabric is breaking down in many places, and where, in others, powerful forces of globalization threaten existing structures, rather than being content to see this third area continually being , in effect, engulfed by the other two, we may be faced with the need to view it more as the necessary foundation for everything else, and on that basis seek to recover something of its former status. It is reported that Lu Xingwei, commenting on the Chinese scene,

has indeed argued that moral education is, or should be, the *soul* of 21st century education (cited in Maosen 2001, p.399). At any rate, there appears to be a strong case for insisting on the crucial importance of developing our underlying humanity. As Gaita has put it, it "passes through us like a thread through a needle. Everything we do is stitched with its colour" (2000, p.283). And one might add that, as I suggested in the Introduction, the *success* of everything we do can likewise be said to be ultimately dependent on this more basic development.

But if this sets the problems we are facing in a wider historical perspective, and perhaps gives us a better understanding of why things are like they are, it does not take us very far in practical terms. In the face of a continual tendency for this third strand of provision to be virtually engulfed by the other two, it is all very well to make a case for substantially enhancing the status of this area. But after more than 100 years during which we have had systems of public education geared largely to, and judged largely by, attaining good results in the other two fields, is there any generally accepted alternative way of patterning educational provision? How *can* one effect some rebalancing of things in the direction suggested which will allow this area to come more 'into its own' in relation to the other two?

In the next chapter I will have a look at how the very conceptual tools and methodologies that are usually drawn on for constructing the curriculum may be unwittingly acting to perpetuate the existing pattern of things, and will try to establish a sound basis for looking for an alternative.

3

Perspectives on the curriculum: the need for a fresh approach.

I have, I hope, brought into relief some of the primary impulses giving rise to the diversity of educational practice seen in schools on a daily basis; and I have tried to depict what is happening 'before our eyes', so to speak, as the strand of provision concerned with the child's wider social and moral development seems inevitably to get eclipsed and marginalised by the other two - and this in a situation where there seems to be more demand then ever on education to make a meaningful contribution here.

I have also raised the question of whether there appears to be any other way of patterning educational provision which might both counter this tendency and at the same time gain general acceptance. And it is here at the more practical level that one comes up against the real scale of the problem in the form of some deep-rooted habits of thought, virtual built-in assumptions that we seem inevitably to fall into when engaging in the whole business of curriculum construction. But to appreciate this, we need to look more closely at the sort of strategies commonly in use.

It is not as if critiques of the present system have been lacking; nor have there been a dearth of attempts to re-think things by getting back to basic foundations. (Such activity is hardly surprising if we remember that many of the principal subjects which in practice make up the curriculum in most state education systems have, as Bramall and White (2000) have reminded us, remained largely the same for over 100 years, although we appear to be living in a rather different world now.) In Britain, for instance, back in the 70s Bantock put his finger on a fundamental problem which is still a live issue when he suggested that:

> We are faced with a need to find a substitute for the central humanizing
> and civilizing discipline which in the past penetrated so many aspects of
> social and cultural life (1971, p.251).

In fact over the years there have been many who have called, in effect, for an overhaul of "the very structure and context of schooling" (Skillen 1997a, p.375), or "for the

school curriculum to be unpacked and remade" (White 2001-2). Noddings (2002), commenting on the situation in the USA, has stated that "it is obvious that our main educational purpose now is not the moral one of producing caring people but a relentless …..drive for academic adequacy"(p.94). Making what is ultimately a similar point, Pring (2013, p. 188) has called for an urgent re-think of the whole educative task on both sides of the Atlantic to reflect the fact that "There is much more to becoming human than academic success."

Some past suggestions for reform

As for particular suggestions regarding ways of dividing up the vast territory of human learning, knowledge or culture, etc, for curriculum purposes, these too have not been lacking. Among the different schemes suggested over the years one can find breakdowns of knowledge or experience ranging from three to thirteen basic areas. Aristotle (Carr & Kemmis 1986, 32) divided the main disciplines of learning into three: the 'theoretical' (concerned with arriving at certain (or 'scientific') knowledge through rigorous and methodical investigation of phenomena that are relatively stable); the 'productive' (including the arts, crafts, and technical production generally); and the 'practical' (concerned with our moral, social and political lives). Both Schwab (1975) and Walsh (1993, pp.120-1) have reminded us that this is a model which may still have its merits. Moving on, the British educationalist Richard Livingstone suggested four spheres of 'human excellence' as a basis for educational endeavour: the realisation of excellence in one's job or vocation; in the arts; in political and national life; and in the sphere of character formation and human conduct generally (1946 pp.48-49). Broudy, Smith and Burnett had five basic strands in their scheme (in Wheeler 1967, p.68); Phenix (1964) suggested six 'realms of meaning'; Hirst (1965) originally suggested seven 'forms of knowledge' (mathematics, the physical sciences, the human sciences and history, literature and the fine arts, morals, religion, and philosophy); in 1977 the schools' inspectorate in Britain listed eight 'areas of experience' (DES,1977); Skilbeck (1984) proposed nine 'areas of knowledge and experience' (arts and crafts, environmental studies, mathematical skills and reasoning, social/cultural and civic studies, health education, science and technology, communication, moral reasoning/ values and belief systems, work, leisure, and life-style.); while Lawton (1996) suggested nine 'subsystems of culture'. Finally, in official publications of the Department for Education in Britain one finds there has been, in a very *ad hoc* way, a

creeping advance from the eight 'areas of experience' referred to above, to the 12 'subjects' which are on the National Curriculum at the time of writing.

Organising the curriculum in practice

Amid this wealth of perspective (the above is simply illustrative – certainly not comprehensive) one finds that, in practice, two principle ways of organizing the elements of the curriculum seem to stand out, which, although by no means representing every possibility, do serve to illustrate some problematic issues which can arise at the level of implementation, whatever the original scheme.

First there is what Walsh (op.cit.) has called the 'grandly theoretical' approach. Here some underlying factor or principle is selected from which one can see different areas of human learning and achievement radiating out as branching subspecies (for instance, realms of *meaning*, forms of *knowledge*, subsystems of *culture*, etc.) An attempt is then made to analyse, define and enumerate these branching areas based on the way each one seems to form a domain in its own right, with its own concepts, and particular problems etc. The resulting list of areas is used as a basis for constructing what can claim to be a comprehensive system of learning as everything appears to be covered, or at least addressed at some point. It is this 'grand' approach which became most influential, at any rate in Britain, in the latter half of the 20th century given, as Wheeler put it back in 1967,

> the new interest in the structure of knowledge and in those problems of (its) organization…..structure and syntax which confront the investigator (p.71).

One might add that, in view of the rapid growth and complexity of knowledge, any such 'grand' analysis which might reduce it to some manageable order and offer a general overview of things was probably going to be looked at with interest at a time when a rigorously methodical, 'scientific' and rational approach to problems seemed to offer the best way forward for a better world in general.

The other main method of putting things together has been what Walsh termed 'deliberative and pragmatic'. Here a basket of desirable elements is selected on a more

'pragmatic' basis. Skilbeck's nine 'areas of knowledge and experience' above appears to be an example of this. Others may appear more complex and consist of, for instance "a matrix … of life areas, learning processes and learning environments" (Walsh 1993 p.119). However, against the background of the general appeal and widespread influence of the so-called 'grandly theoretical' approach (particularly those influenced by the comprehensive breakdowns of 'knowledge' or 'meaning', etc, that appeared to provide a sound logical basis for a generating a 'broad and balanced' education), in practice the results of these more 'pragmatic' schemes tended to end up looking not so very different in timetable terms from the former, particularly since all state educational systems have been concerned to provide the child, at least initially, with the sort of broad 'general education' that I described in the last chapter. But this is less to the point than the fact that in both cases the result tends to be a wide number of different areas for inclusion in the curriculum, each apparently valid in its own way, and each to be addressed in the name of giving the child an adequate education. The significance of this will become clear shortly.

(Before moving on, to avoid doing a disservice to Walsh, I should mention the third type of scheme that he has drawn attention to. This he calls 'elementary' since it is based on "some set of simple distinctions", which can in some cases be "profoundly archetypical" (pp.120and 123). He himself cites Aristotle's three-fold scheme as a classic example of this, and points out that this elementary type of 'map', can have a "critical and reconstructive power in relation to standard curricula and standard cultural assumptions" (p.120). In other words, in the light of these more elemental distinctions, one might judge, for example, that the typical 'general education' curriculum, based largely on the acquisition of propositional and theoretical knowledge, at the expense of more practical moral and social experience, could be seriously unbalanced. In practice, however, compared with the use of and references to the other two ways of separating things out for curricular purposes, one finds relatively little mention of such 'elementary maps', particularly in official publications. Further, it is hard to see how such schemes could be used in a 'reconstructive' way when there is usually no relative weighting or value perspective brought to bear on the underlying areas they distinguish; and therefore, to stay with Aristotle, there appears to be nothing to stop the theoretical and productive areas mushrooming at the expense of the practical, much as happens at the moment and for the same reasons.)

In each case then, whether selected on the basis of subspecies of a common denominator, a medley of desirable items, or (much less commonly) a set of more elementary divisions, the end result tends to be an (often large) basket of elements, considered as so many interesting phenomena to be put together as a sort of anthology, each one of which, like the segments of a circle, is necessary to complete the whole.

Two widespread but problematic tendencies.

On the face of it many of such schemes may seem cogent and, certainly, comprehensive. However, when it comes to putting them into practice, one encounters two common tendencies which can have the effect of seriously frustrating work across the whole area of educative endeavour concerned with providing for the wider aspects of the child's development: the 'third strand' of educational work the I drew attention to in the last chapter. I will discuss these under **(i)** and **(ii)** below

(i) At this more theoretical stage there is usually no attempt made to appraise the relative significance of a particular element within the whole, and any perspective which might bring proportion or depth to the scheme, concern itself with questions of weighting, priority, or the comparative contribution of different fields to life as a whole – all this is either absent or merely referred to in passing. One can, perhaps, see here a natural tendency on the part of many of those involved in the devising of such schemes to steer clear of such fundamental and value-laden issues, and in the name of objective analysis try to adopt a purely value-neutral or phenomenological stance towards the elements they are bringing to our attention. This may be at least partly because we are still coming to term with the legacy of a loss of faith in 'grand narratives' that I described in the first chapter and an apparent breakdown of consensus about values and gradations of worth generally.

At any rate, having got a breakdown of elements, areas, dimensions, etc, the next deceptively plausible step follows: in the name of breadth, and balance, (or on the basis of fostering the full development of the child's mental capacities), they are all brought forwards as deserving candidates for a place on the curriculum for which adequate provision should be made.

There are two provisos here. Firstly, this does not mean that each element or subject is necessarily treated in the same way. Certain things, for instance moral and social education, may be treated as 'cross-curricular' or through a 'whole school' approach rather than appearing at set times on the timetable. However this does not alter the fact that the underlying ideal of doing justice to each area through a 'well proportioned' or 'balanced' approach remains; and if there is any thought about whether one or some of these areas may be more fundamental to our lives than others, the main thrust of things is towards inclusive and comprehensive provision – not with such deeper issues. Secondly, sometimes, as in England at present, certain subjects such as English, maths and science are regarded by the government as 'core' or 'stem' and are thus in practice given more attention, with correspondingly less time left for others. But this, while annoying to those teachers who find their own subjects squeezed, overall, on a more international scale can be seen as a comparatively minor variation within a more general approach, with the wider inclusivity principle remaining as an implicit, if sometimes challenging, ideal. The child is still introduced to a range of areas or forms of knowledge etc, and as far as possible justice is done to each. Thus the dominant experience throughout a child's educational career tends to be that of range of different subjects or fields, each of which (s)he is expected to master. In this way we can feel that, as far as possible, all-round comprehensive provision has been made, with many areas receiving attention, at any rate before the child begins to specialize to some degree in later years.

While this sort of 'balanced' approach is generally regarded as a desirable, if little examined, feature of curriculum organization, what essentially seems to have happened is that, in the desire to distinguish the different fields of knowledge or learning and then 'teach all things to all men' (the ideal of Comenius which is still influential), a certain flattening of perspective on the dimensions of human existence has occurred. However, when it comes to catering for the broader aims of education encompassing the development of the wider personality, such an approach via analysing the subdivisions of a culture in its maturity seems rather like analysing the major features discernible in the fully flowering stage of a plant, and then assuming that the best way to promote the healthy development of new seedlings is somehow to ensure that the same set of features should be present (albeit in reduced form) in the earlier stages of its growth. In fact it is hard to believe that the mainsprings of such development depend

on the child being introduced to such a nice admixture of cultural elements. Rather than this bland pall of evenness, we might need a rather different perspective on the whole spectrum of our human learning and experience, one which will bring into sharper focus both its key dimensions and their relative significance.

(ii) Before getting into this, however, we should note the presence of another major factor which affects the way any such bundle of basic elements gets translated into actual curriculum provision. There is another deep conceptual problem here to do with the way educational subject matter is generally processed for consumption and presented. The effect is to cast a second kind of 'pall' across the whole field of educational practice which, even more than the 'bland evenness' of approach I have just described, may be hampering the blossoming of work in the wider third area of educational provision that I have identified.

I am referring to the fact that we are inclined to see the whole field of learning essentially in terms of prespecified, explicit, and generally systematized forms of knowledge or skill. Indeed, the case for reducing material to this form can appear to be so obvious as to be hardly worth commenting on, let alone questioning. As Jane Green has put it, such an approach "has now acquired the status of a public virtue (2011, p.58; cf. Hager & Halliday 2009, p.241). Similarly Doddington (2014) has pointed out that current education policy across the globe encourages learning to be seen in terms of "predetermined avenues of skills and prescribed knowledge to be acquired through direct instruction". However there are deep questions here which can be asked about whether this whole systematic and virtually commodified approach which has proved so successful in opening up certain aspects of the world to our understanding, is tending to spread well beyond its natural limits; and whether we as a society are now so much in thrall to it that we are becoming forgetful that there are other ways in which one can constructively engage with the world and learn from life.

In fact this touches on what some have seen as the greatest conceptual problem we face in the modern age. It concerns the place and role of what is probably a universal human tendency to analyse, systematize and objectify certain aspects of what we experience, but which in the West (due in no small part to the 'new' rational and scientific spirit of enquiry which was taking off at the time of Bacon), has now become

elevated into what has been seen as a 'master-trait', a relentless driving force underlying our whole civilization. But serious questions about how one sees the place and role of this dominant impulse vis-à-vis other ways in which we engage with the world and learn from life remain, and have exercised some of the most incisive critics of modernity, including Collingwood, Oakeshott, and Polanyi; and on the continent Weber, Gadamer, Lyotard, and Derrida - to mention just a few, many of whose works, often spanning decades, have grappled with aspects of this problematic issue.

There are profound matters here to do with the whole intellectual thrust of the modern age, and about just how one acquires and validates knowledge and 'know-how' in the professions, in the workplace generally, and particularly in the whole realm of ethics and politics. I shall be commenting further on certain aspects of this in chapters 5 and 8. At this stage, however, I do not wish to go too far into these deep waters, but to show something of the core problem here *as it manifests itself in education*, and to shed light on why such an apparently sound and straightforward approach may be as ill suited for work in the third area of provision that I have described as it is eminently suited for work in the other two. This emphatically does not mean that a strictly methodical and objectivising approach has no part to play, no place at all, in this area. Rather, it may be a matter of *keeping* it in its place, and being more open to other avenues of learning and growth. (At this stage perhaps I should point out that, compared with the discussion above of the 'evenness' factor, the issues here are less straightforward, and to do anything like justice to them will extend discussion beyond the lengths that were necessary there. I hope, however, that while below I touch on some of the deep issues involved, the reader will not lose a sense of the overall context here.)

It has to be admitted that, when thinking about how to put material over to the student, it is only to be expected that a methodically organized and explicit approach will predominate in many areas of the curriculum. We naturally tend to think along the lines of how the various ways in which we understand and come to terms with the world can be packaged in a form that can be readily and efficiently passed on to the young. Given this desire, however, there seems to be an overwhelming tendency to take what appears to work well in certain fields of learning, where things can indeed be reduced to bodies of facts or propositions to be acquired by study (or a set of skills to be learned by following explicit rules and procedures), and to assume that all worthwhile learning can

be made to follow the same sort of format. In fact such methodical schemes, with subject matter laid out in explicit and transferable form (preferably as free as possible from the foibles of an individual practitioner) are now often taken to be the hallmark of an 'efficient and effective' approach to subject matter. All of this is, as I have indicated, very much of a piece with the positivist and empirical spirit that has been such a feature of Western thought and endeavour since the Enlightenment.

Hirst has given what is, in effect, an early and now classic exposition of such an approach (although I am not claiming that he was ever as hidebound in this respect as some later enthusiasts for such an approach). He argued that, in any field, it is only by mastering the process by which a body of explicit propositions have come into being, are related to each other and subjected to public scrutiny "that experience of that sort" really becomes available to the individual. Education is therefore primarily concerned with the transmission of such propositional knowledge, and the primary 'forms' it can take constitute the "basic articulations whereby the whole of experience has become intelligible to man….the objective elements round which the development of mind takes place" (1965, p.124). Put another way, "To acquire (such) knowledge is to learn to see, to experience the world in a way otherwise unknown, and thereby to come to have a mind in a fuller sense" (ibid). (Compare Phenix (1964), Broudy et al (1964), Tycociner (1964), and Korner (1974), who all took a rather similar line.) It is true that Hirst himself later had a change of mind and radically criticised both the general adequacy and the *de facto* pervasiveness of this approach to learning (Hirst 1993); but since he (and others) first laid out this sort of position in the 1960s and 70s the general momentum towards getting material into this sort of form has hardly, if at all, lessened. In 1995, for example, Coulby and Jones noted that such an approach:

> forms part of the conscious ideology of many of those people involved
> in the running and working of educational systems in Europe today
> (p.26),

And writing in 2000, Blake et al. observed that this whole tendency seemed to have been reinforced by the recent trend to regard teaching more as a "technology" (p.6) using "forms of learning that divide into readily identifiable units" (p.9), offering "controllability…..predictability and precision" (p.8).

This sort of packaging of material into explicit units of knowledge or skill, however, somehow seems to miss the essential character, the actual quality of life as it is actually lived and experienced 'on the ground', so to speak - particularly as we go about our moral and social lives, or engage with the whole realm of what one might call 'the life of the (human) spirit'. The potential richness and intricacy involved in one-to-one human interaction, the wider give-and-take situations generated by complex encounters in communal life, life in general with its emotional roller-coaster of crests and troughs, unexpected joys and setbacks - life involving a willingness to venture and risk, to face ethical dilemmas and take hard decisions in situations calling for judgement, insight and for a sensitivity to the (often) unique features and moral salience of a situation - the bracing and taxing reality at the heart of all this tends to slip through the net of such attempts at systematization, and perhaps rightly so. What is one to make, for example, of the fact that if an ethical decision has to get itself authorized by following a particular theory of 'the good' or justice, etc, by doing so, as Lyotard points out, it would seem to

> forfeit its ethical character forthwith. Why? Because it would lose all responsibility for what it decides….. Decisions are ethical precisely when they take upon themselves the responsibility for their authority (1995, p.300).

Making a similar point, Bernstein quotes Derrida to the effect that no code is in itself ever sufficient justification or legitimation for an ethical or political decision. Rather, what is called for is a matter of

> ethical-political responsibility. It is even its necessary condition. A decision can only come into being in the space that exceeds the calculable program….There can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial….(in Bernstein 1991, p.214).

In fact Beiner has brought this sort of critique to bear on the whole area of human 'judgment', arguing that if judgment can be reduced to a formula which should just be followed, "then it would no longer be meaningful to conceive of judgment as a task or a burden." Such a decision procedure "will absolve the judging subject of responsibility" (1983, p.111).

There is a whole dimension of life here where some explicit formatting, while it may have a place, may well, as I have said, need to be kept in its place if it is not to interfere with the essential integrity and potential richness of the phenomena being experienced. Finding one's way through such predicaments as I have just mentioned, along with the ability, for instance, to see and seize opportunities thrown up heuristically and unexpectedly, and to weave things together to form a rich situational tapestry which has a positive outcome – all this would seem to have more to do with what Pascal (in his Pensees) called the "spirit of finesse" than the methodical calculations of reason, or sets of logical procedures and protocols (the "spirit of geometry").

If however, as I have suggested, in such basic areas of life the 'raw' and unrefined just cannot be reduced to the 'cooked' and systematically processed without considerable loss of or distortion to the very elements which give the experience its essential character and learning opportunities in the first place, the dominant and overriding tendency in education has nevertheless been, to take up Lasch's telling metaphor:

> to boil all experience down into "courses" of study - a culinary image appropriate to the underlying ideal of enlightened consumption(1979 p.264).

It is true that the whole exercise can result in a vague realization that something hard to define but important to human life – in fact crucial to the life of the human spirit – has somehow slipped through our fingers in this process. But then the obvious response is to attempt to capture what is missing in a form that *can* be packaged in such an explicit and systematic way. As Inglis put it, criticising Bruner (another one-time advocate of an explicitly knowledge-based and structured approach):

> It is not enough to object by saying that Bruner is all cognitive skills and misses out the soul. This is true………But the stock response is to include a new section to the pack which takes care of the soul….This is to commit the classic heresy of modern technocracies. It was J.S. Mill's in the first place, and has been teachers' since (1975, p.42).

Putting his finger on what is, perhaps, the crucial point here, Lasch stated that there seemed to be no aspect of contemporary life that could resist such "educationalization".

And although referring to the university, he could equally well have been talking of the school when he continued:

> In its eagerness to embrace experience the university comes to serve as a substitute for it. In doing so……notwithstanding its claim to prepare students for 'life'…….it incapacitates them….rendering them incapable of confronting experience without the benefit of textbooks, grades, and pre-digested points of view (loc.cit.).

In fact looking at this tendency generally, one sometimes gets the impression that such theoretical systems or sets of exemplary techniques, in the name ensuring of quality control, are designed to make tough personal virtues, such as courage, hard-headed judgment and resolve, virtually redundant in the name of ensuring a uniform standard of performance or output.

Blake et al. in 2000, although starting from different premises, end up making much the same point, writing that such "technology" which "has the power "to displace other possible ways of revealing the world to us",

> overcomes the stubborn resistance of things (in order) to facilitate access into a world that, in losing its recalcitrance, loses its depth (p.8).

The result is a reluctance to live with risk and failure, and "a thinning of our ethical lives" (p.98). Put in really stark terms, it can lead to the sort of result that Hemmings has recounted: a brilliant student in higher education who could read and recite love poetry in four languages but found himself unable to carry on a conversation with a girl and enter into a relationship in any one of them (1980, p.40).

But here we get to the heart of the conceptual problem underlying everything. It seems that we are so used to dealing with things in term of methodically organized learning packages that, when we want to step out of such a paradigm, one may wonder what there is to work with. Of course, there *is* educational work going on in schools which lies outside this sort of paradigm, but when it does take place we can find ourselves somewhat at a loss to justify it, and search about for something to lean on, as it were, to sustain and give a sense of direction and purpose to one's efforts. It is true that there have been trenchant critiques of this dominant approach to subject matter since the time

of Dewey who was concerned about it in 1912 (pp.140 & 184ff). Schwab (1975) and Inglis (1975) were among those who had their own critiques in the 60s and 70s; while Carr (1987) and Hogan (1990) have been among a host of later critics who now include Green (2011) and Doddington (2014). But the question remains: what acceptable alternatives are there? How *is* one to tackle those areas of life which are not so amenable to, in fact appear to resist, such mainstream reductive treatment? Is it really the case that, as Lyotard once suggested, "all one can do is gaze in wonderment at the diversity of discursive species, just as we do at the diversity of plant or animal species" (1984, p.26)? Rather than this rather defeatist attitude, however, in order to get to the real heart of the problem here, do we need to take a deeper look at all this 'diversity' that we experience; and, amid the seemingly prodigious variety, see whether there are some key underlying factors which will allow us to form a more ordered and structured picture of things? In other words, since I have raised the question of whether the rather one-dimensional approach we now increasingly bring to bear on subject matter is appropriate for some of the most fundamental and primary dimensions of human existence, do we need to take a hard look at the more basic question of what these dimensions are? We can then ask how they are best catered for. This raises basic questions of our human functioning and ontology which at present tend to be skated over, at least in educational circles.

Before engaging with such profound issues, however, I wish to return to the underlying argument of this chapter so far, which concerns the effect the present dominant approach to subject matter is likely to be having on work which attempts to cater for the third strand of educational provision that I identified which is concerned with the wider personality development of the child.

The effect on the child's learning experience

I suggest that the two overriding factors I have drawn attention to – the 'pall of evenness' and the largely pre-packaged and commodified approach to curriculum fare – combine to produce a powerful conceptual milieu which inevitably leaves its own deep imprint on the way the curriculum takes shape. But it has to be admitted that the resulting schemes can be presented in a very attractive light. Such well-structured components radiating out from some underlying principle, or simply as an anthology of

desirable elements, can appear, as I have said, to provide a multifaceted and comprehensive breakdown of the heritage we wish to pass on to the young. In some of these schemes all the elements of life that one might wish to see schools tackle seem to be there. In fact, to repeat a thought from the last chapter, one might wonder what aspect of the child's experience and personality could possibly escape such a comprehensive net. However, if one takes into account the manner in which these elements actually get processed and translated into curriculum provision, one can understand more clearly why, when it comes to engaging with the broader aims of education and catering meaningfully for the moral and social development of the child, schools may be falling seriously short of the mark.

Firstly, having got a broad basket of subjects, areas or dimensions, such an approach tends, in the name of balance and inclusiveness, to obscure fundamental questions regarding the comparative significance and role of these different elements, including their place in any larger scheme of things or overall philosophy of life. Secondly, any such bundle of elements easily becomes a prey to an underlying preoccupation of modernity – a delight in reducing things to an explicit form of (often propositional) knowledge or a set of itemised skills which, it is assumed, can be acquired in a straightforward and systematic manner.

In fact this second factor, in combination with the first, tends to ensure that not only is there no attempt to look at and assess the wider significance of the different elements making up the curriculum, but that there is, in effect, a bias which continually favours the expansion of those fields that *are* amenable to this sort of straightforward and explicit treatment - in particular, those aspects of the humanities and arts which *do* lend themselves to this, and of course the sciences themselves. On the other hand, the whole area related to our more practical living and everyday conduct - the moral and social issues we are actually involved with, which, I have suggested, resists such easy systematization, and where the learning that is crucial cannot be acquired in such an pre-packaged and commodified way - ends up becoming the 'poor relation' when set against these other more tractable areas. The situation shown up by the international survey mentioned in the last chapter (p.57) appears to be longstanding. Right back in 1967 Wheeler et al. observed that:

> Ten national curricula consulted recently showed fairly balanced
> statements of general aims, yet the detail indicated that in numerous
> cases most of the time and effort was spent in acquiring academic skills
> and information…….It is generally noticeable that when there is an
> imbalance, attention may be drawn to the need to cultivate values,
> feelings and sensitivities, though the actual practice is to give them no
> more than incidental attention (pp. 95-96).

The natural result of this is an emphasis on the academic and the technical – in effect a preoccupation with how things branch out 'at the top', which is at the expense of the more everyday world of our practical and interpersonal lives. And whatever the original balance of elements may have looked like, the upshot in timetable terms tends to be an overwhelming emphasis on the upper foliage or 'superstructure' of life with relatively little attention to the base.

From this perspective we might now get a clearer idea of what lies behind the frequently heard comment that there appears to be a disjunction between the widely accepted broad aims of education, which in effect fully embrace the third main impulse in education that I have drawn attention to, and what the system is geared to in practice. The point made by Bramall and White (2000 p.28) for instance, that there was something of a mismatch between the prominence given to fostering the personal qualities of students, including values and general attitudes (in the statement of aims in the then National Curriculum guidelines for England and Wales), and what the actual specified subjects were likely to deliver (which seemed to reflect, rather, the "desiderata residing in particular disciplines") appears to apply equally to the present situation. Other critics have been more forthright, from Ted Wragg (2001) who stated that we were "burying" teenagers at a difficult and turbulent time in their lives under a mass of subjects, to Harriet Sweatman (2019), a sixth-form student in Scotland, whose bitter complaint in an essay about feeling "flattened by a concrete curriculum" has been reported widely in the educational press. In the end, it seems, we are brought back to the question Griffith has starkly confronted us with, which still appears to be the basic issue here:

> Can we really justify an educational system, effectively unchanged in
> terms of philosophy and construction of curriculum……since the
> middle of the nineteenth century, as an appropriate proposition for
> citizens of the twenty-first century? (2001, p.14)

The need for a more radical approach

If, however, one can now see more clearly just what is happening as the usual, almost automatic strategies for parcelling out and processing curriculum content are put into effect, from this vantage point we might realise that, if we are to give more effect to the third impulse of educational endeavour, we may need to take a step back from the usual strategies of curriculum construction and ask, almost naively, whether a rather different perspective on the principal forms of human experience – the main dimensions of our existence – that education sets itself to address, is needed. At present, being in the grip of these branching subdivisions of 'knowledge' or 'culture' etc, which appear to make up a desirable totality, we generally do not think to ask if, from the perspective of the developing personality, there might be some more fundamental modalities which underlie and give rise to these ramifying strands: more primary ways we find ourselves in and taking on the world, which might act as vital catalysts for the growth and healthy development of the personality, but which may be in danger of being obscured by this branching proliferation, particularly its thick upper foliage. Is there not some basic ground we can get back to here - some more elemental strata in the architecture of human experience, each of which needs to be opened up and developed in its own right if satisfactory development is to take place, but which we are in danger of losing sight of?

Such a perspective might give us the means to tackle not just the first, but also the second dominant factor presently exerting a strong pull on, or as I put it, casting a pall over, much educational practice: that is, a preoccupation with reducing the multifaceted experience of life to one-dimensional form in the shape of knowledge-based courses of study, or predetermined sets of skill, which admittedly may offer what Blake et al (2000 pp.8-9) have described as the "predictability, control and precision" so beloved of the typical "learning organization"; but which, as I have tried to show, may be as inappropriate for work in this third area of educational provision as it is eminently suited to it in the other two.

Here, however, while it is relatively easy to ask what are the fundamental dimensions of human experience that underlie, and are central to, human growth and development,

it may be an indication of how infrequently we look at this sort of issue in any depth that it is difficult to know how to conceptualise and find the language to express just what we are after here. In order to allude to what I am trying to get hold of, various terms such as "dimensions of experience" or "modes of human engagement" come to mind. But there appears to be no agreed way of looking at, or language in which to express what one might provisionally see as principal dimensions of our human existence. Yet it can be argued that this is surely an issue we should be trying to get to grips with, particularly in a world where so much former tradition and previous patterns of life are being dislocated or abandoned, and where, as one sociologist has put it, we are "in the midst of massive cultural transformation" (Weeks, 2003, p.28). In such circumstances there may be a need to (re)awaken a recognition of, and keep a firm hold on some of the fundamental dimensions of a human (and humane) existence.

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Further, if one of the main problems of present systems of education, one that is widely recognized, is that it *is* too exclusively preoccupied with the rational/scientific paradigm of learning – with knowledge or skills that can be readily made explicit, methodically presented and reliably tested – then surely one needs to become more aware of those other ways in which we engage with life which might have an equally important educative function.

In fact from the perspective of the child engaging with the world in all its multifaceted variety, growing up and being exercised in the general ferment of existence, certain more fundamental dimensions of experience do seem to stand out, reflecting some underlying ways in which our engagement with life appears to separate into its cardinal modes: our primary 'ways-of-being-in-the-world', to put things another way. Once such basic dimensions are brought into relief and their significance realized, it becomes difficult to imagine how any healthy growth could take place within the personality unless it was given sufficient scope to exercise itself in these more primordial ways of experiencing and interacting with the world. They appear to remain at the heart of and key to the successful unfolding of our being at any stage in life: to constitute a bedrock on which much of our development depends.

Further, in so far as they reflect crucial areas of our ontology and functioning, and appear to give us a matrix for key dimensions of our human development, they might in

themselves, I suggest, provide some solid ground on which to base the whole business of education – a basic framework of reference which might enable us to situate, and get a more definite sense of bearing in relation to, the many and varied activities which can come under that heading. In particular, these more overarching parameters might better accommodate and ground much of the work that bears more directly on this third area of educational provision, while at the same time enabling one to appreciate the point and purpose of more traditional subject learning in this wider scheme of things. In this context the latter clearly represents one (albeit important) dimension of human life, while the place and importance of other ways in which we engage with the world are brought into sharper focus and shown to be crucial to the development of the wider personality (including its social and moral functioning).

Having got such a framework, one can then look at education in the light of its contribution to these basic dimensions. How readily does it contribute to some; how unevenly or patchily, perhaps, to others? How much of a contribution *could* schools make to some of these underlying areas once their importance was recognized? This may give a clearer idea of the areas that education may need to give greater recognition to and engage with more constructively. These have a rather hazy and problematic status at present; and while some provision is attempted, they often tend to inhabit a sort of twilight area, scarcely recognized for what they are, and on the margins of the main business. However if their place in this wider scheme of things is seen, then they could, perhaps, be brought in from the cold, so to speak, put more at the centre of things, and acknowledged to be as (if not more) important to the wider aims that education sets itself as more traditional fields of learning.

At the same time, such a perspective, if it brings out certain dimensions of experience that education may need to take more note of and make better provision for, it may also shed light on the real difficulties and limitations involved. *Can* education contribute more effectively in this way? How *much* of contribution can we expect? It thus poses a considerable challenge for schools; and those who easily identify with high-minded lists of aims (whether in national policy or individual school 'mission' statements) may get a reality check, and be brought down to earth with something of a jolt when confronted with the real implications of aims which are so easily set down on paper.

On the other hand, it may point to a way forward in so far as it brings into relief the sort of provision that needs to be made and shows where effort might best be put. Again, on the more positive side, this more fundamental breakdown of educative experience might situate and bring out the salience (or otherwise) of much of the work in schools which is presently directed towards these wider aims, but which, taking place outside conventional subject areas, tends to struggle for anything like the status accorded to the latter and may remain comparatively undeveloped. Not being as grounded in such well established and structured traditions, this whole field can appear to be diffuse, difficult to get hold of, and (as I indicated in the last chapter) a prey to a lot of well-meaning but uncoordinated initiatives; even as a distracting diversion from the 'serious' work going on in the rest of the system. In other words it may enable much of the work that goes on under the banner of values education, emotional literacy, or citizenship, etc, to acquire more of a sense of underpinning, and to gain a greater sense of direction and purpose by being seen in the context of its contribution to these more fundamental dimensions of human life. Equally, however, it is hardly likely that such a perspective will provide an easy justification for each and every initiative that may be introduced under the guise of work in these fields. (The issues discussed in chapters 7 and 8 below should make this clear.)

More generally, it raises questions about how much of a contribution schools can be expected to make to such underlying areas compared with other forces at work in society. In this way it may throw some interesting light on the whole feasibility and profound implications of calls to educate the 'whole child', or, for example, to promote the sort of basic personal qualities and virtues ("consideration and respect towards others……courage, honesty, generosity, integrity, humility, and a sense of justice") which the present DfE guidelines on Character Education (as part of PSHE) mention. (See pages 32-3 above). We may never and probably should never, wish to bring such ambitious aims totally within the remit of education. Schools can only do so much; but as I have said, this does not mean that they could not do more. Just bringing out these underlying ways in which we engage with the world, together with an indication of their comparative role and significance in our lives, appears to shed a useful light on the sort of provision schools need to make if this third strand of educational endeavour is to be put onto a sounder footing – with those working in the field able to gain a sense

that, while they might not be able to do all that they might like, they can at least make steady progress in the right direction, knowing the essential lines upon which to work.

Finally, one might note that such an approach does not imply anything like a complete revolution in educational practice. What I am hoping to show is that schools might achieve a better balance between the academic, on the one hand, and the wider human and social goals they set themselves, on the other. In principle such a perspective might provide the possibility of an antidote to the frequently heard complaint – particularly in Britain at the moment – that schools may be increasingly successful in churning out academic or technically competent students by subjecting them to a regime where they are 'tested to destruction', but that other less tractable, but equally (if not more) life-enhancing areas are being squeezed in the process. If one can acknowledge the place of the academic and other specialisms, but at the same time see them in perspective against other vital dimensions of human existence and perhaps get a better balance between them, this does not mean that everything has to change: that, for instance, all good practice built up in certain conventional areas has to go. In fact such a more fundamental framework of provision may enable one to see the wider justification for much of the work that is taking place at present, whether in more traditional subject fields or, more hesitantly and uncertainly, outside them..

To return to the underlying theme here, if current mainstream ways of structuring and processing the elements of the curriculum seem inevitably to lead to this third impulse of educational endeavour being squeezed and treated inappropriately, but in today's circumstances we wish to see it made more central and more meaningfully addressed, then we may need a wider perspective on the main dimensions of human experience which can better ground and accommodate such work. In this way perhaps the whole area could be strengthened and a greater sense of direction and purpose imparted to some of the many strands of work that are, or could be, taking place.

I am aware that, in setting the scene so far, in making out the general case for and bringing out the possibilities of such an approach, I have made some rather large claims and begged a number of questions. Everything hinges on what these underlying dimensions turn out to be, how they compare with regard to their significance for and

effect on human development, and whether schools can contribute more constructively to certain of these underlying areas. These are matters for the following chapters..

4

Back to basic ground: some crucial dimensions of human life

In this chapter I will attempt to bring into relief some primary dimensions of our human experience, reflecting basic ways in which we find ourselves in and taking on the world. As I have indicated, since these represent underlying ways in which the human engagement with life separates into some cardinal modalities and appear to embody key parameters within which human development as such takes place, they might provide a 'deep structure' in which to situate and judge the significance of the many and varied strands of work taking place within education – a sort of second-order framework of reference, providing some overarching parameters for its activities, and perhaps establishing a basis whereby work in the 'third area of provision', as I have described it, can come more into its own in relation to the other two strands of educational work.

I hope it will be apparent that, far from launching some new or complex revelatory perspective, what follows may be rather an exercise in bringing us back to dimensions we may, in a sense, be already tacitly aware of, but which have become obscured in much of modern life - not least by the proliferation of the branching 'upper foliage' I have referred to. As Wittgenstein has put it, 'The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something because it is always before one's eyes.' (1953, para.129)).

The breakdown I suggest will also be found to connect, albeit in different ways, with other philosophical perspectives on aspects of human existence from Aristotle through to Husserl and Heidegger, and indeed with some more recent attempts to analyse this rich fabric. But I have not been overly concerned to make these connections explicit, especially when to do so would be to risk burdening the overall picture being presented with cumbersome detail.

Given this context, the following ways of being in and engaging with the world seem to stand out as primary:

To begin with we need to face squarely the implications of a sphere of human activity I have already alluded to, and which one might call:

1 General Lifeworld Experience

Schutz described this basic area of life thus:

> Philosophers as different as James, Bergson , Dewey, Husserl and Whitehead agree that the common-sense knowledge of everyday life is the unquestioned but always questionable background within which enquiry starts and within which it alone can be carried out. It is this *Lebenswelt*, as Husserl calls it, within which, according to him, all scientific and even logical concepts originate; it is the social matrix within which, according to Dewey, unclarified situations emerge, which have to be transformed by the process of inquiry into warranted assertability (Schutz 1971, p.494).

To go much further back, Vico suggested that this level of our experience gives rise to what he called a *sensus communis*, a sort of shared sense of the basic human condition. It is in constantly overcoming the gap between what one needs and what one has, in formulating beliefs about what is necessary and useful to oneself, that the human faculties of ingenuity (ingenium) and imagination are developed. The result, he thought, tends to produce a 'common (or shared) sense' of our basic life situation. (See Grassi (1976) on this). Returning to more recent philosophers concerned with this area, one might add that it embraces Heidegger's basic human situation of *Dasein* – of finding oneself (sometimes starkly) thrown into and coping with the surrounding world (Heidegger, 1962); and also Oakeshott's sphere of *practical activity* (1962, p.206). Following William James here, Schutz and Luckmann called this our 'paramount province of reality' (1973, p.21), while Macmurray (1933) writes in a more lyrical vein that:

> That immediate knowledge of the world which is the effortless result of living in it and working with it, and struggling against it, has a much higher claim to be taken as *the* type of human knowledge than anything that science either has or can make possible……(p.16, my italics). The processes of reflective thought as well as the reflective experiences of the artist and mystic are bathed in it. They are born and die in it, dissolving once again into the soil from which they sprang and enriching it with a new fertility (pp.19-20).

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There is a host of different approaches one can bring to bear when analysing the kaleidoscope of impressions and experience we are subject to here. I shall just draw attention to some key aspects of such lifeworld experience for two purposes:

(a) to bring out something of the scope, role and significance of this level of experience in relation to life as a whole. (This may throw some ironic light on the general thrust of our culture which I have already mentioned, where the general focus of attention has been very much on rising above the mundane world of everyday life.) It will also, I hope, provide a background context against which one can set into perspective the other areas of human experience I go on to discuss; and

(b) to illustrate that how one views the human encounter with life at this level – the picture one has of the dynamics at work as our being is subject to and interacts with the complex of forces impinging on it – involves assumptions regarding the fundamental nature of our being, the sort of creatures we are. Such assumptions (whether acknowledged or not) tend to be part of the baggage we carry around, and can reach into and condition one's approach to issues at the very heart of social and educational policy. Yet there seems to have been some reluctance, particularly in the world of education, to get back to and engage with such fundamental issues. While this may be understandable given the past legacy of controversy and polemical position-taking surrounding even whether we should discuss questions of human nature at all, a full acknowledgement of the forces at work in our basic transactions with the physical and social environment, and of the dynamic tension between such forces could, I believe, usefully inform, and bring some much needed foundational ballast to bear on, some of the most widely discussed and controversial educational and social issues before us. (These include, for instance, how one sees the development of personal autonomy, the debate surrounding 'liberal' as opposed to 'communitarian' stances on social policy, approaches to multiculturalism and social diversity, and debates about the very role and purpose of education itself. Certainly the perspective which emerges in the following account of these forces is central to the overall approach I will be taking in the main body of this work.)

Changing views of the forces at work at this level.

Looking at this, our basic experience of the world, one can see it as something that is, in the words of Dewey, already 'clothed with meaning' (1926, p.26) – as a sort of accomplished *gestalt* having a certain form largely made up of the 'common-sense' ways of seeing things and conducting our affairs which we absorb (largely unconsciously) from our immediate environment. Wittgenstein saw this as the linguistically based 'form of life' we are immersed in (1953, paras.19 &23); Gadamer (1975) stressed the social and historical 'tradition' in which we are placed; similarly, for Habermas, this milieu within which everyday understanding unfolds 'stores up the interpretative work of many preceding generations' (cited in Giddens 1985, p.101). All this, of course, tends to be covered by what is, perhaps, the primary meaning of the term 'culture' which, Feinberg suggests, consists of:

> Certain structures of meaning and significance into which we are born, together with the symbol and socialization systems that enable us to decode and produce these structures, establish distinctive ways of relating to one another, of appropriating information, and of establishing goals……….distinctive ways of appropriating meaning (1995, p.203).

That we are inevitably situated in such webs of meaning - powerful structures which can, in a very real sense, condition our everyday existence - is, of course, a significant insight. It has been made much of by those with communitarian leanings who have criticised the so-called 'atomistic' view of the self-determining individual supposedly dear to the Anglo-Saxon liberal tradition. Sandel, for instance, has stressed the way that the 'constitutive attachments' we enter into are crucial to the formation of our individual identity (1982 p.179), while Charles Taylor has emphasized the importance of the "horizons of significance" that we absorb from the social milieu (1992, p.37f.).

On the other hand, if this sort of perspective can be seen in a positive light, an absorbed fascination with the way we appear to be subject to such structures can lead to a position once taken by certain influential Continental thinkers who, in the late 20th century appear to have taken delight in showing how any idea of an individual with an authentic subjective life or self-determining ability tends to vanish amid the seemingly overwhelming structures in which (s)he is immersed. One may perhaps believe that one is thinking one's own thoughts and leading one's own life, but at the height of this sort

of 'structuralist' movement, Vincent Descombes could write that, for this way of thinking:

> The origin of meaning cannot be located in the individual who believes he is expressing himself, but rather it lies in language itself. *Not man, but structure is decisive. Man is nothing!* (cited in Schmidt 1985, p.164)

Habermas, lecturing on Foucault, criticised the implications of this tendency, asking whether we are to be seen simply as 'individual copies that are mechanically punched out' by such forces, - mere imprints of the particular slice of culture we have been subject to (in Levin, 1988 p.300). However the general influence and pervasiveness of such views not so long ago was mirrored in the way that even Gadamer, by no means a structural determinist, saw the mental life of the individual as 'only a flicker in the closed circuits of historical life' (in Warnke 1987, p.80). It might be thought that since the heyday of such full-blown structuralism, we have moved on from such determinist perspectives. But in fact it seems that in certain circles these socially determinist perspectives are still in vogue, albeit in rather different forms. If in the past, for instance, it was assumed that a particular culture was a relatively coherent mass of forces impinging on the individual, the more modern, or rather 'post-modern' trend has been to see such structural forces as much more of a multifarious and inconsistent plurality, even in so-called primitive societies (cf. Holland 1997, p.169). The result is that, in this light, individual identity (which is also subject to such forces) has also been seen as inherently multiform, and often fractured and unstable. (On this tendency in the 90s, compare Sampson (1989), Gergen (1991) and Lifton (1993)). More recently one reads that within the academic community it is mainly "sociologists, non-evolutionary anthropologists, women's and gender studies and…humanities scholars (except philosophy)" for whom *the* critical factor and dominant influence on human behaviour is the social milieu of the individual (Jarrrett 2017). [5]

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[5] With regard to the influence of social factors, some would also point to the role of the social media in creating a veritable myriad of disparate and often highly polarised groups of the like-minded online. The algorithms these platforms use are, it seems, deliberately designed to latch onto whatever views an individual has expressed, and then, by manipulating the 'feeds' he or she receives, to reflect back to the user only what people with similar opinions already think. In this way, one's opinions, whatever they are, are continually confirmed and reinforced by the group identity of a particular online community.

While acknowledging the force of such socially determining factors, however, there remains an underlying problem of whether, how, and to what extent one can see the individual, particularly in childhood, as a being with its own developing sense of integrity and authenticity, as opposed to a being that is basically a mere reflection of the structures in which it is embedded. It has generally been assumed, for instance, by those English-speaking thinkers who have taken a communitarian stance (such as MacIntyre (1981), Sandel (1982), and Taylor (1992)) that, having started off by absorbing the meanings and values implicit in a particular culture, the individual will then, if all goes well, be able to gain a more critical perspective on things as the power of reason develops within. But here, even if one assumes that reason is a power that enables one to escape to a considerable extent the socially constructed nature of life (something the structural determinists would not accept), we are still left with an implicit account of the development of our identity which seems rather hollow and anaemic. We have essentially a picture of the individual as initially constituted by pre-rational attachments that are involuntarily acquired, resulting in an identity that is the result of absorbing the structures and norms of a particular environment. Reason can, as it were, go to work on this initial state as our powers of reflection mature, enabling us, to some extent, to become free of such imprinting.

However what has now become clearer – and due to recent changes in the intellectual climate, more admissible – is that, while these structures are of crucial importance to the formation of individual identity, there is something much more dramatic, indeed traumatic, going on as we engage with life than this rather absorbent and sponge-like picture of the human entity suggests. Instead of being initially a rather hapless reflection of the structures that are impinging on it, there seems to be a real clash and interplay of elemental forces working themselves out at this level of life, the dynamics of which constitute what is, perhaps, *the* basic predicament at the heart of human existence.

As a way in here, we can look at the different ways in which the basic bodily or biological heritage we enter life with has been viewed. Even during the high-water mark of the structuralist movement in the 1970s and 80s there was a debate about how one should view this underlying neurobiological entity, the 'biological substrate' on which structural forces competed to make their mark. Was it to be viewed as, for

instance, Bourdieu and the earlier Foucault tended to think, the site onto which social forces, as it were, inscribe themselves, so that our bodily being itself becomes by its gestures, its stance, its sexuality etc. a mere reflection of these external forces? (Both cited in Levin 1988, p.303ff). Is it, as some social determinists cited in Holland (1997 p.170) have tended to assume, just unimportant to the formation of a sense of personal identity because, while it may operate with an integrity of its own – its own laws and forces – these *remain* at the biological level? Or is there some implicit way of being in and apprehending the world that is tied to our embodiment, but reaches beyond the purely biological into the way our mental life is toned and patterned; into the way we feel inclined to respond to and assimilate the various social and structural forces as they impinge on us; a way of being which has a sense of its own integrity and will experience numbness or distress if this gets twisted or overridden?

If, as Holland (p.171) pointed out some time ago, there was already a 'heated dialogue' among anthropologists concerning the degree to which this embodied being that we start off with is important in this way, recent studies on new-born infants, together with a more receptive attitude towards the findings of genetic research and the (admittedly more speculative) work of socio-biologists, very much tend to confirm this latter picture of the human entity as it enters into life. It does appear to have its own rudimentary approach to life, its own way of registering and reacting to the particular environment in which it finds itself. A new-born baby, for instance, seems to exhibit an individually toned set of responses to what it experiences, and to its primary carer in particular. The carer (normally) responds to this, as well as the baby responding to her (Coyle in Levin 1989, p.162; cf Fordham in Astor 1995, p.54ff). In short, we find a being which interacts with its physical and social environment on the basis of its unique constitutional (genetically influenced) make-up (cf. Rutter 2006; and, among others, Archontaki et al. 2013). This includes, it appears, a basic temperament of a certain sort and, to put it in the broadest terms, a sense of affinity for certain areas of life and learning rather than others. (All this is not to downplay the role of the environment because the particular form which an affinity takes will clearly depend on the opportunities available in a particular setting – although it has been suggested that even young children can seek out, or even generate, opportunities in their particular environment which might not otherwise have been much in evidence (Plomin et al.1985; Rutter op.cit; and Viding & McCrory 2018).

This whole field of basic interaction with the environment is obviously both fraught with difficulty and filled with delight. On the one hand as a child one needs to be challenged by an environment that is not simply acquiescent to his or her every wish, but offers some resistance so that incipient powers within can be stimulated and develop. On the other hand, overall it seems that things should not be so obdurate or rigidly imposed that the child is allowed no scope for assimilating the structures encountered in his or her own way. One needs to be able personally to 'appropriate' things (to use Merleau-Ponty's term) or to 're-create' them (to use Ricoeur's), putting one's own gloss on them; otherwise one may become a mere cipher of society. If a child is not allowed some scope in this respect (s)he may well develop what Winnicott called a 'false' or 'compliant' self which is outwardly docile but which lacks any sense of personal resonance with the norms it has internalised (1966, p.102). Generally however, do we not find children actively engaged in this process of personally appropriating the structures they are confronted with? They test, stretch, and sometimes kick against what we as adults try to impress upon them. They do not just soak everything up passively. As Adam Phillips has put it:

> The child has the culture's repertoire of acceptable ways of being foisted
> upon him and answers back, often in a rage, but more acceptably with
> inventiveness and innovation (1998 p.90).

Here we get to the essence of the 'clash of elemental forces' I referred to earlier. The child, seen in Freudian terms as a 'virtuoso of desire' (Phillips p.6) seeking both to preserve and extend the powers (s)he has, and seeing life as a veritable carnival of possibilities, encounters a world that is in many ways refractory, just unyieldingly there irrespective of any cherished hopes and desires. Here (again in Freudian terms) the 'pleasure principle' comes up against the brute 'reality principle'. Yet somehow in this process – and this is only implicit in Freud himself – children need to keep alive something of their original aspirational and visionary energy, and maintain a core of hope. Things do not always go well for a number of reasons. A very real tussle involving a range of strategies can take place as the individual striving neurobiological entity, with a uniquely patterned constellation of energies, strengths, blind-spots etc., and its own incipient way of being, encounters the world of hard physical realities, the world of particular and sometimes obstructive others, and a range of wider cultural

expectations. William James aptly described the human mind engaged in such basic interaction with its environment as a 'fighter for ends' (cited in Gouinlock 1985, p.279); and taking up this sort of image, we can perhaps see the individual as (s)he encounters, tests, and comes to terms more or less successfully with the structures and expectations that encompass them, as always in a sense taking on some aspects of the archetypal hero(ine) figure. Out of this sort of buffeting and dramatic interplay, with its joys and sorrows, its points of resistance, accommodation, and congruence, comes the result that, to use G H Mead's words:

> All selves are constituted by or in terms of social processes, and are individual reflections of it [while] every individual self has its own peculiar individuality, its own unique pattern (cited in Lukes 1987 p.287).

Or, to put in a stronger way, as Phillips does from his perspective:

> We need to revive one stark version of Freud's story: there is a part of ourselves that adapts and a part of ourselves that doesn't. (op.cit. p.106)

It may seem that I have been unnecessarily wide-ranging in delving into the forces at work in this, our 'primitive' contact with the world. But the primary forces at work here are not something one leaves behind at any stage of life. They continue to exert an effect and to condition our everyday lives, reflecting a tension which lies at the heart of human existence.   It can be argued that any educational or social policy that is not grounded in an acknowledgment of the tension and strong interplay between these fundamental forces will be undermined by what it ignores.

(It would be interesting to analyse the reasons for the rather extreme swing of the pendulum against the recognition and acceptance of one of these polarities in the later twentieth century, particularly in much of the educational and academic world.[6] But this would be to digress from my main concern at this point which is to bring out something of the basic characteristics and general significance of life at this level. In the present less doctrinaire climate, having emerged fairly recently from a period in which any mention at an educational conference of 'human nature' or 'innate potential' was likely to be quite literally howled down, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world, discussion of this whole area can still be rather fraught. In certain circles in the

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[6] The paper which has impressed me most on this issue, and which goes deeply into the educational, anthropological and philosophical implications is that of Papastephanou (2014).

academic world, for instance, any leanings towards acknowledging an individual's particular nature still tend to be associated with 'essentialism', as if the very conception of a person with particular abilities is bound to lead to these being treated as 'fixed ceilings' to the individual's development, or, indeed, to convey the idea of a 'fixed essence'. It seems that even in the present more amenable intellectual climate we may still need to come to terms in a balanced and constructive way with the tensions inherent in this dynamic interplay of polarities, particularly when attempting to cater for the wider personality development of the child – an issue I take up in chapter 7.)

Some emerging dimensions of our lifeworld experience

As for the basic elements of our experience at this level, its primary branches would seem to represent some fundamental axes along which human development takes place. If we can take the importance of sensory-motor skills, along with scope for physical exercise and the development of a sense of bodily prowess, as read – as a necessary foundation and continuing dimension in everything else – three areas seem to stand out as fundamental at this level which I will discuss under **(i) – (iii)** below. Each covers a wide spectrum of activity, but each, it can be argued, has an overall feel or quality of its own. In these respects they appear to reflect some deep-seated impulses in the human make-up.

(i) Firstly, (though not necessarily in priority) there is the realm of interaction with 'things' – with the world of nature and material objects. This is obviously closely connected with the development of sensory-motor skills *per se*, but there are further dimensions here which go well beyond this sphere. Schutz and Luckmann are referring mainly to this area in the following:

> The life-world is the province of my live corporeal acts…… In the world within reach there is a zone I can influence through direct action… [W]hat [G H Mead] termed the *manipulative zone* presents the kernel of reality ……..
> Only the experience of physical objects in the manipulative zone gives us the 'fundamental test of all reality' namely, the experience of resistance. Only this defines the 'standard size' of things which outside of the manipulative zone appear in the distortions of optical perspective …… [The province of my live corporeal acts] offers opposition and it requires exertion to overcome it. Everyday reality introduces me to tasks, and I must realize my plans within it. It allows me to be successful or frustrated in my attempts to actualize my goals

> … I can test the results of my performances as occurrences within an intersubjective and therefore 'objective' world….(1973, pp.31, and 41-42)

They seem inclined to run together a number of strands here, but we can see that dealing with the world of 'things', which are generally fairly inert and readily manipulated, provides fertile ground for the exercise and development of intellectual curiosity. In such interactions one can in principle explore, manipulate and experiment freely in the process of finding out more about a particular object or aspect of the world, and the relationship between the aspects one has explored. In this way such a field of interaction appears to be intimately bound up with the development of many of our basic cognitive abilities, along with the urge to acquire knowledge generally. It appears to provide ideal material on which to exercise one's developing rational and analytical faculties, particularly, it would seem, those involved in what has been termed 'system building' (Baron-Cohen 2004).

At the risk of stirring up a hornet's nest of 'politically correct' clamour, I will mention that Baron-Cohen himself has suggested that it is primarily a 'male' type of brain that feels most at ease with this world of things, with the urge to take things apart, to find out how things work - in short, to reduce things to a 'system'. But there are different ways in which this tendency can develop. It has been suggested that it can lead to a preoccupation with the impersonal at the expense of the interpersonal which, at its extreme, is strongly implicated in autistic behaviour (ibid.). On the other hand, we also appear to be dealing with a way of processing information which, among other things, has given rise to the careful scientific study of natural phenomena which, allied to the right motives, can considerably help the general condition of mankind – to refer back to Bacon's vision. In general, we can say that this is an important area of interaction with the world which generates its own wealth of challenges and rewards.

As Schutz and Luckmann implicitly acknowledge above, this sort of activity cannot be completely separated from our experience of the social world, particularly one might think, in the case of a child, from the encouragement the young receive from others. But the encounter with the world of others as such has its own characteristic problems and challenges. It comprises the second basic element in our encounter with life that I wish to look at.

(ii) The situation as one interacts with others who are both like oneself in some ways and different in others – who will have their own interests which will not always coincide with one's own – will tend to evoke a rather broader spectrum of human energies and responses, and that, in a very direct way. 'Things' may be relatively supine at our feet, as it were, passively awaiting our manipulation. People, on the other hand, can answer back, question, suggest, and help or hinder us –all of which can bring into play a wider range of human reactions.

Such interpersonal responses give rise to what Strawson (1974) termed typical 'reactive attitudes' which he saw as 'part of the general framework of human life' since they inevitably seem to arise in the emotional reactions generated by person-to-person contact. These include (lumping together Strawson's particular strands) such interpersonal attitudes as: gratitude, resentment, love, hate, approval, disapproval, shyness, pride, pity, guilt, remorse, and shame. It is worth noting that there is a moral dimension implicit in many of these reactions; in fact such interpersonal situations obviously act as the locus *par excellence* for the learning and display of moral (or immoral) behaviour, with ready opportunities for deceit or honesty, generosity or meanness, courage or timidity, pity or hardheartedness, and so on.

To stay with Baron-Cohen, initially it seems that it is the more 'empathising' (so-called 'female') type of brain that feels more comfortable with this interpersonal sphere – with sensing moods, empathising, conciliating, etc. But we should note, firstly, that we are here dealing with *some* bias towards one or other of these polarities on the part of most people; certainly not with exclusive orientations, except in extreme cases. Secondly, that such a bias by no means always corresponds with physical gender. Thirdly, in many situations in life one would ideally be drawing on both, though not necessarily equally[7]. In the area of morality in particular it may be that more impersonal, detached and dispassionate considerations to do with, for instance, maintaining a strict system of justice for the common good, should be informed by considerations stemming from a more individually empathetic approach embodying care, concern and compassion; and,

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[7] It has to be said that Baron-Cohen's work has created some controversy in academic circles, and he has been accused of 'neurosexism'. However, all I argue here is that there may well be these two tendencies in our human make-up overall, and that neither is exclusively confined to the male or female gender. Nor is it clear just to what extent they are due to inherited characteristics or to socialisation.

of course, vice-versa. (For a flavour of the considerable and long-running literature on 'justice' v. 'care' orientations in accounts of moral development see Gilligan (1982), Vreeke (1991), and Jorgensen (2006). For a more recent large study which appears to confirm such 'gender differences' in brain types, see Greenberg et al. (2018)).

(iii) Looking through much of the literature on our basic transactions with the physical and social environment, one might get the impression, particularly from the pragmatists and existentialists, that, at this level of our contact with the world, thinking is primarily for the sake of acting; and things are seen primarily as 'ready-to-hand' - to be used to satisfy our needs and purposes (Heidegger 1962, p.97ff.). This is, however, nothing like the full picture. In interacting with one's physical and social world as a sort of drive-propelled body among other driven bodies, basic physical and social needs are likely to be well to the fore. But our primary experience of the world also, it seems, acts as a catalyst for the release of wider, less purely instrumental aspects of our human potential. A child experiencing the physical world or encountering another person may not just be adopting a utilitarian stance or attempting to reduce an initially troubling situation to a more manageable one. Amid the stream of thoughts, feelings and vague impressions we are subject to as we experience what is before us, an impulse just to appreciate what is there, or simply to engage in understanding for its own sake, may also be evoked. In other words we find that some of our basic encounters with the world appear to evoke more purely aesthetic responses of delight and wonder which it is difficult to categorise as part of either the 'systematising' or the 'empathising' impulses discussed above. This is the third element in our basic experience of life that I wish to draw attention to.

Even new-born infants appear to prefer symmetrical to asymmetrical patterns; and it is surely a common experience that young children can be fascinated by the sheer quality of certain sounds, by the sight of a body of water shimmering in the sun, by the movements of a dancing figure. Dylan Thomas described his early love of the sheer sound of the words he heard in his first nursery rhymes in the following terms. They were:

> as the notes of bells, the sound of musical instruments, the noises of wind, sea and rain (cited in Chadwick 2003).

It is, perhaps, Oakeshott who provides us with the classic description of this impulse under the heading of 'poetry', writing that:

> By 'poetry', I mean the activity of making images of a certain kind and moving them about in a manner appropriate to their character. Painting, sculpting, acting, dancing, singing, literary and musical composition are different kinds of poetic activity (1962, p.216).

He goes on to say that not everyone who takes part in these activities 'speaks in the idiom' or true 'voice' of poetry, but the essence of the poetic impulse is that:

> [images] are made, remade, observed, turned about, played with, meditated upon, and delighted in (p.224).

They can also be combined and 'composed into larger patterns' to produce more complex images for the sheer delight that this produces ' like a girl bunching flowers, considering only how they will appear together' (p.224), i.e. with no thought of a premeditated end.

It is, he says, its own activity, and, once entered into creates its own momentum and impulses which drive it along its own paths. This is not to say, of course, that any such activity, although entered into for its own sake, may not produce results which turn out to have tangible benefits either for the individual or society. In this sense (and *against* Oakeshott) we may think Schiller was right to see the 'social value' of art as lying 'in the relief it offers from the uniformities and rigidities of a life narrowly concentrated upon practical endeavour' (cited on p.240). More strongly, some, including Adorno (1984), have seen that art, simply because it can go its own way and give intimations of worlds outside the normal parameters of our thinking, may have the potential to subvert established systems. But in childhood, as Oakeshott says:

> Everybody's young days are a dream, a delightful insanity, a miraculous confusion of poetry and practical activity………..[a]nd however immersed we may become in practical or scientific enterprise, anybody who recollects the confusion it was to be young will have a ready ear for the voice of poetry (op.cit. p.245-6).

The larger picture

In these spheres of our functioning – engaging with the world of things, with the shifting subtleties of the interpersonal, and with the sheer delights of the aesthetic realm – we may well see the seeds of three great domains of activity which, for much of western history since the time of Plato, have been seen as reflecting the essence of our distinctively human endeavours: that is, the pursuit of 'truth' (through systematic knowledge and 'science'); the pursuit of 'the good' (note the strong moral dimension above within the interpersonal); and the delight in 'beauty'. (This is, of course, not to imply that these are strictly demarcated areas, but that each has its own distinctive feel, creates its own ways of processing and exploring experience, and brings its own satisfactions.)

I will leave it to the reader to reflect on the significance of these spheres, but when one finds what is basically the same three-fold division appearing in Kant's great Critiques; being strongly implied at points in Dewey (e.g. 1900, p.31); and being taken up by Habermas (who, following the work of Weber, characterizes modernity in terms of the increasing separation of the worlds of science and technology, morality and law, and art and aesthetics (1984, p.157ff)) – all this seems to point to the continuing primacy and relevance of such polarities in our human make-up, and to reflect ways in which some deep-seated impulses find expression and fulfilment. At any rate, returning to the lifeworld of the child, the seeds of these domains seem already to be active, and able to take the individual well beyond a preoccupation with lower-level bodily needs.

Finally, to get back to the general picture I am presenting of life at this level: as our lifeworlds are being formed in childhood, we are not like human sponges soaking up environmental influences, but go through what is perhaps *the* basic human predicament in a very direct and exposed way as the child, with a particular constellation of energies and implicit way of being, meets with, adjusts to, fights, and embraces the individuals and structures confronting them in a particular environment; and forges, for better or worse, some personally distinctive approach to life. And in these, our basic transactions with the world, as one both 'undergoes' and 'acts', to use Dewey's words (1916, pp.139-140), it seems that the whole spectrum of human energies and capacities can be evoked, albeit initially in rudimentary form.

It is in this full sense that one sees the real significance of statements of Merleau-Ponty to the effect that science (along with other more refined bodies of knowledge) is:

> but a 'second-order expression' of a 'basic experience of the world' which [is] the 'homeland of our thought', the 'horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles' (cited in Schmidt 1985 p.37).

2 Organised Bodies of Knowledge or Skill

If the lifeworld is, as Merleau-Ponty put it, the homeland of our thought, and if this world as it is 'lived, suffered and enjoyed' gives rise to our "basic experiences of "love, beauty and mystery" etc, such experience tends to be largely "Protean ..a thing of moods and tenses", often a shifting kaleidoscope of impressions (Dewey 1926,ch.1). But we have, in embryonic and undifferentiated form, material which, through more systematic and focussed investigation can be refined into more organised forms of knowledge or skill – into 'subjects', 'disciplines', and areas of expertise.

These form the second main category of human experience I wish to discuss, and it is these that have traditionally made up the staple fare of the school curriculum. In fact it appears to have been an overriding economic and political impulse (when setting up mass education systems at a time when industrialised processes and other specialised fields were expanding in the nineteenth century) to enable more of the population to move beyond what Dewey (above) has called the 'dense' and 'macroscopic' experience of everyday living so that they could acquire these more 'refined' and 'technical' bodies of knowledge (cf. Jarman (1963, p.212f.) and Maclure (1973, pp.85-6,121-5, &142)).

In view of the great variety of these fields, ranging from the sciences to the humanities and arts, some may think it unwise to consider them together as a group. However I shall argue that, as areas which can be systematically structured, they do tend to have certain underlying features in common, that they play a distinct role in the wider realm of educational endeavour, but (in the next chapter) that their educative effect on the wider personality tends to be limited by the very qualities which make them what they are.

The creation of virtually autonomous worlds.

They appear to reflect, and have the potential to develop, different forms of intellectual ability or areas of technical skill which can be progressively refined to generate their own virtually autonomous spheres of operation, ultimately giving rise to the plethora of specialisms which loom so large in today's world. In the educational context I would make a rough but definite distinction between these fields, which are public and largely external to the learner, and those subject or topic areas which attempt to deal explicitly with the more personal life and conduct of students – their relationships, their personal feelings, how they conduct themselves in everyday practical living and making their way in life. These are obviously important areas which I shall come to later. But, it can be argued, this whole sphere of practical living does not lend itself in the same way to such systematisation or specialised treatment –something I discuss more fully in chapters 5 and 8. Because of the dominance of the latter (systematising) paradigm in education, however, we may well feel at a loss when it comes to dealing effectively with areas which are not amenable to such treatment. (To the reader who asks at this point how the 'humanities', particularly the study of great literature, fit in here, I would say that whatever the intrinsic potential of such fields, there are strong pressures at work in the educational system, some of which I have already mentioned, which tend to pull the humanities into the mould I am describing here. However this is an issue which, again, I will address directly in the next chapter where, against the wider background of human experience I am exploring, one might see more clearly how such areas measure up to their time-honoured 'humanising' function.)

To return to these organised fields, although there are obvious difficulties in attempting to locate the source of such a proliferation in a few more fundamental human abilities, and while one may have reservations about aspects of the particular classification of 'intelligences' in Gardner's (1993) scheme, I would maintain that one does find in his account the sort of abilities susceptible to such development – as opposed to those that are not. Borrowing from and modifying his account, one might pick out the following types of 'intelligence': the logico-mathematical, the scientific-empirical, the linguistic, the spatial (including the artistic), the musical, and aspects of the kinaesthetic (in so far as this area is implicated in craft and other skills requiring dexterity and the development of physical techniques).

What typically happens in these areas is that in looking in close-up and delving deeply into a particular area of life in order to understand something of the dynamics or laws underlying it, one tends to become progressively removed from the surrounding generality of everyday life. This gets left behind as one homes in on a particular set of phenomena, behind which one may discover a whole complex of subtly interacting elements or forces – a virtual world in itself which can draw one ever more deeply into its fascinating intricacies. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the case of physics where one enters into the world of waves, particles, inertia, weak and strong nuclear forces, etc. But in the area of the humanities and arts we find other complex breakdowns of elements believed to be behind surface phenomena, with the discovery of underlying patterns, hidden influences, or subtle relationships between the elements making up a particular form or technique.

Having found a way into such a world and, as it were, set it up, it can then take on a life and dynamic of its own, generating further properties and problems as more implications of these underlying elements emerge and are progressively explored. Any one such emergent corner, so to speak, may then be expanded into a room as its inherent possibilities are realised; and this itself may open out onto further corridors, and so on. (Something of the technical dynamics at work here has been described by Cassirer (1953-57, esp.vol.3) who saw this as representing the most advanced stage of man's symbolizing activity, with such activity able to build reflexively on itself to generate whole new layers of meaning. In fact the meaning of one set of symbols will often lie in another set that could be on a higher or lower logical level.) Here, Prosch has commented favourably on Polanyi's notion of:

> a reality from which one may expect indeterminate properties to arise in
> future, properties of which we have not yet dreamed – that have, as it were,
> a life and development of their own which one can neither control nor
> anticipate (cited in Scott 1985, p.190);

while Popper neatly captures the essence of this process when he refers to these kinds of world (which form a large part of 'world three' in his scheme) as "largely autonomous, though created by us" (1972, p.118).

Such refined and elaborate operations do, of course, represent the extreme end of this push towards ever greater specialisation, and may seem far removed from the school 'subjects' which form a large part of the typical school timetable (although, as I point out in the next chapter, there seems to be a tendency for some specialist and virtually autonomous subject worlds to develop at ever earlier stages of the child's learning). More generally, however, in so far as our civilisation is, in large part, dependent on the mastery of particular fields which demand a substantial degree of specialisation - we expect education to produce competent mathematicians, engineers, geographers, historians, social scientists etc. - we have in embryo in many of our basic school subjects essentially the same underlying push towards progressive differentiation and specialisation, particularly at the secondary (age 11 plus) level. To cite a dictum of William Barrett, '"Specialisation is the price we pay for the advancement of knowledge" (1958, p.6); and it can certainly be argued that this tendency, connected as it often is to a general impulse towards the hard empirical study of different facets of the world around us, has, as Bacon foresaw, extended our knowledge immeasurably and brought immense material benefits. Today we appear to be ever more reliant on this process to sustain the technologically sophisticated systems underlying a way of life we now take for granted.

A closer look at some particular features.

Looking at the characteristics of these fields in a more detailed and systematic way, and drawing on the work of various thinkers here, one may list the following facets as indicative of **(i):** their principal structural features, and **(ii):** their potential psychological or 'educative' effect - although the two are not completely separable.

(i) *structural features*. Typically we find:

  (a) a body of skills or thought-forms typically organized into a system of increasing levels of complexity, and consisting of:

   - certain key concepts which are often peculiar to, or used in a way that is peculiar to the field in question; for example, in physics, 'mass', 'acceleration', 'force' and 'atom'; in literary theory 'differance', 'presence' and 'supplement'; in carpentry (more specifically chair-making) one finds 'splats', 'rails' and 'scrolls' (cf. Hirst1965, pp.128-9).

- a network of related ideas which has its own 'syntactic structure' (Schwab 1975), 'logos' (Reid, 1961, p.7) or general 'feel'. (This is not to say, to borrow Kuhn's term, that competing 'paradigms' may not exist in any one field, each of which may have a slightly different 'feel' about it.)

(b) such a structure tends to generate:

- its own methods of procedure, its own 'truth-tests' (including ways of viewing what counts as evidence), and yields its own distinctive insights (or 'truths'). These can be tested against, or otherwise ring true to, experience; or be found to cohere with other aspects of the general structure which do. (Again, compare Hirst, op.cit.)

- through such means any such body also tends to create its own system of what MacIntyre (1981, pp.175-6) has termed 'internal goods' – intrinsic satisfactions which may be intensely rewarding to those who develop a sense of affinity with a particular field (or set of 'practices', to use his term).

(c) there tends to be a build-up of what one might call 'self-regarding watchfulness' within a particular field: a concern to maintain standards and defend the interests of its practitioners. One finds, for instance, yardsticks of good practice developing, authority figures emerging, and professional bodies being established.

(d)   in any such field there is a greater or lesser degree of tension between tradition and innovation - between deference to existing knowledge and forms, and a willingness to subvert and modify. Writing of the arts, Peter Abbs has likened this sort of polarity to 'the dialectical current of Western culture' itself, seeing the latter as made up of 'a kind of piety' to its inheritance but also 'a turbulent iconoclastic spirit, infinitely restless, infinitely seeking, infinitely dissatisfied' (Abbs, 1993). Polanyi sees the place for both in mastering a particular field in terms of 'dwelling in' and 'breaking out' (1958, p.131). This, of course, no more than reflects a wider tension running through individual lives, through society and all its institutions.

(ii) *psychological effect*

In so far as these fields embody ways in which the mind can develop the particular types of intellectual or technical abilities that have been mentioned, this appears to be their main and most easily identifiable function in this respect. The situation is, however, more complex than this straightforward account might suggest. The development of any one of these abilities may also draw on and draw out elements of one or more of the others, or, indeed, draw on other capacities (for instance of an ethical kind) which are not strictly on a par with those considered so far. This raises a host of questions about the total view one has of human capacities, how they interconnect, and whether some might be more central to our functioning than others,

forming a sort of foundational core that is involved in all forms of structured mental activity and underlying the development of more particular mental powers. Rather than attempt to go into these deeper matters here, I will illustrate the sort of strong 'drawing on' and interconnection that can take place, since this appears to shed further light on the disciplinary potential of these differentiated fields. It may also bring out some further features that they have in common.

(a) These fields and the particular 'intelligences' associated with them all appear to involve, to a greater or lesser extent, the development of the more rational side of one's being. They can all be described as 'forms of understanding' whether involving mainly intellectual activity per se, artistic development, or technical forms of skill. There is usually a strong rational or logical basis to the way they become structured and presented to the learner - often in a series of graduated steps. It is generally expected that the students will adopt a methodical approach to the problems they encounter, and wishful thinking will be left behind, as they test their knowledge and skill against standards and practices which have stood the test of time. Gardner himself wonders whether what he calls the 'logico-mathematical' intelligence (which in his scheme includes what I have termed the 'scientific-empirical') is somehow 'more basic' than the others he describes (op.cit. p.167).

(b) However, if they are basically rational structures, they also allow scope for the development and exercise of wider mental powers. In particular, the human creative impulse, involving the use of one's more intuitive and imaginative capacities, can find ready outlet in these fields, both in its rudimentary and more sophisticated forms. As regards the former, it is surely a common classroom insight that, when introducing these fields, while one can take a 'no-nonsense' matter-of-fact approach to a subject, there is also scope for encouraging the child's own insight, initiative and sense of revelation as part of the learning process. As for the more sophisticated form of this impulse, Popper's view of the way science evolves is illuminating here. While stressing that in science any hypothesis should be subject to rigorous empirical tests, he also pointed out that there is no such thing as a logical method for having new ideas or a logical reconstruction of the process.

> My view may be expressed by saying that every discovery contains an 'irrational element' or a 'creative intuition' in Bergson's sense. In a similar way Einstein speaks of the 'search for those highly universal laws …. from which a picture of the world can be obtained by pure deduction. There is no logical path', he says, 'leading to these … laws. They can only be reached by intuition based on something like intellectual love ('einfuhling') of the objects of experience' (1959 p.32).

(c) Frequently allied to this creative impulse, but not confined to it, is a sense of the aesthetic. I do not wish to court controversy by attempting too precise a definition, but one might provisionally describe it as a disinterested delight in the form or apparent beauty of something, as the examples on pages 97-8 suggest. A child painting a picture, absorbed in the words of a poem, or fascinated by the markings on a butterfly, may experience a strong sense of this quality. It is not hard to see how this impulse can

be readily expressed in the arts, but the sciences too have their own share of this quality. The physicist J B Oppenheimer has referred to 'the beauty of the world of nature and the strange and compelling harmony of its order' which science reveals (cited in Reid 1962, p.173). In a similar vein Henri Poincare drew attention to the 'feeling of mathematical beauty...a true aesthetic feeling which all real mathematicians know' (in Scott 1985, p.34). In fact mathematicians in particular seem to be susceptible to this dimension of experience in their work. P D Smith writes of Paul Erdos that 'for [him], like mathematicians, a proof could be strikingly beautiful, something he was unable to explain (2001 p.13). While Roger Penrose (1996) has said that if the primary aim of the mathematician was to arrive at the truth, he was striving for truth "by following a path where beauty resides….Truth is the ultimate criterion, but beauty is the way you find it." (For a very similar more recent view compare Gardner (2012)).

(d) Finally there is undoubtedly a moral dimension implicit in developing a mastery of these fields. One aspect of this, already alluded to, is that with the development of any form of thought where reason and rational debate have a role, wishful thinking and unfounded prejudice will be questioned, shown for what they are, and, ideally, openness and honesty will triumph. This is easy to say from an armchair position, but in practice it may imply a series of difficult and humbling experiences. Bernard Williams (2002), referring to this sort of intellectual honesty, sees two main 'virtues of truth' involved here. The first – the pursuit of 'accuracy' – seems to correspond to Susan Haack's central intellectual virtue of honesty that is:

> a wish on the part of the enquirer to get to the truth of the matter that concerns him, whether or not it comports with what he held at the outset of the investigation. This should involve a willingness to face up to evidence that contravenes his prejudices and preoccupations, even his own material interests (1998, p.11).

Williams' second main virtue here is 'sincerity': that is, a willingness to *assert* what one believes on the best evidence – not to be tongue-tied in the face of convention, expediency or the party-line.

However, perhaps more basic than these typical 'intellectual virtues' is the possibility that in exploring, giving one's mind to, and mastering a structure of thought forms or skill, one will be relatively 'other-' rather than 'self-centred' if one becomes fully engaged in this process. Everyday preoccupations, jealousies, grievances etc. will, for a time at least, be left behind as one opens out to these absorbing and complex structures, and some 'decentring' of that self is likely to take place. 'The extreme pleasure I take in study', writes Hobbes, 'overcomes in me all other appetites'.(Cited in Thomas 2001; compare Murdoch 1970, pp.86-91).

I do not claim that these points regarding, respectively, the structural and disciplinary features of these fields constitute an exhaustive list. But they do point to some important underlying elements which these structures have in common. The increasing

recognition in recent years on the part of philosophers of science that, even on the so-called subjective/objective axis, there is no absolute divide between the natural sciences and the humanities (since science itself is a human activity riddled with subjective elements) may be taken as further evidence for this. (Mary Hesse (1972) was a seminal influence here). Equally any of the humanities or arts may embody something of the rigour one might normally associate with the sort of strictly 'scientific' approach advocated by Bacon, i.e. careful observation, keen analysis of data, the painstaking testing of hypotheses, etc. (Carr (1994) has even claimed that there is a sense in which some important *religious* truths can be tested through our experience of life.) Perhaps the following statement by McGee in his book on Popper epitomises the point:

> If Popper is right, there are not two cultures, - one scientific and the other aesthetic, or one rational and the other irrational – but one. The scientist and artist, far from being engaged in opposed or incompatible activities, are both trying to extend our understanding of experience by the use of creative imagination subject to critical control, and so both are using irrational as well as rational faculties (1973, p.68).

If we remember that 'trying to extend our understanding of experience' is, in many activities, implicitly rather than consciously pursued, the same can surely be said of the skilled technician, the master carpenter, or those in many of the professions who continue to advance their own skill and understanding.

A wide or limited educative effect?

In this discussion of common features I have brought out what may seem to be a potentially wide-ranging educative effect that an initiation into these fields can have on the student. It is the sort of case that those who are devoted to a certain profession or academic discipline often make, and it *is* important to recognise this sort of potential if one is to understand these fields. To what extent, however, it is realised in practice is another matter, particularly when, looking at these fields from the perspective of life in general, their focus of attention may be relatively narrow. We should not lose sight of the fact that they consist of limited worlds of their own, any one of which is, to use Oakeshott's term, essentially an 'arrest' in our free-ranging experience of life, and narrows down our horizons (Oakeshott 1933). Further, as we have seen, there seems to be a continual tendency for these partial worlds to fragment into increasingly

differentiated specialisms, in the process becoming further removed from the everyday world from which they originally sprang. As such they may indeed enhance one's understanding of aspects of the world. But whether the result is an integrated and balanced approach to life, or one that is disconnected and one-sided; whether it leads to a greater sense of connection to the world, or acts as a comforting substitute for it, - these are other questions which I hope to deal with in the next chapter, before which we need to consider another major dimension of our human way of being.

3 The 'Overall Sense-Making' and Evaluative Aspects of our Functioning

(It may be a comment on our present situation that I can find no convenient word or phrase to encapsulate this dimension of our lives, important though it is. Other terms that spring to mind are 'meaning-making', 'interpretive' or 'synoptic' experience. However I hope what I am alluding to will become clear in the account which follows.)

We have seen that the 'lifeworld' encompasses the everyday physical, social, mental and aesthetic world we inhabit, and that the various subject specialisms take off from this world, tending to become progressively differentiated from it. But there is something basic to the human condition that is missing here. We are beings who not only wish to experience life, and the various ways in which particular aspects of it can be understood in detail, but desire to get some greater perspective on things – we seek meaning and want to make 'sense' of it: in its strongest form, perhaps, to see a place for ourselves as part of some ongoing and meaningful narrative. Of course one might not be able to make sense of things, or the sense one makes may be subject to change and development; but we do seem to have a deep urge to 'search for meaning' as we go through life (Frankl 1964), and to pull these meanings into some overall 'frame of orientation' (Fromm 1949), 'personal myth' (Jung 1967) or 'narrative' (MacIntyre 1981, ch.15). There appears to be a widespread recognition of this impulse, although as the above may indicate, a host of different terms are used to express it. Even the conclusion that life does *not* make sense and that there is no point in looking for such a framework appears to betray the fact that one is attempting to get some sort of perspective on things which will help one cope with, and respond to, events as they press in upon us.

This dimension of our functioning, which includes reflecting on life in general and formulating a basic approach to it, together with the learning experiences that bear directly on it, forms the third part of the 'rough ground' of human experience, the basic ways of being and apprehending the world, that I wish to bring into relief. In so far as it is to do with the formation of one's basic attitudes, aspirations, and a developing sense of what one feels one is 'all about', this appears to represent a central and most important part of our human functioning, forming, it seems, a pivotal axis around which the rest of our lives rotate.

Although I think this area does not fit easily into Gardner's general perspective on the 'intelligences' (op.cit.), it is clearly related to the 'personal intelligences' in his scheme, particularly the 'intrapersonal' one which operates in the realm of general self awareness and understanding, although this draws on and can work in conjunction with the 'interpersonal' intelligence which is directed outwards towards understanding others and their behaviour.

Educational approaches to this area

In educational circles there does seem to be a wide, if rather uneven and hazy recognition of the importance of this area, and some such recognition is hardly surprising since it represents much of the ground which the third main educational 'impulse' I drew attention to in chapter 2 (providing for the wider personality development of the child) would be concerned with. Getting to grips with it, however, is another matter.

In the context of the other two areas of experience I have drawn attention to, the educational objective in catering for this area has been described (somewhat ideally), as follows:

> Here, while perhaps presenting a certain amount of subject matter from bodies of knowledge (or more rarely some direct lifeworld experience) as a catalyst, one is specifically concerned with assisting the internal functions and skills implicit in such operations as the evaluation, assessment and integration of information stemming from any quarter of the student's experiential world.

Compared with the typical subject fields described in the last section, the direction of the mirror in which the student sees the picture is, so to speak, switched from particular subjects and skills, which generally represent areas external to them which they have to reach out to and grasp, onto the actual position of the student as such with his or her present hopes, aspirations, fears, understandings and values etc. The object here, it is suggested, is to open up the ground for the consideration of such fears and aspirations, though this may need to be done in a gradual and gentle way. In the process of encouraging students to bring to the fore and verbalize their own preoccupations, and perhaps to face viewpoints and experiences other than their own, one is working to help clarify attitudes, to synthesise thinking processes, and to develop a feel for procedures making for openness and objectivity in assessing their experience of life in general. Here one would include processes bearing particularly on what Pring (1977, p.66) has called the education of 'common sense', in which students are encouraged to question the 'unquestioned assumptions…. through which its (the group's) members understand their relationships, tackle personal problems, pick out features of experience as significant – their 'reality of everyday life' (adapted from Marshall 1980, pp.49-50).

As the above may indicate, this is a motley and diverse area in which a potentially prodigious hotchpotch of material may surface and need to be handled sensitively. In practice one finds a host of different educational perspectives and approaches being brought to bear on it, and a brief look at just some of these may give some understanding of the many interconnected threads implicit here.

To begin with, we should make mention of what is, perhaps, the most common means of approach with younger children, at least in Britain: regular periods of *'Circle Time'*. An important feature here is that, in group sessions, each child in turn is given the opportunity to raise their feelings and concerns about potentially any aspect of life in a non-judgemental atmosphere. There is some time for discussion and the opportunity to respond, and work through, conflict situations and other personal problems (Mosley 1993). Jenny Mosley's work in this area has continued to influence such work with young children and, while not immune from criticism, some would see it as providing a foundation for many of the more particular movements discussed below.

Later on, things tend to become more structured and programmatic, and the same sort of underlying impulse can splay out in various ways depending on which aspect of our functioning is being primarily addressed. The *Philosophy for Children* movement, for example, approaches things mainly from a cognitive perspective, being concerned with

sharpening the child's thinking in general, together with the ability to enter into constructive dialogue. More particularly, a teacher may introduce children to a text (usually a human story) and the child will be encouraged to reflect on it, to think more deeply about the issues involved, listen to what others have to say about it, and engage with what (s)he has heard. Taking part in such discussion in a thoughtful way, if only as a listener, will (it is claimed) provide opportunities for the child continually to revise and reshape some of their thought processes. Building on earlier work by others, Hand & Winstanley (2008) have made a good case for teaching this type of philosophy in schools and there is now an open-access journal (the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*) on the subject.

On the other hand an *Emotional Literacy* approach will generally focus more directly on the affective side of one's nature, being concerned with such matters as impulse control, developing an empathetic understanding of others, looking at personal fears, and the student's level of self-motivation (Goleman 1996; cf. Klein 2001). Much of the original impulse here has taken shape in schools in the form of programmes of SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) in the USA, and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) in Britain.

This area obviously overlaps with the whole realm of value formation and a *Moral (or Values) Education* approach. In practice in many cases there may not be much of a divide between the 'emotional' and the more directly 'values' orientated approaches. There does appear to be a difference in principle, however, which I will go into briefly since this will shed further light on what may be involved in, and in catering for, this general area of life.

Looking at the standard breakdown of 'emotional intelligence' (the concept which has, to a large extent, given rise to the emotional literacy approach), one sees that it is largely concerned with understanding oneself (including one's strengths and weaknesses), 'managing' one's emotions (so that one can achieve one's goals), and understanding and getting on with others (Goleman 1996 ch.3 & pp.283-4). The underlying aim here (which may be reflected in the use of the morally neutral words 'intelligence', 'competence' and 'literacy') appears to be to remove emotional cobwebs and blockages in order that the individual can boost his or her general performance and

productivity in life - in other words, so that whatever the person's objectives, they can be achieved. But, one wonders, is this not compatible with a narrowly self-centred and egoistic existence, so long as one develops enough empathetic awareness to keep others 'on side'? What about the *quality* of the life-goals that are pursued? Here a focus more generally on values as such can in principle offer a fuller picture of what the individual might aspire to. Certainly some prominent strands within moral philosophy and values education appear to favour the cultivation of a more comprehensive vision of human flourishing or the 'good life'. (Here for instance, Kristjansson (2006) sees the emotional intelligence approach rather wanting in comparison with a more value- and virtue-based Aristotelian one (cf. Carr 2002)). Certainly in Britain over the years government educational bodies have listed a range of values that it was felt should be promoted in schools. More recently the Department for Education (2017) in England have referred approvingly to one of the Jubilee Centre's publications (2017) on developing character skills, listing particular virtues (which could equally well be expressed as values) that (in the Centre's words) "resonate well with current efforts at character education in schools". These include courage, justice, honesty, compassion, gratitude, humility, integrity, and respect for others[8]. Individual items on such a list may beg a number of questions, but such qualities do illustrate the general point about the range and reach, in principle, of the wider 'values' sphere compared with a focus on the emotions as such.

These three perspectives, focusing respectively on the cognitive, the emotional, and the realm of value, while they give an indication of the basic capacities of the personality that are implicated in this area, are not, of course, mutually exclusive. Whatever the way in, any approach which attempts to cater for things here may well find itself dealing with aspects which one might normally associate with the other two.

As for less general and, perhaps, more concrete approaches, I mentioned in chapter 2 that in   England and Wales from 2020 all secondary schools are required to make provision for *relationships and sex education* (RSE) as a key part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) – something which (albeit minus 'economics') they have been expected to cater for with varying success for more the 30 years.

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[8] Compare the DfE's Character Education Framework list noted on p.33 above.

Again, in Britain *citizenship* (the equivalent in the USA is *civics*) can be taught as part of or (at the secondary level) alongside a broad PSHE programme, and again with varying success. It may, as with certain other aspects of PSHE, involve a number of different elements, some of which may actually involve direct life-world interaction or acquiring a body of knowledge and which would therefore fall more aptly within those particular modes of experience. However, as understood by Passmore (1994) the subject would include generally reflecting on the importance of how we engage with others, and considering the place of "rules, friendship, property, community, prejudice, justice, and authority"; and where a reflective atmosphere can be created for discussion, debate and critical thinking about such issues, this *would* seem to fall within the wider sense-making sphere of our functioning.

Finally – though I am making no attempt to draw up an inclusive list here – this reference to the general sense/meaning-making impulse may remind us that in recent years there appears to have been an upsurge of interest in promoting the development of *'spirituality'*. This term, although susceptible to a number of definitions and viewed with suspicion in some quarters, *can* be seen as a term which neatly encapsulates the sort of psychological process which underlies everything here: the search for meaning and for a frame of orientation. New Zealand's Ministry of Education in 1999 issued, perhaps, *the* classic definition here, describing this area as being about:

> The values and beliefs that determine the way people live, the search for meaning and purpose in life, and personal identity and self-awareness. (For some …..spiritual well-being is linked to a particular religion; for others, it is not (cited in Fraser 2004, p.88).

Before leaving this 'spiritual' area, one should mention the potential role of *religious education* (or *instruction*) which, of course, can likewise be concerned with a search to find meaning and purpose in life, sometimes in a very down-to-earth way. As Tom Bennett (2016), a teacher of this subject tells us, it is a subject that "walks….through minefields of controversy and delicacy". He continues: "On an average day, I can teach lessons about abortion, funeral customs, suffering and mercy killing – all before lunch."

He concludes his piece with some words which might well strike a chord with any in schools who are striving to engage with children in this general sense-making way, *whatever* the official term for their area of work:

> I've been breathless at the honesty children can display when they know that they finally have one adult they can talk to, or write to. I always remember the girl who explained in a simple essay about Christmas how much her parents' divorce had devastated her. "I have never told anyone this," she wrote.

Some potentially problematic aspects

If these various approaches give some idea of the multifaceted nature of what is involved here, in the educational desire to cast the net widely it may be easy to forget some of the underlying and potentially constraining dynamics at work in this area as meanings build up in the individual psyche and frames of orientation take shape. But a recognition of these factors may be crucial to understanding, and so catering for, this area of our functioning. I shall discuss three of these.

(i) Implications of the strong value dimension.

Bearing in mind the potentially raw and poignant issues, which, as Bennett has shown, can surface in this area, one can understand that, as Park has stated;

> Young people need to be offered secure spaces where ….their feelings can be heard, where they can reflect upon where they have come from, where they are now, and where they might be going; where they can come to understand the powerful emotions they experience (Park 1997, p.10).

Here, although one may approach things gradually, there is no getting away from the fact that we are here talking about allowing space for, and at some stage hoping to bring reflection to bear on, the child's basic attitudes to and experience of the world, ultimately stemming from (to revert to my previous discussion of lifeworld experience) how the human entity, with its own incipient way of being, interacts with the conditions of life around it. In opening things up here, one is opening up the ground for the whole spectrum of desires, longings, ideals, joys and sorrows - which may ultimately derive from the very way the individual emerges as a striving organism interacting with the world - to come to the surface and make themselves felt. And at the very heart of things here are aspirations, values and the process of value formation. It is true that, to

some degree, the dimension of value suffuses one's perception of everything one experiences, but in dealing with, or even approaching, our basic experience of the world and the formation of an embryonic philosophy of life, one will inevitably be dealing with some of the deepest and most cherished values that the individual holds – those that are fundamental to basic hopes, aspirations, fears and aversions. If it is in the lifeworld that we normally *acquire* values, it might be said that this is the arena par excellence for reflecting on and clarifying those values.

However, for some, opening up discussion for such reflection and clarification can seem like entering into unfamiliar and difficult territory and may not be for the fainthearted. In Japan, for instance, we read that a recommended reform to moral education in schools to "shift from just reading materials to reflective and discussion-based learning":

> sounds fine in that it aims to foster children's motivation for learning and encourage a creative community of inquiry on moral values and virtues. It is crucial for the new subject to inspire children to think more reflectively and creatively, …not just to guess the 'correct answer' teachers expect from them as is normally the case (Nishino 2017 p.54).

However, she continues, "teachers and children have not been accustomed to having an open discussion in Moral Class" and in view of this, "it is crucial to prepare teachers to make a major transformation in their teaching methods." (ibid p.55).

In the West too, in circumstances where we still seem to be recovering (if, indeed, we are) from an apparent breakdown of consensus about values (see chapter 1) some may be wary of engaging with such potentially fraught and controversial issues. It is true that one can now find examples of recommended values and/or virtues in many official reports and documents, but many of these, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, appear to have been drawn up comparatively recently specifically to combat this apparent lack of consensus, and, at any rate in official documents, one can look in vain for a sound underlying philosophy or more overarching vision of human development.   But, to refer back to Nishino:

> There is a need to encourage teachers to develop their own moral thinking beyond the conventional and to acquire the flexibility and confidence to face the realities of schools and children in order to develop various methods suitable for their own classroom situations (p.55).

In other words, we need people who are confident enough in this area not just to parrot some text book or officially approved line, but who, through their own personal presence, understanding and commitment, can convey to students something of the inherent value of engaging in such reflection; and who, taking account of the actual situation of the individuals and classes they encounter, know when and how to improvise and be flexible.

(ii) The 'whole mind-set' problem

Here we need to note the real significance of a feature of this area of our functioning which has been implicit above, but has not been looked at closely. That is, the tendency, as we search for and find meaning and significance, for things to condense into a basic frame of reference – a relatively compact fusion with an overall twist or tenor which can underlie a whole approach to life. There may be profound and difficult implications for educational work as a result.

In making provision for this area it might appear to be a fairly straightforward task to set up a course or 'whole-school' programme under the banner of 'emotional literacy', 'values education', or 'citizenship' etc., with the terrain broken down into more particular areas, each of which will be addressed. The scope and reach of the resultant programme can appear to be remarkably comprehensive and one might assume that, having got things 'taped' in this way, such provision was bound to bear fruit.

It may not be sufficiently appreciated, however, that a child's approach to an issue that is particularly concerning, or touches a deeply held belief, may well be part of, and embedded in, a core complex of attitudes and beliefs which cluster around an investment made in an overall approach to life. Any particular manifestation of it will tend to cohere with a whole network of other elements, some of which may be the result of the child's struggle to adapt to the basic circumstances of life as (s)he finds it, and which will not be given up easily. In these circumstances if one succeeds in

dealing with a particular issue, the underlying predisposition may simply fasten on another object as a channel for its expression.

In what has become known as Ego Psychology this basic frame of reference within which one perceives the world, and which structures one's outlook, tends to be equated with the 'ego' itself: i.e. a mental structure consisting of a complex of beliefs and attitudes in which thought, values, and feelings are processed and regulated in a distinctive way. In what is still a much referenced work on this, Loevinger (1976) notes that one can trace the history of the basic idea back to Adler, who observed that early in life the child adopts a particular way of seeing, which he called, variously, a 'way of facing problems', a general 'attitude to life', and a 'scheme' or 'style of life' (p.9). This provides a frame of reference which, in structuring things in a certain way, tends to screen out unwelcome or unassimilable observations. But as Loevinger has pointed out, citing Sullivan, without some such simplification – which Adler termed 'tendentious apperception' - 'the complexity of stimuli impinging on the individual would be overwhelming' (p.105). For a more recent view of our "natural tendency to self-integrate, and fashion one's values, goals and motivation into a fully coherent whole", drawing now on Self Determination Theory, see Curren (2017 pp.20-1).

To return to Loevinger's account, this core, she maintains, consists of a number of related components, although the precise nature and degree of connectedness between them will probably vary with the individual. Among the most central are an unfolding moral sense, a developing 'interpersonal style', and the growth of 'cognitive complexity' (pp.24-7 &161). The core structure appears to grow in spurts with intervening periods of relative stability (p.105), and forms the "frame…around which the whole edifice of personality is constructed" (p.41).

 (iii) Growth and development

Although numerous developmental sequences have been found for particular human capacities, one does not come across much, particularly in educational literature, which considers the overall implications of this work for the development of a more general frame of orientation or underlying attitude to life. But not surprisingly the way this central complex develops appears to have much in common with more specific

sequences which have been identified in such areas as morality, interpersonal interaction, and cognitive development. One way of looking at this developmental pattern overall is to see it in terms of the ability to acquire successive freedoms. There is, Loevinger suggests:

> first, freedom from one's impulses through the assimilation of cultural and social expectations and conventions. Later there starts a continuing struggle to attain some freedom from convention and social pressures (p.46).

Within these overarching parameters there tends to be a movement from limited and particular to more open and inclusive horizons. One would expect this to manifest itself in the cognitive field, as a movement from concrete here-and-now reasoning to more detached and principled considerations; in the affective sphere in the progressive expansion of a 'sentiment for humanity' (to adapt Hume's phrase) so that the range of people one feels some fellow-feeling for eventually encompasses the whole of humanity; and in the moral area as a move from self-centred towards other-centred and self-transcending perspectives. Overall the direction of movement is, as Loevinger points out, towards bringing more and more of life within the scope of the ego at the expense of the unconscious and purely instinctive (p.425).

Anyone familiar with the developmental sequences considered by Loevinger; with Hoffman's work (2000) on the development of empathy; with Piaget's , Kohlberg's or Gilligan's work on stages of moral development (1932,1978 & 1982 respectively); or with Fowler's (1981) account of the stages of 'faith' (which also claims to encompass the development of secular frameworks of belief) - will recognise a similar underlying pattern, although any implication of a conclusively final end state in such schemes can be questioned. Loevinger, for example, suggests that this overall direction of growth can "never be consummated; life will always draw its vitality from unconscious sources" (p.425). (One is reminded that, for Jung, the 'archetype of the self' (an inner urge reflected in a striving for the full realization and integration of every facet of the personality) is an ideal which can never be totally realized. It nevertheless remains a powerful, if often obstructed, impulse at the heart of our being (Jung 1967, pp.222-4 & 417)).

If this has illustrated something of the tangled complexity of things in this area, and of the difficulty of getting to grips with it, it can be argued, as it has been by Noddings (2005), that what we 'care' about - reflecting the sort of spirit which beats within the breast, where the heart lies, and what one sets one's sights on – is far more important than any conventional school subject, and it is surely important that schools continue with attempts to make meaningful provision in this area.   Before going further into this, however, we need to look at some of the more general implications for education of the three dimensions of our 'being in the world' that I have identified.

5

Implications for educating the wider character: a challenging task.

In this chapter I propose to take a more considered view of the scene I have set and to bring out some wider implications of those basic dimensions of our life and functioning which I have drawn attention to. So far my account has focused on broad outlines and structural characteristics. I suggest we now need a more critical appraisal of these modalities and the part played by each in our lives. This will give a more weighted picture of them and a better understanding of the scope and limitations of each. One can then consider the very real implications for education.

I will approach this by looking at some more particular (if in some cases rarely explored) dynamics that seem to come into effect within each area. This is an exercise which, in itself, could well be extended to fill a whole chapter in each case. Here I will content myself with just dealing with those factors which are particularly relevant to the wider case I am making, and will start by trying to get to grips with what actually happens, and what is the effect on us, as we engage with those more structured fields to which education devotes the vast bulk of its resources and energy: the organised bodies of knowledge and skill. Then, by way of sharp contrast, I will look at our life-world experience in this light. Finally, I take a more in-depth look at the dynamics operating within the wider sense-making dimension of our functioning, and consider more critically the role that *it* plays.

The Role of Bodies of Knowledge and Skill: A Critical Appraisal

In view of the very substantial investment in energy and resources which education devotes to this area it seems important to get some clearer understanding of what is actually being achieved, although these organised bodies have become so central and dominant a part of the curriculum – in fact of our way of life in general - that any radical questioning of the place and status of such imposing structures could be viewed

as heresy in certain quarters. However, serious questions can be asked both of their role in our lives generally and about the part they play in education as such. What sort of effect do they generally have on the learner? And what part can they play in fulfilling the wider aims of education – in educating the child in the fuller sense of the term – which, as I have pointed out, is a task we are now increasingly expecting the school to address? It might seem odd, for instance, that in the present scramble for better academic results, educational policy makers rarely stop to think about what this formidable edifice we expect the young to assimilate actually achieves. This may be, at least in part, because when one starts to go into such issues, one is immediately confronted by an array of complexities which it can be difficult to get beyond. I will give a flavour of these below and then try to get more to the heart of the matter.

Getting the measure of these fields: an elusive quest

On the face of it, there seems to be something of a conundrum here. On the one hand we have for centuries tended to rely on these rational structures to provide the mental discipline, the intellectual muscles and sinews, which underlie and have driven so much of our progress and development in the modern world. And it can be argued that, without such disciplines representing the more intricate workings of reason in its various modes, we would remain much more a prey to blinkered convention and blind superstition. On the other hand, for all the time and effort devoted to such fields, do we not sense that all too often such structures fail to connect with the actual person, the inner being or core of the individual who has acquired such knowledge; that, while giving a person certain intellectual or technical skills, their basic energies, drives and general attitudes to life seem to be left virtually untouched and unaffected?

Here, it may be thought that one main feature of such structures that I have already drawn attention to will inevitably tend towards the latter sort of outcome. This is that, typically, in enabling one to gain a deeper understanding of particular aspects of what we experience, they tend to leave behind the generality of the everyday world and our existence within it. This is, of course, more particularly the case at the 'secondary' (age 11 plus) level of education where subjects become more differentiated and each requires a more concentrated and sharply defined focus if the student is to master both the content and the way they are structured. As Floden et al. have noted:

> [U]nless students can break with their everyday experience in thought, they cannot see the extraordinary range of options for living and thinking; and unless students give up many commonsense beliefs, they may find it impossible to learn disciplinary concepts that describe the world in reliable, often surprising ways (cited in Garrison and Bentley, 1990, p.32).

They conclude that "reaching the goal of disciplinary understanding is frustrated by relying on everyday experience" (ibid). Oakeshott has expressed himself in a similarly unequivocal way on this issue, in his case seeing the university with its disciplined modes of discourse as a place where the learner can gain some respite from "the muddle, the crudity, the sentimentality, the intellectual poverty and emotional morass of everyday life" (1989, p.30). It may be true, as Dewey consistently argued, that there should be no sudden break with everyday experience in the process of acquiring such disciplined learning, since it should grow naturally and organically out of our everyday activities and enquiries. But once the sort of methodical investigation he advocated is underway, the material will tend to develop progressively into a "fuller, richer, and also more organised form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person" (1938/1998, p.87). Thus systematically processing this vastly expanded wealth of material does, it seems, tend to result in things separating out into the various scientific, mathematical, and literary etc. disciplines, each with its own layers of increasing complexity, and each (to quote Garrison and Bentley) with "a distinct set of concepts, criteria of rationality, dispositions, interests, values etc., each different from those in everyday life…" (1990, p.32). (One might see this as summing up some of the threads I was exploring in the last chapter)

But what is the effect of this phenomenon? It can be argued that in developing one's mental powers in ways which might be difficult to achieve otherwise, in exploring new vistas which are opened up in this way, we are is able to fulfil ourselves as essentially rational beings and in so doing transform our whole existence. There is a strong tradition one can draw on here going back at least to Aristotle, through Spinoza and Hegel, and on to Hirst and beyond. Hegel, for example, fully acknowledged that such fields of learning, as they developed, tended to end up becoming virtually autonomous entities with a life of their own, which then stand impassively before us almost as if we

had not created them. (In fact he saw this as a tendency in all man's cultural products and described it as a process of "alienation".) But, he claimed, such structures do serve to liberate us from the restricted outlooks and parochial forms of life which would otherwise condition and limit our horizons. In order to actualize himself as a particular individual, the person must, paradoxically, take on these more universal forms which free us from our original state. Although initially taken out of oneself, education should ensure that one can ultimately find a way back to a self that has become more informed and enlightened. (Hegel, 1811/1970 cited in Vanderstraeten, 2004, p.203). The continual influence of this way of thinking is reflected again in Michael Oakeshott's ideal of the university where the learning is made up of such distinct modes of discourse, and where to become fully human is to become initiated into this great inheritance. And something like this seems to have influenced the minds of many of those who have striven to promote the ideal of a 'liberal education' which I described in Chapter 2.

If these are powerful and still influential claims, the reader will probably not be surprised to learn that they have been seen as rather inflated and unrealistic – at any rate in respect of many, perhaps the vast majority, of the students in our schools. All too often, it seems, such high status structures do not lead from a state of what Hegel saw as alienation back to a self that has become better informed and enlightened, but are rather seen as objects to be grasped on their own terms, as it were, and they remain largely insulated from the everyday lives and functioning of the learner. In fact they can become ever more distant and remote from this the more deeply one delves into them. In the words of Ray Elliott:

> A common objection to education in the disciplines is that it tends to result in a loss of the primitive sense of being within the whole, and in estrangement from natural understanding. Instead of understanding life and the world through deepening his experience of them, the educated man depends upon theoretical and scholarly explanations which, at least for the most part, he neither originates nor fully understands. He thinks he has gained from his initiation into the disciplines, whereas in fact he has lost his genuineness as a human being (1975 p.69).

There is, surely, much to ponder on here. To what extent do such fields of learning have an effect which reaches into and enlightens a whole way of being? Do they not tend to remain as discrete sites of operational effectiveness which in reality have little

if any connection with the everyday functioning or animating spirit of the individual? Or, indeed, can they actually get in the way of living life fully? As Dewey has warned (albeit in the context of philosophical enquiry):

> Problems can be made to emerge which exercise the ingenuity of the theorizer, and which convince many a student that he gets nearer to the reality of experience the further away he gets from all the experience he has ever had (1926, p.5).

In any case, can one generalise in this way? Are not different disciplines bound to have different effects and degrees of effect? What about literature and the humanities? Far from departing from the everyday world, are these disciplines not firmly based on the material – the human problems - thrown up by it? And what about the more child-centred approaches to these fields? Surely, one may think, such approaches are expressly designed to enable the child to acquire such learning in a more holistic or organic way so that it naturally becomes integrated with a whole way of being rather than remaining as discrete bubbles of knowledge or skill.

Two limiting factors

It is not easy to cut through the range of issues which can arise here and get to the bottom of things, particularly when there appears to be little in the way of hard empirical data which one can draw on, and there seem to be so many variables which can affect the outcome in the individual case. However, there appear to be two basic features of these structures, especially as they are developing in the modern world, the implications of which may well turn out to outweigh and override many of these more particular considerations and prove to be decisive in this matter - particularly when combined with some psychological insight and an awareness of the wealth of historical and literary figures whose lives seem to exemplify the underlying point.

(i) Specialization and the increasing fragmentation of life.

Firstly, if the reader will bear with me, there is a need to look more closely at one aspect of the tendency of these structures to pull us beyond the everyday: that is, the allure of - and seemingly unstoppable impetus towards - specialization, leading not just to a narrowing of focus in the individual case, but increasingly over time, it seems, to the fragmentation of life itself into a myriad of separate worlds and disparate

perspectives. This is, perhaps, just the logical outcome of what Schutz and Luckmann, saw as a "shift in the proportions of general and special knowledge" and the resultant rise of:

> a multiplicity of heterogeneous provinces [of knowledge] whose meaning-structures cohere loosely, if at all (1973, p.328).

Further, this, I shall argue, is not just a feature of those more refined bodies of knowledge one might typically associate with higher education and research; but even at a comparatively low level the child's learning can succumb to this fragmenting tendency in one guise or another. There are, I believe, serious implications here with regard to how such learning relates to the wider personal development and general functioning of the individual.

Looking at the larger historical context against which specialization has been powering ahead in the modern world, one has to acknowledge that it seems to have been a persistent feature of developing accumulations of knowledge or skill throughout history. It was Plato who, in the first book of The Republic, pointed out the benefits of a basic division of labour so that, instead of one person trying to do everything, the builder, the cobbler, the farmer etc. could devote themselves more efficiently to one particular occupation. And it was reported (see Gaiser, 1980) that Plato in his old age gave a public lecture called 'On the Good' where the specialist terminology and abstract thought went completely over the heads of his audience. However, particularly since the Industrial Revolution and the veritable explosion of knowledge which took place in the West throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (due in no small part to the 'Baconian turn' I have described), what Giddens (1991, p.124) has called "the proliferation of specialisms" has accelerated and such exponential growth appears to be unstoppable. Further, it seems that we now find ourselves living in a world where even those aspects of our lives which were once thought of as the proper province of the layman and *not* that of the expert are increasingly being subjected to such treatment. As Giddens has observed:

> Expert systems…..penetrate virtually all aspects of social life in conditions of modernity….They are not confined to areas of technical expertise. They extend to social relations themselves and to the intimacies of the self. The

doctor, the counsellor and therapist are as central to these expert systems
….as the scientist, technician or engineer (ibid. p.18).

One might add to his examples the plethora of 'experts' in such areas as childcare and parenting, sexual fulfilment, diet, fitness training, and - not least - 'life-coaching'.

One reason why this tendency may have intensified in recent years is that, with the apparent breakdown of wider value frameworks and large-scale ideologies, specialisms themselves, divorced from any larger picture, but comprising virtual worlds with their own intrinsic satisfactions, can come to act as substitutes for the wider meaning-giving functions which these larger frameworks once had. With no wider world-view or encompassing belief system in which to locate and gain a greater perspective on these proliferating systems, they can come to be seen as ends in themselves, as structures to be prized in their own right, each of which creates its own mystique. At its extreme, when combined with a blind adherence to 'efficiency and effectiveness' of the sort which Lyotard (!979/1984) has drawn attention to, this can lead to a situation described by Warnke (reflecting Gadamer's view) in these chilling words:

> The course of technological and scientific advance is no longer guided by
> public consensus on aims and goals; rather, the reverse is the case: goals
> and purposes are themselves dictated by technological demands and
> possibilities (1987, p.163).

If this is the wider context in which education is inevitably caught up, it is, of course, most obviously seen in higher education where, in order to gain a deeper understanding of certain aspects of these ever expanding fields, individuals tend to confine themselves to a comparatively narrow area and the subject itself splits into more particular branches which can accommodate this. This is, perhaps, most readily seen in the sciences as new data constantly accumulate and new explanations evolve. But even in the humanities it has recently been said of its scholars that:

> [T]heir horizons are too narrow and their standards too high to allow them
> to comment freely on issues outside their own area of expertise. As Max
> Weber suggested, the scholar has ceased to be a sage and become a
> technician (Thomas, 2001, p12).

- an impression which is not dispelled when one hears of research papers with such titles as 'Scrotal asymmetry in ancient sculpture' (McManus 1976) and 'The semiotics

of ruff-adjustment in the Elizabethan (mad)rigal' (Day 2004). Further, in the academic world generally there seems to be a natural tendency for specialists in any one area to dig themselves in ever deeper, as it were, as they investigate their own fields. While, as regards their relationship with the public, according to Thomas (op.cit.)

> Academics fortify the frontier which separates them from the populace by mining it with arcane jargon and fencing it with esoteric 'theory'[9].

Looking at the lives of people who have acquired such specialisms, history is replete with examples of those who have been brilliant in a particular field, but whose brilliance has been accompanied by an inability to operate successfully at the level of everyday human interaction or to have fruitful and fulfilling personal relationships. In such cases, indeed, concentrating on and immersing themselves in their chosen field seem, indeed, to have acted to compensate for a lack of development in other areas of their lives rather than contributing to a more general transformation of their character. This does not mean, of course, that such an immersion must *necessarily* lead to some imbalance or skewed development. We have to remember the sane Haydns of the world, as well as the socially inept Beethovens; Ernest Rutherford as well as Paul Erdos and Albert Einstein; and in philosophy Locke, Hume, and J S Mill (in later life) as well as Rousseau, Nietzsche and Russell. However, in the former cases, whom we might regard as leading relatively healthy and fulfilled personal lives, it seems that the seeds of such development are to be found in the opportunities they had, particularly when young, for rich and meaningful interaction with others: being raised in a family, for instance, which provided stability, security and a setting in which emotional warmth and affection could be experienced, if not always freely expressed. Where such conditions are lacking, no amount of knowledge or skill in a particular area, it seems, can easily make up for a basic deficit here. That, at any rate, is what the biographies of such figures point to. (Here, apart from particular biographies such as John Campbell's on Rutherford (1999), the reader might like to delve into Johnson

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[9] At its extreme this tendency appears to be only too well illustrated by the ease with which certain academic 'hoaxers', from Alan Sokal in 1994 (reported in Whipple (2017), through Gary Lewis (in Whipple, 2018), to Pluckrose, Lindsay and Boghossian (cited in Ferguson 2018), have been able to get their spoof academic papers (generously laced with fashionable buzzwords and/or abstruse technical language) published in established journals. To get a real flavour of the almost unbelievably surreal and sometimes farcical results, I would refer readers to Whipple (2018) above, where, as he puts it "Someone should really have questioned whether such sophisticated statistics were needed to determine whether your position on the political spectrum affects [which] hand you use to wipe your bottom."

(1988), Carey (1992) and Lilla (2002) for an appreciation of how frequently intellectuals seem to lack a basic sense of humanity in their personal lives and political stances, whatever their theoretical positions might be thought to imply.) This is a point which, in a sense, should come as no great surprise when one considers the general findings of clinical psychology regarding the fundamental importance of interpersonal relationships to the psychological health of the individual.

So far I have drawn attention to what some might regard as rather extreme cases of such specialization, partly because it is at this level that the effect – or lack of effect – on the wider personality is often particularly obvious. But of course, in providing for the general education of the child, schools themselves are not expected to reach into such advanced and recondite areas. Here however, one has to appreciate that, even at a comparatively low level, ordinary school subjects can become turned in on themselves, as it were, in a way which means that they are increasingly removed and insulated from the everyday life-world of the child, becoming virtually self-contained areas. This is especially so in a world where, as I have pointed out (pp.55-6) the instrumental/utilitarian orientation in education is on the ascendant and even at a comparatively low level there can be considerable pressure to get students to succeed in the system (by means of tests, grades and examination requirements), whether or not they acquire any real understanding of the material in the process or can relate it to any wider scheme of things. Even where such subject matter is understood adequately on its own terms, as it were, it may remain segmented and compartmentalised, like a series of independent and self-contained islands, with no necessary connection to the wider life and understanding of the child.

If there is one subject where one can argue that this should not be happening, it is surely in the study of one's native language and literature. But even here, at any rate in England in recent years, it seems that the pressure to raise standards and meet nationally set targets means that all too often the subject can become a sort of sequestered area where, according to one study, in order to prioritise the content of the national curriculum, "[t]he life-worlds of the students were held at bay." One of the authors of this report has explained that in the school in question this was ostensibly for good reasons. The school wanted to provide a 'haven', secure from the immediate local environment. The English offered was focused on giving students skills "to

demonstrate their competence in exams" (Kress, 2004, p.12). It is true that the same study found considerable variation between schools in their approach to the teaching of English; but one reads increasingly of teachers of language and literature who feel frustrated by having to conform to externally imposed guidelines or testing regimes which, while in theory designed to raise standards, seem in practice to concentrate on a comparatively narrow range of technical competencies that can be readily measured, many of which can be attained without entering at all into the real life and spirit of the language and its literary masterpieces. For actual examples of this widespread tendency and the concern it is causing, one might cite O'Mahoney et al. (2003 p.24), Mansell (2008), through to Woolcock (2017). The latter has reported that, as a result of the recently introduced 'spelling and grammar' curriculum where 10-11 year olds have been taught to identify such items as subordinate clauses, fronted adverbials, modal verbs and split digraphs, when a class of these children arrived at their new secondary school and were asked to actually write a story, they were at a loss and "broke down and cried".[10]

While I have focused on language and literature above, one can find similar comments from teachers and educators today which seem to go right across the spectrum of curriculum subjects. This tendency is, of course, part of a context of movements and trends that are becoming internationally widespread and decisive in modernity, particularly - in the absence of wider metanarratives and higher frameworks of value - the down-to-earth appeal of and resort to "performativity", defined as "the best possible input/output equation" (Lyotard 1984, p.46) and focusing on factors which yield a clear and quantifiable outcome. (On this wider underlying tendency, see Hogan (2003, p.213ff); and compare Carr, (2003 p.260 & 263), and Saito (2005, 128ff. & 149)). Naturally, there will be many teachers and educators who will be resisting this particular trend; but looking at what is happening to school subjects overall, it can be argued that the wider fragmenting and specializing tendencies I have described are still on the ascendant.

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[10] One might compare this with the scene in the USA described by Kelly Gallagher in his book 'Readicide' (2009) which , among other things, points to a similar emphasis on formal and structural matters in language and literature courses there - as opposed to a focus on the actual content and human implications of the material..

However, if in practice we can see this as a continuing, seductive, and perhaps in some respects necessary development (if we are to gain a deep understanding of some very particular aspects of the world we inhabit), the reader may be wondering whether I am rather overstating the case, particularly with regard to the humanities where, one can argue, any such drastic narrowing of focus defeats the whole object of the exercise. There may be a *tendency*, as I have argued, even for humanities subjects to become self-contained worlds and to end up as discrete pockets of operational effectiveness rather than integrating with, and bringing an added dimension to, a person's general way of being. However, surely, someone may object, the raw material of such fields as literature, history, and psychology comes directly from the everyday lives and predicaments of humankind; and while a focus on very particular areas may well be needed at certain points, attempts should also be made to maintain a broad perspective rather than losing touch with the more general human condition – at any rate during the childhood and adolescence of the learner. Here however, a second limiting factor inevitably comes into play which I will introduce by way of a general observation.

(ii) The humanities: a vicarious perspective on life?

It will, I am assuming, be generally agreed that in many areas of life, particularly where our moral, emotional and social development are concerned, there is often a great difference between having a first-hand and direct experience of something, and learning about it simply as information or 'cold fact' from a position which is at one or more removes from the actual event. One can feel the full impact, be directly affected by the consequences, find oneself responding etc. in ways which are not called for to anything like the same extent when one is in a more observatory or secondary position. In such situations Dewey's dictum that "an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory" seems particularly apt (1916, p.144).

If one brings this insight to bear on the bodies of knowledge which typically make up the bulk of the school curriculum, one sees that as these subjects progress and encompass more and more material, and the student has to assimilate ever greater amounts of information to master any one area, there is a tendency for such learning to be acquired from an increasingly vicarious, observatory or 'theoretical' position. Typically, the student is involved in amassing, collating and assessing content from a

stance which is at least one remove from the primary phenomena which have given rise to that content; and this appears to be particularly so in the case of the humanities where, if the student is to get some idea of the width and wealth of human experience inherent in these fields, (s)he has to view things from a distance – to be able, as it were, to look down on the varied traumas and predicaments which have given rise to the material being studied. Here, I have in mind not just such subjects as psychology and sociology which necessarily abstract from the fullness of our original life experiences in order to bring out certain underlying commonalities or developmental patterns; but also subjects such as literature and history where, if there is more scope for looking at the particular ups and downs – the dramas and traumas of a personal experience - this is still from a secondary or observational position. In fact these fields by their very nature consist largely of accounts by others of *their* experience, and therefore of experience already abstracted from the direct human encounters with the world which underlie what one is studying.

Having made this point, again there seems to be little in the way of empirical evidence concerning how and in what ways such vicarious learning may affect the personality in general. And again one has to rely on psychological insight, a look at some of the dynamics involved, and the multitude of illustrative examples one can point to both in the literature and all around us in the present world. On this basis there seem to be strong indications that, for many, what they learn from this basically observational and vicarious stance, while it may provide knowledge and promote certain mental skills, may have very little bearing on their wider personality. As Maxine Greene has pointed out:

> Not only is there little evidence that the reading of great literature or the ability to appreciate the arts in general makes a man humane; there is even less evidence that the writing of great literature (or the composition of great pictures or great music) makes a human being more sensitive, joyful, or concerned than any other human being. (Greene, 1971, pp.557-8; cf. Barrett, 1987 p.97; and Tallis, 2000)

But here, the reader may be wondering, am I not dismissing the whole point of a more 'humanistic' or 'rhetorical' type of education stemming originally from Greek and Roman times, which for centuries was thought to be a potent force for humanizing the

human spirit? And have we not individually been stirred on occasion by a 'message', 'truth' or sheer vision inherent in a work of great literature or art?

As a way into this complex issue on might start by citing what was, on the face of it, a telling experiment conducted in the USA some years ago with students of theology. Soon after reading the New Testament 'Parable of the Good Samaritan', they individually came across a 'real' person in distress. In most cases, the research showed, they acted as if they had never heard of the parable, let alone just read it, and did no better than the control group who had just read a passage on current job prospects (Darley & Batson 1973). One might justifiably point out that this is hardly a convincing example if only because any personal intimations of meaning are bound to depend on time for reflection and perhaps discussion with one's fellows – in short, time and space for the meaning to sink in. Given this, one might maintain that studying the humanities could well have an effect on the human spirit which would run very deep. Gadamer has argued that one can not understand the 'truth' implicit in a work of literature or art unless one sees what it implies for one's own attitudes and situation, and in that sense lets it "change your life" (cited in Warnke, 1987, p.62). This certainly implies a more leisurely, open and reflective approach and it may well be the case that without this sort of approach, one will have little chance of understanding any such message or truth in all its fullness and depth. In fact elements of such an approach seem to have formed an essential part of the traditional humanizing role that the humanities (particularly literature, poetry and philosophy) were once expected to fulfil. This clearly bears directly on the interpretive, meaning-seeking side of our functioning – the synoptic mode that I described in the last chapter - and it is this which, it seems, Nussbaum (2001, p.426ff.) and others, along with many practising teachers, would like to allow more space for where the humanities are concerned. In fact one can argue that, ideally, the principle function of such subjects should be to serve this more personal 'humanizing' process in a reflective and unhurried manner.

But to return to the real world, how many teachers, under pressure to bring students up to a certain standard within a limited time to meet test and examination requirements, feel they have the time to consider or discuss these such potentially life-changing intimations adequately? And how many students will actually hold on to and follow up any implications for themselves when this is not required for examination or other

instrumental purposes which, as I have pointed out, in official circles are now increasingly seen as the sole object of the learning process? Certainly there is no need for students to apply their understanding of a work of art to their own lives in order to pass exams and progress smoothly through the usual levels of academic achievement. In any case, to do so would probably involve stepping out of the comparative safely and comfort of an observatory position on life, and stepping into life itself in order to change things at the level of one's active relationship with the world; for it may well be that this is the only way that the full import of any such insight can be realized. As Mill put it:

> There are many truths, of which the full meaning cannot be realized unless personal experience has brought it home (1859, p. 105).

Rather than this, however, it seems only too easy to fall prey to the sentimental delights vividly portrayed by Tolstoy (retold by Tallis 2000) in his tale of the freezing coachman left shivering needlessly in the cold while his rich mistress, in a warm theatre, sheds tears of sympathy watching a play depicting (to use a traditional form of words) man's suffering at the hand of man.

The emerging picture: partial worlds, vicarious worlds, or 'real' world?

Looking at things now more in the round, one can see how the two overriding factors I have described go hand in hand. In many of these fields the pull towards specialization and continual fragmentation results in a drastic narrowing of focus. The everyday life-world with its untidy complex of situations is increasingly superseded, while these more partial worlds gain ascendancy. On the other hand, where there is an attempt to maintain a broader perspective, a vicarious or observatory stance tends to be adopted in order to cope with the sheer width and variety of material that has to be taken account of. In both cases cloistered worlds can arise which can generate their own intrinsic 'goods', but there may be little connection with the child's core attitudes and beliefs. In fact it seems quite possible for a child to go through the educational system, passing exams and acquiring sought-after certificates, but with the underlying personality and basic attitudes – how (s)he regards and deals with others for instance – virtually untouched and unaffected.

Further, while I have tended to focus on the more academic fields of learning above, this perspective can also shed light on more practical and vocational courses in schools in so far as the same two tendencies seem to be operative in these areas as well. If in such vocational areas there is the *potential* to allow the student to experience more direct and varied human contact through actual 'work experience', for example, in reality in a target driven environment things can easily become compressed into sequestered areas focusing on a narrow band of skills, and/or become increasingly theorized and vicarious. As Purvis has observed some years ago with regard to the situation in England:

> Children today have their work theoreticised and academicised from the earliest years, with the focus firmly on paperwork and the occasional computer screen. Even GCSE "technology" subjects involve far more written theory than ever before. Folders about your "skills" take up time which was once spent in workshops…….nothing is considered real unless it is written down (Purvis, 2002, p.20).

This is a tendency which seems to have continued, at any rate in Britain and the USA since then. The results appear to be two-fold. On the one hand, to quote Pring (2013):

> Despite the importance of ….practical learning, educational systems give priority to propositional knowledge in syllabuses, examinations and league tables to such an extent that there has been a massive decline in those areas of the curriculum which had focused on the practical - carpentry, design and making, cooking, rural science, horticulture, mechanics (p.73).

(And he goes on to cite Matthew Crawford (2009) describing a similar situation in the USA.) On the other hand, in order to raise the status of those vocational subjects that remain (in the hope that they will gain 'parity of esteem' with more academic ones) the tendency to 'academicise' such learning appears to have intensified. The truth is, however, as Cook (2017) points out: the whole language tied to academic endeavour and 'study' in general often "sits awkwardly in a vocational learning context". She continues:

> [W]e've tried over generations to use the academic assessment model for vocational learning, and then wondered why it doesn't produce' job-ready' students.

It might prove interesting to set such 'academicising' tendencies in these fields precisely against the opportunities for children to experience wider and more direct human interaction – the encounters and challenges involved, for instance, in solving practical problems jointly, resolving conflicts of interest as they work, allowing their different individual strengths scope in a joint enterprise, etc. (In the next chapter I explore the many opportunities for this sort of interactive learning that can be opened up within the school setting generally)

To return to these structured fields generally, it is true that, with their own 'intrinsic goods' mentioned above, they *can* provide havens of security, even intense satisfactions for those who immerse themselves in them. Indeed in some ways this may act to compensate for poor conditions or a loss of meaning experienced elsewhere in life. One reads, for example, that the author Lorna Sage found in books a salvation, a continual comfort and refuge, from a miserable childhood in a dysfunctional home (2001); compare Ashworth (1998); and Sally Bayley's similarly rather grim memoir (2018).   In such cases a deep interest in a particular field may enable the child to build up enough confidence and sense of achievement to re-engage with life more fully at a later stage. But there is always the danger that, if these mental satisfactions compensate for a loss of meaning experienced elsewhere, this may result in them becoming, in effect, a substitute for life rather than encouraging the individual to plunge more fully into it.

Bertrand Russell appears to have conceded this point, seeing (in his case) mathematics as providing a lasting "habitation……where our ideals are fully satisfied and our best hopes are not thwarted". Contemplating such objects, he wrote, provides "the chief means of overcoming the terrible sense of impotence, of weakness, of exile amid hostile powers" which otherwise tends to beset us (in Dewey 1926/1958 pp.57-8). And Einstein, perhaps the greatest scientific genius of the 20th century, might almost have been elaborating on this in stating that:

> Man tries to form a simplified and clear conception of the world in a
> manner somehow adequate to himself, and to conquer the world of reality
> by replacing it to a certain extent by this picture. The painter, the poet, the
> speculative philosopher, and the naturalist do it, each of them in his own
> way. He places in this picture the centre of gravity of his emotional life in

order to find the tranquillity and constancy which he cannot find within the narrow limits of turbulent personal experience (cited in Reid 1962, p.173)

On the other hand, it is just this messy and potentially turbulent world with which we are in direct contact that exists as the background setting within which everything else takes place. In fact this could be regarded as a defining feature of our 'life-world' experience, some aspects of which I described in the last chapter. I now wish to consider this area precisely in the light of some of its more elusive, variable and often volatile characteristics in order to bring out the real significance of the dynamics involved – particularly when set against the more formal structures I have just described.

The Terrain of the Life-World

Some crucial features
In one's basic interactions with the immediate physical and social environment, particularly in one-to-one personal encounters, it is, it seems, this very immediacy, relative unpredictability and possible turbulence which accounts for the potential of such experience to engage with virtually any aspect of the personality including, importantly, those aspects of one's moral and affective functioning which can underlie a whole way of being. In such interactions, compared with the learning which takes place in the more organised bodies of knowledge or skill, it is not so much a case of selecting a piece of reality to examine or work on within preset parameters or from a safe observatory position, as of engaging in and being confronted by situations, not necessarily of one's own choosing, in which being, so to speak, an actor on the stage rather than a spectator in the auditorium, one's whole being may be directly exposed to whatever forces may be operating, and any facet of the personality may find expression, or be a prey to, the give and take, the unexpected twist of the moment. In this way the door is open for engagement to be made, and alchemical action to take place, between the world of these relatively unfettered situations and the world of one's own primary wants, complexes, hopes, fears, etc. This is not to say, of course, that there are *no* more detached, analytic, or reflective elements of one's functioning involved. Often however, in the immediacy of the situation itself, it is the inherent element of the unknown, the very uncertainty, which gives the situation its importance and meaning; it is the very unresolved and incomplete nature of it which gives scope

for commitment and action, and attracts the wider non-observational aspects of the personality. In not having a preordained section of the world safely partitioned or put under a glass for examination, but rather encountering life as it happens, the range of variables which can enter the picture cannot be totally foreseen, and in any case the nature of the situation will be constantly shifting in response to the part one is playing oneself. There will often be something of a leap in the dark and an act of faith involved, with the whole process more akin to (sometimes fraught) trial and error and continuous revelation than detached analysis and observation. It is the realm of what Arendt has called human "action" in its truest sense, where we insert ourselves into a complex web of human concerns and relationships, and where "he who acts never quite knows what he is doing"(1958, p.233). It may only be long afterwards with the benefit of hindsight that a relatively true account of what was going on can be given.

It would be tedious to dwell too long on a description of something which we probably instinctively recognise, but perhaps the spectacle of young children at play, with its kaleidoscope of changing situations in which they are totally caught up provides the paradigm for this type of experience. Here is Cicero commenting on their world 2000 years ago:

> How headlong they pursue their rivalries! How fierce their contests and competitions! What exaltation they feel when they win, and what shame when they are beaten! How they dislike blame! How they covet praise!....How great is their memory for those who show kindness, and how eager they are to repay it! (1961, p.463).

Two thousand years later one finds Trevarthen and Logotheti writing similarly of the scope and intensity of such experience, albeit in more measured tones:

> In every culture, the period of 3 to 5 years is one in which children begin to discover wider opportunities for co-operation as well as the harsher aspects of human conflict and aggression…….Emotions of liking and disliking are strongly expressed in play. When play breaks down, fights can become mean and bitter. Friendships and antipathies last, but are open to negotiation and change. Confident and joyful sharing of experiences, and of the motives which give them significance, depends on acceptance of rules and the exercise of communicative skills that facilitate agreement (cited in Carrithers, 1992, p.78).

While the image of children at play may provide a readily recognisable example of this sort of experience, more generally one should bear in mind situations in which a person directly interacts with, confronts and is confronted by, others who can respond in a variety of ways which will, for good or ill, directly impact on him or her, just as (s)he is seeking to impact on others. Thus an adolescent encountering peer pressure and perhaps resisting it, or a group of them acting to solve a challenge which demands both individual initiative and cooperative teamwork, are similarly being directly exposed to a range of potentially testing interactions. While in the wider world, office politics, and the whole realm of 'man-management' and industrial relations, are settings in which, again, such face-to-face contact can take place in situations which can prove personally challenging and fraught, or sometimes heart-warming and unexpectedly uplifting.

Aristotle, while not discussing things in precisely these terms, would, I think, have seen such areas as falling under the heading of the 'practical' disciplines which in his day he saw as covering household management, ethical behaviour and practical politics. These, he concluded, were essentially different in kind and in the manner they could be acquired, both from the 'productive' disciplines (dealing with making or producing things whether through artistic pursuits or by technical means), and from the 'theoretical' disciplines (devoted to the methodical – we would say scientific – study of phenomena that are relatively stable and predictable.) In spite of the elements of change and unpredictability in the former, it was, he thought, possible to learn to act successfully in these more 'practical' areas of life through developing 'phronesis' – a sort of shrewd yet considerate form of judgment often translated as 'practical wisdom'. But this could only be acquired by direct experience in such potentially testing situations, and by developing such virtues as courage, self-control and just-dealing in the midst of them (Aristotle, 1963, esp.bk.6). I discuss this further in chapter 8, where I situate the development of practical wisdom more precisely within the context of the three polarities in our human experience that I have described.

Modernity and the rise of eclipsing forces

One might contrast such open recognition and, indeed, embrace of this whole complex and often shifting world of practical human affairs by Aristotle (and also, incidentally,

by Vico (1709/1982) and – albeit more summarily – by Locke (1690/1947, p.317ff) with the dominant impulse of the modern age which, as we have already noted, has very much put the emphasis on rising above this level of 'gross' experience in order to gain a deeper understanding of very particular aspects of life and the world around us. In fact much in modern education seems intent on diverting us away from engaging fully with this more "rough" or "swampy" ground as it has been called (by Wittgenstein (1953,1, section 107) and Schon (1987, p.3ff.) respectively) with all its ups and downs, uncertainties, rugged interactions and variety; and, rather, sets us to master as quickly as possible those more 'refined' and relatively clear-cut areas already condensed into organised bodies of knowledge and skill. It is true that there are more modern thinkers such as Arendt, Gadamer, and Habermas who have tried to restore a sense of the primacy, importance and *sui generis* integrity of life at this level, but they have seen themselves as very much swimming against the main tide of modernity which seems to have continued regardless.

To amplify what is, I hope, a self-evident but none-the-less important point made briefly in the last section, it is as if in the attempt to escape what Arendt has called the essential "frailty" of human affairs (1958, p.230), we are trying to reduce more and more of the world we live in to safe controllable systems: in her terms, to reduce human "action" to "the planned products of human making"(ibid); in Gadamer's, to replace the to- and-fro of open dialogic encounter with scientific 'method' or sets of techniques (1975 and 1983); while Habermas was concerned that the life-world was becoming increasingly "colonised" by systemic imperatives (1984, p.232-3). It is true that reducing a particular area of human life to a system may serve to bring out some underlying patterns and suggest some general principles behind, for instance, successful parenting, relating to the opposite sex, or man-management. But to abstract from the fullness of interactive life at this level in order to reduce things to a nice model or skeletal format seems rather like expecting what one reads in a holiday brochure to be an adequate representation of the holiday experience itself. The brochure format has its uses, but it can hardly give one anything like the full experience of the actual holiday along with all that may crop up in any one setting at a particular point in time. Nor can mere knowledge of an apparently exemplary set of techniques in an area such as 'man-management' substitute for, or even specify just what is involved in, working through the unique personal challenges which may arise

as any one individual breaks new ground in implementing them in his or her own particular circumstances.

The need for an Aristotelian perspective?

There is much more that could be said on this subject as increasing areas of life seem to become subject to such formal systematisation in the name of greater standardisation, efficiency, control and predictability. In modern times the growth of this tendency may reflect, at least in part, a situation where traditional patterns of living and relating have been breaking down, with the result that the individual, feeling somewhat at sea in a more unstable and liquid milieu, may seek to compensate for the general lack of certainty in life by looking to expert systems which, as Giddens points out, appear to offer "a validity independent of the practitioner who makes use of them" (1991, p.18); But to what extent this trend can continue without impoverishing the very life-world which such systems were, in theory, set up to help us cope with and master in the first place, is another matter. Perhaps we need to revive something of the more robust attitude to, and embrace of, our experience of life at this level evinced by Aristotle, Vico and Locke; and realise that in spite of the sometimes frustrating uncertainties and difficult predicaments we can face here, things cannot be reduced to neat protocols or standard procedures without detracting from some of the very qualities which give such experience its character as a rich source of sometimes hard but potentially rewarding learning opportunities in the first place.

I will now turn to the other main dimension of our human engagement with the world: the search for meaning and a frame of orientation. I will start with a brief résumé of ground already covered, and then bring a more probing and critical perspective to bear.

The Wider Synoptic Dimension: A Deeper Look

In going through the often disjointed plurality of things we encounter in life, we try, as I have said, to make some personal sense of it all as it presses in upon us: to understand, for instance, how it connects with one's own intimations of worth, or seems to be part of a larger pattern which itself has significance. There appears to be a central information-processing capacity at work here which, in Gardner's words, is sensitive to "our own feelings, our own wants and fears, and our personal histories"

(1993 p.263). This registers, symbolizes and can try to make sense of the reactions one has to what one experiences in any aspect of life. In its most primitive form, a fairly simple, even simplistic, framework of orientation may develop in response to what the person has experienced in life. There is also the possibility that things may not coalesce coherently, or indeed, that the individual may veer between several seemingly disconnected orientations. In a more sophisticated form - and here I am borrowing again from Gardner – it may be relatively fully developed in a novelist like Proust who can write introspectively about our human feelings; in the patient (or therapist) who comes to a deep understanding of his or her own strengths and weaknesses; and in the wise elder who can draw on a personal wealth of experience to advise those in the local community (op.cit. p.239). But however evolved it is, (and however out of step with some postmodern approaches), it seems that, other things being equal, there is a tendency for things to condense into an underlying approach to life, or frame of orientation consisting of a fusion of cognitive, affective and conative elements which may be either tightly or more loosely and provisionally interwoven (cf. McAdams, 1997; Frimer & Walker, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2017). This appears to be strongly linked to an emerging sense of self in so far as the central processing capacity is also capable of registering what this complex fusion is up to, as it were, and can thus create an internal model of what the individual is like, representing, in Gardner's words, "what he has done, what his strengths and weaknesses are, how he feels about himself, and the like" (op.cit. p.295). In the normal course of events a central organising or 'self-system' emerges from this process and this can, Gardner suggests, be seen as the "crowning capacity which supersedes and presides over [the] other more mundane and partial forms of intelligence" (p.243).

Although there is this reference to a 'crowning capacity' in Gardner's scheme, in some respects our functioning in this area could be viewed as just another type of 'intelligence', like the mathematical, the spatial or the musical, for instance, superior in some respects, but otherwise basically like them - a position perhaps analogous to that of Zeus/Jupiter with regard to the other Graeco-Roman deities. However, in this dimension of our functioning we seem to be engaged in a fundamentally different sort of activity; to be concerned with pursuing a rather different kind of understanding; and with the whole thing animated by a very different kind of spirit which may well draw on different capacities. This is something I will expand on, as the underlying dynamics

at work here have implications for how one sees this area in relation to the other two areas of our functioning that I have described, as well as shedding further light on just what is at stake in this area in general.

Forging an identity: the search for meaning

So far my account may have suggested what is basically a rational kind of stocktaking and coping picture of what happens as the self, in its role as central information processor and coordinator, registers a body of contingent preferences and endeavours to manage them, ironing out inconsistencies and seeking to integrate the whole complex into some workable amalgam. But there is surely a stronger sense in which we can search for meaning and forge an identity - a sense just left implicit in the last chapter - than this rather pedestrian picture of registering and coordinating (corresponding to adaptive 'homeostasis' in psychological terms) would indicate.

Within the same person there is likely to be a vast array of inclinations ranging from pure greed and concupiscence, the desire to gain power and prestige, to intimations inspired by the sheer worth or intrinsic rightness of something (or some course of action). And one of the primary features that appear to distinguish us as human beings from other animals is the capacity not just to accept and get on with working to satisfy this contingent bundle of desires we find within us, but to note that within this plethora of impulses certain things seem to stand out as having a value or significance that strikes a particular chord within - one that, as it were, connects with the very fibres of one's being in a way which others do not. Further, on this basis one can choose to cleave to, follow up and identify with certain of these intimations, while letting others take second place. In other words, amid the mass of impulses and propensities we are subject to, something at the core of one's being appears to be receptive to intimations of value or meaning which seem to have a particular significance for us: that seem charged with a quality of depth which, for example, makes one feel 'this is what makes life worthwhile', 'this is really worth pursuing', or 'this is where fulfilment lies' in a way which puts other things in the shade and which seems to invite, indeed summon one to identify more closely with it and to set it more at the centre of one's life. Consequently, rather than seeing oneself as a bundle of contingent desires, a sum total which needs to be integrated into some sort of working economy, one can to some

extent stand back, appraise and discriminate between the different elements of this mass of inclinations as they stand; and by doing so and subsequently committing oneself, aspire to give one's life a shape and direction it might not otherwise take. Some of the more conscious and rational aspects of such activity (although heavily reliant on original more intuitive intimations of meaning and value) have been described by such well respected figures as Frankfurt (1971), Dent (1984, ch.4), Taylor (1985, vol.1, 13-44) and Sandel (1998, 154-161) who have seen such 'second order' evaluative activity or 'strong evaluation' as fundamental to forming a strong sense of personal identity - although not everyone will feel they have to engage in this, and where this process does take place, it is hardly likely to be a once-and–for-all exercise; but rather, one that is always ongoing and incomplete. It is also a process one can engage with largely intuitively, or with a greater or lesser degree of reflection and conscious intent. And finally, it is one where, it seems, there are the ever-present twin dangers of either shying away from this area and failing to engage with it other than in a desultory, lax, or dilettante manner; or, at the other extreme, one can take it up too obsessively, even neurotically, resulting in an unbalanced and perhaps guilt-ridden outcome. (Compare pp.146-7 below on the increasing prevalence now of certain symptoms in clinical psychology,)

Given this backdrop, I would suggest that there are two (not always separable) areas or aspects of such activity. On the one hand, in the general socio-moral domain in which we are inevitably situated one can aspire to realise those qualities which seem to have a special significance or 'pull' on one, whether this is towards a self-serving/exploitative or self-transcendent/other-centred end of the moral spectrum. On the other hand, within this wider 'summoning' dimension, one can have the experience of feeling drawn, sometimes in a quite unexpected way, to *more particular* areas or pursuits that seem to have a strong resonance - that strike a particular chord within. This seems to have been a constant theme in accounts of the human search for meaning throughout history, and across the world – one that is reflected in folklore, poetry and literature, philosophy, and even religion - although explanations and descriptions may differ: one may feel possessed by a Muse, pulled by one's (Greek) 'daemon' or (Roman)'genius', in possession of a God-given gift, realising a certain natural affinity or talent, finding a sense of vocation, etc. There are probably as many ways in which this phenomenon takes effect as there are people who have the experience. Some seem to find early on

that they have an affinity for a particular area of life that presages fulfilment. Rudolf Nureyev, for example, on a visit to a ballet at the age of seven, seems to have had a particularly sudden and powerful revelation of this type. In the words of a recent biographer, he just knew: "That's it. That's my life!" (Kavanagh, 2007; and compare Michael Pennington 2019) Many others, perhaps most of us, more gradually discover what gives a sense of fulfilment and vocation whether it is a type of outdoor life, a particular artistic or scientific pursuit, a way of serving others more directly, etc. And there may well be some, of course, who due to straightened or oppressive circumstances will have little chance of experiencing such intimations in the first place - or of acting on them if they have them.

The above may be taken as a very general, largely phenomenological account of some central aspects of our experience where meaning and value are particularly salient, and to reflect some of the more personal (one might say 'existential') correlates of what happens as the individual progresses through what, from an external and generalizable point of view, may represent just a stage in a developmental pattern of the sort I have referred to on pages 117-8, particularly when moving from a conventional to a more autonomous stage. But, to return to a more first-person perspective with its inevitably aspirational, questing and often fraught character, it would seem that finding such meaning in life – getting a sense of what is central to one's existence in this way – is perhaps the most important and challenging task we face as human beings, given that, as Heidegger has put it, our human way of being in the world (Dasein) "is distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it" (1968 p32). In other words, the very nature of our being is such that we can decide, or indeed neglect to decide, what it should be. One may not wish to go all the way with Heidegger and Sartre who, as existentialists, were generally inclined to dismiss any idea of natural abilities or affinities which might be thought to limit freedom of choice. But nonetheless, compared with other species in the animal kingdom, we can be said to be relatively 'unfinished creatures'. It is up to us as individual human beings to bring out and realise the qualities we particularly wish to aspire to. In this sense, in Symington's words, human nature "is not a given....[it] is an object to be achieved"(1994 p.112); and in this process the forming of some substantive set of interests and aspirations which can be said, quite literally, to 'turn one on' appears to

be central. (Compare "Souls are individuated by that they most deeply care about" (Nussbaum 1990 p.324-5, commenting on Plato; cf.,also, Frankfurt 1999, p.115).

A 'crisis of meaning' today?

This may be a task we are all called to and which all do take part in, at least to an extent where we can, given the essentially underdetermined character of human nature. But clearly there is much that can deter and derail progress here, particularly perhaps, in today's world. In view of what I shall have to say about this below and at points later, it would be as well to make clear that, drawing on a distinction used by Maslow, I am not at this stage referring so much to our primary, lower, or 'deficit' level of human needs, values and aspirations – those that are generally thought necessary for any sort of tolerable physical, emotional and cognitive functioning in the world - but rather to our more individual 'growth', 'higher' or 'meta' needs and aspirations: those that we more consciously aspire to, and which enable one to express and live out a more personal and individual way of life – to realise something of one's own unique complex of potential (Maslow 1968, pt.II). This appears to correspond closely with Rawls's distinction between "primary goods" – the universal basic human goods we all need - and other more individual goods which persons might seek to pursue in their own lives and which will depend "upon their [particular] endowments and circumstances" (1972, p.409; my bracketed insertion). We all want to have our basic physical needs taken care of, as well as some emotional security and cognitive stimulation - as, indeed, do most species in the animal kingdom. It is not so much in these respects that one might view human nature as underdetermined; for, other things being equal, we tend automatically to reach for and grasp what will fulfil these basic urges in the process of growing up and interacting with one's physical and social environment. However it is not the same, it seems, for one's so-called 'higher' values and needs. If the latter are not satisfied we can still get by in life, although there may not be much real sense of personal fulfilment. To hold on to, pursue and live out these more personal intimations of meaning which, if at times intense and illuminating, may not be so constantly present or pressing - in fact they can be momentary and fleeting - may well require more conscious effort and an act of deliberate commitment. They are, it seems, less firmly entrenched and more subtly and delicately woven into the texture of one's neuro-biological apparatus. Rather like tender flowers amid prolific

weeds, they can easily be crowded out and left to wilt. In the general moral domain, in the face of a widespread lack of confidence in and controversy about more substantive ideals and 'grand visions', we can, (as I have pointed out in chapter 1) simply lower one's sights and retreat to a sort of moral minimum that just gets us by. While in the case of our more individual 'growth' or 'meta' needs, these impulses again, it seems, are relatively weak compared with our more basic 'deficit' needs and can be, in Maslow's words, "easily drowned out" (1968, p.164). There is, it seems, much that can get in the way, overlay and distract one from such intimations.   If, to borrow Emerson's metaphor, "A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within" (1981, p.139), he immediately adds: "Yet he dismisses without notice his thought because it is his" (ibid.). While Dewey, taking up the same image, remarks that "It is not easy to detect and watch" these gleams (in Saito 2005). One might add that, even when such promptings are relatively intense and clear, it may still require some sustained effort, involving breaking out of a settled pattern of life, if one is to follow up such intimations so that they bear fruit. It may be less trouble to settle for a quiet life.   Saito herself expounds on this metaphor as a symbol of our aspiration for fulfilment, but likewise notes that we can "acquiesce too easily in the extinguishing of the gleam of light". Such forces, she says (quoting Dewey) spring from "apathy, conceit, self-pity, tepidity, fear, convention, routine" (p.144). In her own words, we easily "subside into apathy and indifference or into a feel-good regime of desire-satisfaction" that tranquilizes the spirit (p.127).

And if in the past it was established convention and a coercive conformity that tended to be seen as the main inhibiting factors here, in more recent times - with the breakdown of so much tradition and larger narratives, and with the rise of a culture dominated by consumer values, glamorous celebrity images and electronic media pouring out a flood of disparate messages – it has been claimed that the whole process of constructing an identity based on a coherent set of attachments and aspirations has become much more problematic, uncertain and fraught precisely because of these more liquefying and dislocating forces. Among those who have commented on this are O'Dea (2001), Furedi (2004), Midgley (2007), Damon (2008) and Schinkel et al. (2016, p.399). Furedi has referred to a "profound crisis of meaning"; while in O'Dea's case, she has seen the whole conception of identity being "turned upside down", with society tending to replace our once socially-based determination of identity with one

based on "the appropriation of disposable commodities, images and techniques, selected and discarded at will from the extensive repertoire of consumer culture" (p.24). This can result, she says, in:

> a fragmentary and disorganized collection of media-based identities created in an environment that privileges surface over depth, simulation over the real, play over seriousness (ibid.p.29).

In this sort of liquid environment, developing a coherent frame of orientation or sense of personal narrative becomes, as she puts it, "no easy task" (p.24). (Some readers may see a parallel here within clinical psychology where over time there seems to have been a shift in the prevalence of symptoms, with the 'typical' rather repressed and neurotic patient of Freud's time being increasingly replaced by patients who have not progressed to a point where a relatively stable identity structure has emerged in the first place (Lasch (1979, p.88ff.); Whitebook, 1985 pp.149-150; cf. McAdams, 1997 p.50.ff)).

I am aware that this is just one of a wide range of different perspectives one could bring to bear on this area and that I have left a number of loose ends. My main purpose above has been to bring out what, I would maintain, are still, amidst all the upheaval of modernity, some deeply rooted and core features of our functioning in this area; and by doing so illustrate something of its dynamic distinctiveness, particularly when set against the other forms of 'intelligence' that are usually developed through the more conventional bodies of knowledge and skill. It will be clear that, compared with the latter, a rather different and perhaps wider spectrum of our faculties are implicated, including some that are central to a developing sense of identity. But there are still some fundamental constraints here.

The essential limitations of this area.

This area may embody our deepest aspirations and it may well be that, as Gewirth has suggested, it is in our aspirations that "the most intimate yearnings of the self… as an enduring conative entity are expressed" (1998, p.23). But 'expressed' in its full sense must surely imply not only some internal affirmation or verbal declaration but a more active and often more uncertain process of living out and putting to the test in the circumstances in which one finds oneself. One has to step out of the relative safety of

internal realizations and change things at the level of one's active relationship with the world – either in the life-world itself or (in the case of following up a more specialised interest) by engaging with a more structured body of knowledge or skill. If this sort of living out does not take place, any such intimations of meaning or value, no matter how intense, are likely to remain relatively inert and uninformed. On the other hand, following things up in these more concrete worlds may set in motion a process whereby whole new vistas can open up, sometimes in quite unexpected ways, as one's original intimations become tested and refined. This simply reflects their conative and questing character. Since aspirations and ideals, for instance, are things we have yet to realise and attain, they tend to pull us into new worlds that, in opening up as we actively pursue them, present us with landscapes that can never be totally foreseen.

Taking Stock: A General Overview

We are now in a position to look at these basic polarities in the way our human experience is structured less in individual close-up, and to get more of an overview of the comparative role and significance of each. They appear to represent three major ways in which we engage with and come to terms with the world. To revert to my original order in the previous chapter we have:

1) **General life-world experience** (consisting of first-hand encounter with the immediate world around one in which, potentially, any facet of the personality may be spontaneously engaged).

2) **More organised bodies of knowledge or skill** (which either narrow down one's focus in order to achieve a deeper understanding of very particular areas; or, in the case of wider knowledge, enable one to acquire it from a stance at least one remove from the original phenomena).

3) **The wider synoptic dimension** of our functioning (including the assessment, evaluation and integration of both of the above with one's own inner schemata, basic dispositions and aspirational life).

Any one of these three may play a greater or lesser part in the life of a particular individual. Any combination of emphasis is possible and one can probably think of certain characters who appear to be living their lives largely through one mode at the expense of the other two, or through any two at the expense of the other one. While this may be true, it would, of course, be foolish to think that each of these modes always appears in a pure or unmixed form, uncontaminated, as it were, by the others. An experience that falls primarily within one of these dimensions may well involve elements of or contain traces of the other two; and there will be times when we will have to draw on all three if we are to complete certain tasks successfully. Nevertheless this does not, I believe, invalidate the fact that there are these definite centres of gravity in the way we engage with life, and that many of our encounters and operations can be seen primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of one or another of these modes. Our everyday family life and our spontaneous interactions with our fellows, for example, fall very largely within the basic life-world dimension of our functioning. While often set within some tacit framework of ritual and custom, there is also some fluidity, unpredictability and healthy openness about such interactions which it is impossible to reduce to comprehensive protocols or rule-governed systems. Such human situations seem to resist such attempts at close systematisation unless the apparently infinite variety and nuance that can arise in human interaction is artificially homogenised. On the other hand, it is the generality of the life-world with its relatively amorphous, 'gross', unsettled and often untidy complex of situations which tends to be left behind by the more organised bodies of knowledge and skill. Of course, there is no sharp cut-off point here. The very classroom setting in which students acquire such knowledge is in itself a life-world situation. However, if in such a context this element is very largely subservient to, and dictated by the perceived goals of, the more formal learning situation, this life-world element may become increasingly constrained and reduced to the status of an insignificant and quite possibly inconsistent and negative by-product. At any rate the conscious emphasis will lie elsewhere. (I will look at this in more depth in the next chapter.)   As for our 'synoptic' or sense-making functioning, it too appears to be at work to some extent in all our operations, as one automatically registers some personal response to events. But there is a difference between this omnipresent level of activity and the formation of our more deeply held and more considered judgements of value and worth – of what one feels ultimately drawn to identify with and commit oneself to.

The pivotal role of our life-world experience

It should be clear from the account I have given that, whatever one learns through disciplines of study either 'about life' in general or about the intricacies of more specialized worlds, as regards to our social and moral development nothing detracts from the primacy of what one learns directly 'from life' at the basic life-world level. Similarly, from a synoptic position, whatever experiences of meaning and significance one may have as one goes through life, it is only through encountering the fundamental physical, social and aesthetic parameters of human existence that, particularly as a child, many of the key elements in one's burgeoning aspirational life are likely to be evoked and exercised in the first place. It is here that the whole business of practical living and getting on with others is picked up and practiced. In particular, it is our interpersonal life – in the to and fro of 'me against you', 'me helping you', 'me meeting you half-way' etc. – that seems to constitute the ultimate crucible in which our rough-hewn elements can be challenged and our core attitudes exposed and informed. In fact one might say that whatever a child acquires in the way of basic life-world experience will form the foundation, the inevitable base, from which (s)he gains and to which (s)he attaches any learning and experience in the other two dimensions. In the case of more formal studies, a child's very openness and willingness to learn in this way may be drastically affected by what is brought to such learning directly 'from' life. If, for example, the child has generally been regarded as an annoying nuisance and treated with impatience whenever expressing a natural curiosity about the world with 'why' and 'how' questions to a parent, (s)he may soon come to feel that life is not something to be curious about.

To illustrate the situation as a rough diagram, the form below represents the basic dimensions I have described as sides of a figure, with **1** (our life-world experience) as the base; **2a** and **2b** (indicating our various more disciplined endeavours) arising from it; and **3** (our synoptic functioning) overlooking things generally.
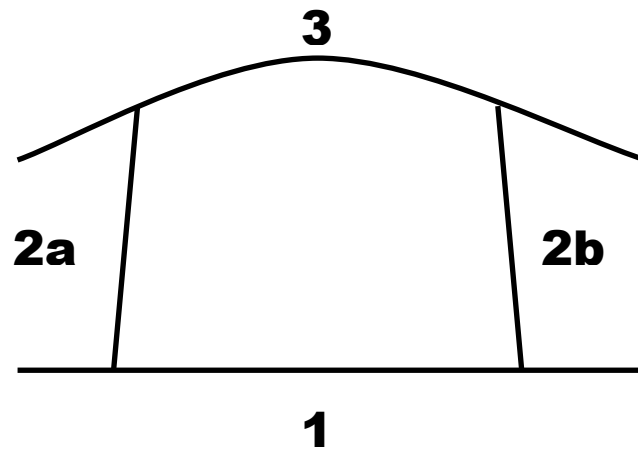
To use a more pictorial analogy, **2a,** for example**,** could be viewed as hills and mountains which one climbs and masters with the help of regular guides along established routes (subject-centred learning). **2b** might represent similar ground which one chooses to visit and explore in one's own way, asking for directions occasionally (a more child-centred approach). **1** is then the central ground or path over which one is journeying in life from which one may make excursions but to which one must return. And **3** represents a bird's-eye view of both the others, although (here the analogy breaks down) obviously of ground already covered – not clearly of that which lies ahead.

An objection based on the potential of general/generic skills or 'competencies'.

Before passing on to consider what this may mean for schools as they try to cater more effectively for the wider social and moral development of the child, I will consider an objection which educators themselves might raise concerning the dynamics at work in and between these areas of our functioning as I have portrayed them.

This is all too simplistic, some might say. Is the direction of influence and effect, with everything revolving around the pivotal role of our basic life-world experience, always so one-way and predetermined as I have implied? Are we to assume that there can be no mutually beneficial interaction between a student's formal learning and everyday life experience, on the one hand, or his wider synoptic development on the other? Surely, the objector may argue, some kind of mental training, whether acquired at a comparatively low level through 'key skills' or at a higher level through the sort of

subjects which are thought to make up a general or liberal education, will give the individual some useful mental tools which can be applied to life in general and thus leaven his or her everyday existence. In fact it may be thought that acquiring a competence in a particular specialism by taking a systematizing stance towards the material is precisely what is needed to develop the keen analytical and logical skills needed more widely in life.

Here one needs to bear in mind that there has been a longstanding and still unresolved debate about whether there *are* generalizable skills or 'competencies' of this sort in the first place - compare Norris (1991), Hyland (1997), and Hayward & Fernandez (2004) for just some of the problems – and, if there are, how they can be acquired. Hinchliffe, for instance, comments that even at the level of key skills "the problems…. are well known, the most fundamental of which concerns transferability". He continues:

> [I]t is transferability for which the evidence is so scant: much experience suggests that communication skills learnt in one context have no built in guarantee that they will be effective in a different setting (2007, p.7).

As regards the mental skills involved in mastering more complex subjects, if the writer can draw on his own and his former colleagues' experience at this point, all too often these revolve around the memory, assimilation and understanding of facts and structures which remain for the student peculiar to a particular branch of knowledge, and any more general skills of analysis and assessment are hoped for by-products rather than lying at the centre of the process. One often finds oneself as a teacher concerned with building up a basic 'technical' vocabulary and with the understanding of certain key concepts in fields where the students' basic lack of competence and proficiency tends to keep them looking at particular subjects very much on their own terms. Even where a more child-centred or constructivist approach is taken, one may still end up with certain skills or areas of knowledge which are discrete, and applied just within a particular field rather than generalized and integrated. Perhaps the words of John White, although referring to a very particular area, epitomise the underlying point here. He writes:

> It is a truism that maths is a good vehicle for promoting independent thinking within maths; but there is no reliable evidence that it promotes it in non-related fields (White, 2007, p.20).

It may be that, in the end, the key to this issue lies with the underlying motivational life of the individual. Assuming that in principle generalizable skills *are* possible, surely the question remains as to whether the person who has acquired these potentially powerful tools will be inclined to utilise them fully in his or her particular life circumstances. If the direction of focus is switched, for example, from areas external to the student onto more personal stances and attitudes, the extent to which one is dealing with potentially troublesome emotions and highly charged sensibilities is, compared with these more external fields of study, considerably increased. One's powers of observation and analysis of things external may be sharpened greatly and yet one may still, in substantial areas of everyday life, be found thinking and acting in ways which are not only irrational but not even acknowledged. The brilliant intellectual who is socially and emotionally inept seems continually with us, as Pring (1976, pp.92-3) pointed out long ago.

Here, I do not wish to deny that the advocates of 'Critical Thinking' or 'Thinking Skills' within education such as Siegel (1988) and Higgins & Baumfield (1998) respectively may have some contribution to make here; but even within these more generalist movements (in spite of the odd nod in this direction) overall there does not seem to be an adequate appreciation of the basic difference in tone and quality between a willingness to look at both sides of an argument within a particular discipline or when considering a hypothetical situation, and the processes when this exercise is applied to issues which are nearer 'home', that touch on raw nerves, cherished opinions, and habitual ways of reacting in everyday situations. To acknowledge and cast the cool light of the intellect over one's everyday preoccupations, frustrations, aversions, enthusiasms etc. - not that it need be sudden or total – can be acutely uncomfortable. The whole process may depend on qualities of openness, courage, a willingness to let go and face unpleasant truths, which may not be called for to anything like the same extent in less personally fraught areas or hypothetical situations. Even if one is willing cognitively to face certain emotional or social failings, this will not in itself provide the experience necessary to remedy them *in situ*. In fact it is precisely when attempting to translate such realizations into action that, as Wilson (1967, p.95) pointed out long ago, contrary and uncomfortable emotions are likely to well up and get in the way. It may be that such limiting and inhibiting emotional

forces are best dealt with more on their own ground – for instance by allowing opportunities for the expression of a more productive emotion in circumstances similar to those which usually present a difficulty, but with an element of additional security and personal encouragement provided; or by generally creating opportunities for, and encouraging the development of, feelings of a less self-enclosing nature such as trust, compassion, and gratitude (cf. Peters, 1974, pp.188-189).

Back to the base of life: a challenge for education

Here again we are brought back to the primacy of basic life-world experience in so far as it appears to play a vital role in the formation and leavening of the psychic base of one's being – the dispositional core implicated in and often revolving around an underlying approach to life. This basic psychic soil forms, it seems, a host environment for any more formal types of learning and, as I have suggested, may well determine whether such learning is inhibited or favoured in the first place. This is not to say that there can be no commerce or interaction between this base and our more refined products of learning, but it would appear difficult for the latter to take the place of, or fully substitute for, what has happened (or not happened) in this area of our more primary transactions with the world. Similarly, in the area of values education and synoptic provision generally, one may learn 'about' such qualities as trust, generosity or justice, but unless there is the opportunity to experience something of these qualities first-hand in one's own encounters, one will have an inadequate base for appreciating and making sense of them. Of course, through what one learns in these other two modalities one may be inspired to a certain course of action in the life-world or one may have some direct experience put more into perspective etc. However at some point it seems that one cannot escape the ultimate indispensability of an adequate base of direct life-world experience if the individual is to become socially and morally competent. .

If this is the case, however, one may ask where this leaves education as schools struggle to cater more effectively for these wider aspects of our human development. In the face of the abundance of life-world experience that the child will inevitably encounter in a particular environment, are schools not faced with a virtually impossible task? Should they, indeed to what extent *can* they contribute meaningfully to this area

of human experience in their own right? And how? Does this mean that such provision should be viewed as on a par in value and importance with the more conventional academic work of the school; that there should be more appreciation of the possibility that, as a former inspector of schools in England has put it: "Exam results are not the only indicator of pupils having received a successful education" (Wenman 2008b, p.26); and that in general, to use the term of Aristotle (who influenced both Vico and Locke) the 'practical' - the basic business of living in the world successfully with others – should be seen as equally as important as assimilating the more theoretical and refined products of human learning? But is this not likely to lead to a diffuse dispersal of effort or even a clash of educational interests which may well detract from the work of the institution in general? And what about the danger of 'social engineering' or, as one head-teacher (Mackinnon, 2008, p.12) is reported to have expressed it, using teachers "to create behaviour and attitudes within children"? In short, *can* schools take on the task of providing a rich and meaningful body of such experience for their students – one that does not entail mere social engineering, and which, far from detracting from academic achievement, actually serves to enhance it? Or, in the face of numerous other demands made on the school, do we just have to accept the rather patchy and variable pattern of such provision that one finds right across the world of education at present?

In the following chapter I will look more closely at what may be involved if schools *are* to come to terms more effectively with this sort of challenge: at how the ground can be constructively opened up, and a body of such experience built up and, as it were, pulled into a shape which can have a powerful and constructive effect. But first I will briefly review where we are now in relation to the wider case I am making.

6

A framework for practical work

At this stage I will take a step back to look at the wider case I am making.

Against the background of widespread change and social disruption taking place in society at large we still seem to have little idea of what works in the field of moral/social education. Some years ago the editor of the *Journal of Moral Education* commented that "in spite of 40 years of the *JME*, our understanding of teaching and learning in moral education is still embryonic" (Taylor M.J. 2011 p. 286); and in the 10 years since we still seem to be looking for some solid ground on which to base practice.

It is here, I suggest, that the sort of second-order perspective on human experience that I have outlined might come into its own. As I hope I have shown in the last chapter, the whole area of our social and moral development, in fact the growth of our basic humanity depends in the end on what happens in this first dimension of human experience – particularly through direct interpersonal interaction in a variety of settings. In Aristotle's terms, we acquire virtue by getting involved in situations where one can *practise* virtue, not by learning about virtue from some theoretical perspective. On the other hand, as a more recent study has it, where moral and character education programmes take the form of direct instruction, such programmes "seem to have little effect on the development of virtues in students" (Willems et al. 2012 p.101).

In this light, at a time when schools are increasingly expected to play a constructive part here, it seems important *firstly* to get clear about the fundamental importance of this area, and see the academic (and other more specialist forms of knowledge) in perspective against these more basic ways in which we engage with the world – other types of experience which can also be profoundly educative. *Secondly*, there is an implicit challenge here for schools to do what they can, as a matter of deliberate policy, to make a meaningful contribution to the area themselves: to provide the child with a range of opportunities to engage in the sort of learning which can take place at this 'lifeworld' level. This seems to be the all-important ground which needs to be recognized, opened

up and, as it were, mined if schools are to engage more effectively with these wider aspects of human development. In fact in the light of the case made about the primacy and importance of this dimension of our experience, it would appear that, in so far as schools do not engage sufficiently with this area, they will be trying to cater for such wider aspects of human development while neglecting the primary means to that end. Just as one cannot learn to swim merely by standing on the bank and learning the principles but only by plunging into water of sufficient depth to permit the activity itself, so, although through the other dimensions of our experience one might learn much that could prepare us for and round out such direct learning, ultimately one needs to engage in the activity itself.

This point may be easy to understand and indeed some may feel that it this is all rather 'old hat' – that in throwing into relief a fundamental dimension of our functioning in this way, and pointing to some educational implications, I have done little more than highlight and perhaps give added force to much that one can see indicated in the work of such figures seminal figures as Aristotle, Dewey and Durkheim, along with a host of more recent suggestions from writers ranging from Lickona (1991) through Noddings (2005) to Willems et al.(op.cit). However the overall perspective here, in bringing out the more particular characteristics of this dimension of our experience compared with the others, may enable us to see more clearly why, in spite of such figures, in effect pressing for a body of such provision, it can be difficult to get to grips with this area and to maintain a steady focus on it, particularly in the midst of other competing demands. Here especially, it seems, it is one thing to see the general point and another to follow it up in practice.

For one thing, with the curriculum as it is generally constituted, the same factors are likely to operate here as tend to crowd out and marginalise the whole third 'strand' of educational endeavour (i.e.moral/social/character education) that I drew attention to earlier. Too often, as Noddings (2002 p.97) has pointed out, we fear that attention to this wider area will mean the loss of the school's 'intellectual mission'; and referring to the developing educational climate in Britain, Anthony Seldon (2011 p.25) has quoted these "chilling words" from a head-teacher:

> Make no mistake. Whatever fine words and lofty ideals we have in our mission statements, our schools have one objective and one alone, exam results.[11]

But assuming that the crucial importance of this whole dimension of experience *is* appreciated and the need to make provision here is well understood, actually implementing, managing and sustaining things over time, if immensely rewarding, brings its own particular problems and challenges. These seem to come with the territory. Here the reader may recall some of the features inherent in this type of interactive experience which I described on pages 136-7. Its very fluidity as well as its potency can bring stresses and strains as well as unexpected rewards. This need not imply, of course, that one should blithely go ahead and pitchfork young people into this world of direct human encounters without regard to their age or without appropriate oversight and safeguards. But ultimately, if one is to build up a body of such provision with the object of engaging with the wider aspects of a person's functioning (including how he or she relates to the wider collective)   then one has to be prepared to encounter some rough-hewn as well as attractive facets. In fact one might see the occasional testing situation arising in the course of such human interaction as a real indication that these wider aspects of the personality are being engaged and any 'difficult' facets addressed.

In this and the next two chapters I will look at some core issues which appear to get to the heart of what is at stake if schools are to come to terms more effectively with this whole dimension of human experience. Looking at these matters will, I hope, serve to throw light on, and give a more concrete feel for, what it means not just to recognise the general importance of this area, but for teachers and others to work constructively with young people in this way if a coherent body of such experience is to be built up and sustained.

For the remainder of this chapter I will concentrate on identifying those aspects of institutional life which seem particularly important if one is really, as it were, to get hold of this area of work. What are the settings within the school which might be pivotal here; which readily afford (or seriously restrict) opportunities for building up such directly interactive learning; and which one should therefore be particularly attentive to?

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[11] One might compare this with a statement he made himself (Seldon 2015), which reinforces this view; and also with Pelletier (2008) on similar trends as they were developing in the USA.

Before starting on this, however, it is worth making three preliminary points to add some context to what follows:

(i) In bringing this perspective to bear on actual educational provision, I am aware that, spread across a wide literature, many of the particular measures suggested have already been proposed in one form or another, as various writers, in looking at particular aspects of school life on their own terms have come, in effect, to appreciate the importance of what happens at this level of our experience, and to see how this can be crucial to outcomes in their own particular areas of interest. While from this point of view the knowledgeable reader may experience a sense of déjà vu occasionally in what follows, this overall perspective on human experience may help one to see the real salience of, and draw together much that is at present scattered across a plethora of studies and initiatives, including, for instance, many of the studies undertaken by the Jubilee Centre in England. (See, for instance, Arthur and Harrison (2013) documenting practice in a number of "Case Study" schools in the UK). In fact the writer would maintain that there is much within such work that could be underpinned and given additional cogency if it could be seen as, essentially, reflecting the need to contribute to and leaven this underlying and all-important dimension of our existence.

(ii) Given all that is possible, no school can be expected to do everything. Clearly, what each one can do will to some extent depend on its own pool of human resources and talent. However, the following overview may enable those working in this field to see where their own school's relative strengths and blind spots lie, and perhaps encourage them to build on the former while looking for opportunities to improve things in the latter (or at least try to ensure that what is happening there does not actively undermine the good work being done elsewhere). What follows, then, is an overview of the considerable social potential which can be unlocked and encouraged to flourish. It is not a detailed blueprint which can be implemented in a uniform way – something which, I hope, the following discussion will underline at certain points. In fact there is, I think, much to be said for the pragmatic approach of a director of an educational project in Bradford, England (whose words I noted a few years ago, but have not been able to track down since):

> There are a dozen small things schools can do, but when you have them all going on, the overall culture of the school shifts….

(iii) As my argument unfolds some readers my indeed be wondering whether such a focus on this 'lifeworld' dimension of our human experience is bound to detract from what many would consider to be *the* main function of the school: that is, to impart the sort of academic and technical knowledge and skill typically associated with mastering the more specialist fields of human inquiry that were discussed earlier. In fact, as I hope to show later in chapter 9 there appears to be some strong evidence that provision in this primary area of experience can enhance rather than detract from learning in the more conventional subject areas. But this should come as no surprise if one remembers the crucial importance of this dimension of experience in the lives of the young and its pivotal place in relation to the other two that were discussed.

*Returning to the question of settings for such work within the life of the school***:**

I would tentatively suggest that the multifarious possibilities here distil into a more underlying framework of three principal areas *(a)-(c)* below) around which effort can cluster and which, depending on what happens within them, can be pivotal either in opening up and nourishing the opportunities here, or in discouraging and blocking them. They might serve as a sort of containing matrix for such activity as it develops across the institution and, amid the ups and downs of the of the everyday human interaction they are fostering, provide practitioners with some overall sense of purpose and direction. Amid the wealth of literature one finds which is relevant to provision here, the main areas I refer to are sometimes implicit but never, it seems, clearly delineated in this overall way. Although each will have its own subdivisions of activity which can accommodate more particular points of emphasis, it seems important to keep such principal aspects in mind as, ideally, forming the main components of a complex whole, aspects of which may be easily lost sight of amid competing pressures, but which are always there, as it were, awaiting one's attention. (It is for this reason that although, ideally, one would need something like a chapter on each area to illustrate the wealth of practical possibilities that can arise, to go into such detail at this stage would risk losing sight of the overall picture, the main threads of which can otherwise seem a tangled skein of forces contributing to the general climate of relationships within the school and forming, for better or worse, what one might see as its human base.)

When one begins to think about the settings where such direct human encounters are most readily generated and managed, those that spring to mind immediately may well be such particular contexts as those where students take part with others in field trips, 'muck in' together in a residential setting, fire questions at community leaders, or participate in such extracurricular activities as music making, drama productions, or sport. As I hope will become clear , the writer has no wish to downplay the potential of such settings or to discourage those keen to promote what might be termed 'a rich life beyond the classroom'. However, as (if not more) important, it seems, than any of these more particular types of activity, and indeed often crucial to whether they really thrive, is what is happening at the level of everyday encounters, and the relationships that result, as these are being generated within the very fabric of day-to-day institutional life – in other words, the quality of interpersonal contact arising as the school functions every day as a social institution in its own right. Within this complex two key areas seem to stand out:

(a) Underlying everything will be a code of discipline including basic ground-rules of behaviour.

Ideally perhaps, such measures should reflect what Kekes (1994) and others have seen as, in effect, 'primary' human values: those needed in virtually any society, given the sort of beings we are, to ensure a largely untroubled flow of social interaction so that everyday exchanges can take place without the participants suffering undue frustration or distress. (Compare 'morality in the narrow sense', p.24 above). As Michael Hand has pointed out:

> Within the reasonable plurality of moral standards there is an identifiable
> subset to which more or less everyone subscribes and for which reasons
> to subscribe are compelling. There is a very broad consensus in society
> on some basic moral prohibitions (on stealing, cheating, causing harm,
> etc.) and prescriptions (to treat others fairly, help those in need, keep
> one's promises, etc.).

And citing the work of H.L.A Hart, Geoffrey Warnock, J.L. Mackie, and David Copp, he states that there is a rational justification for these basic moral standards "whose cogency is hard to dispute". He continues:

> It is, briefly, that moral standards are justified when their currency in
> society serves to ameliorate…… the ever-present risk in human social
> groups of breakdowns of cooperation and outbreaks of conflict. This risk
> is ever present because of certain contingent but permanent features of
> the human condition: namely, our vulnerability to one another, our

limited capacity for sympathy, and a limited supply of needed or wanted resources (Hand 2014, p.528).

In this light (and here I am drawing on the words of Michael McManus written some time ago, but still relevant) it seems important, particularly "for those children whose home life is characterised by misfortune and chaos", that through such ground rules the school provides "a vital encounter with the fundamentals of civilised life." He points out that "For most youngsters school is their first acquaintance with a social unit larger than their family" and since the whole concept of society and an understanding of what it means to live in a community cannot be embraced without experience, a school which does not offer the experience of an ordered social environment "is a school which fails its pupils." He continued:

> Control and discipline are sometimes justified as necessary evils which permit an education to be quickly and efficiently supplied. They need no such excuse: an orderly school is an educational experience which justifies itself (McManus 1983).

However, in spite of such apparently common-sense statements and of what is now a vast literature on the subject, in many schools, as Goodman (2006b) and Rowe (2006) have observed, basic discipline is still a rather fraught and problematic area. One can ask, for instance, just how (especially how consistently) any such code is actually being implemented in a particular school; about the extent to which it is explained, seen as fair, and generally accepted; and about how much the focus is simply on crowd control and achieving a merely external show of compliance on the part of the child; or on seeing this area as in itself providing valuable opportunities for social and moral development by eliciting, encouraging and informing the child's own intrinsic and more personally authentic sense of right and wrong. (I am aware that I am begging some questions here, but these are matters I shall come back to later.)

(b) More widely, the quality of relationships across the school in general is clearly important

If one sees disciplinary measures as, ideally, creating a secure base on which children can build for their wider personality development, many other kinds of human encounter and relationship within the school offer further and more varied opportunities to develop what has been termed our human *sociality*. As children interact with their peers, with

their teachers, and also encounter a particular style of management, this crucial and many-sided capacity, which, to appropriate the words of Carrithers (1992 p.82), enables us to acquire ever more refined understandings of, for example, "rights, obligations, expectations, propensities and intentions in oneself and many different others", can be encouraged and given scope to flourish in a responsible way - with this seen as an important part of the school's wider educational remit - or it can be virtually overlooked in the face of other pressures.

More specifically, one can ask how students find themselves treated on a daily basis in the school; how are the wider problems of human life, which always threatens to spill over and affect the individual's performance in school (the personal disputes, jealousies, misunderstandings, etc.), dealt with; and how the many other (sometimes conflicting) pressures that the school inevitably faces in the course of an academic year are being handled. Is there a good overall sense of community reflected in a concern for the wellbeing of all within it? Or is there an all-consuming emphasis on, for instance, striving to satisfying targets for ever better academic results, come what may, so that the school becomes little more than an examination factory?

All of this will be creating a dynamic complex of social and moral experience for good or ill in its own right, which will convey its own implicit messages about human behaviour and values to those in daily contact with - one might say inevitably immersed in - what can be virtually a whole way of life for the time the child is in the school. In fact what is created within this 'hidden' or 'informal' curriculum may be just as powerful as anything that the school may try promote in the area of values education more formally and explicitly, since here the child will directly encounter types of human interaction in real-life situations where a whole raft of virtues and vices can be displayed on a daily basis, and which is, therefore, in itself an arena of social and moral learning. (On this, compare Patricia White 1981.)

Before leaving this complex area, one might note that a strong contributing factor here – one that may well in many cases prove to be a touchstone of a school's willingness to take this whole area seriously - is the extent to which students feel able to have some input of their own into the way the school is functioning. There appear to be two main aspects to this:

(i) Opportunities for students to voice concerns and to be listened to about matters that they themselves feel are important regarding (potentially) any aspect of school life – whether through particular consultative machinery such as a School Council, a regular class meeting, or more informally by approaching a member of staff. Many initiatives in this area would be seen as part of what has become known (particularly in Britain and the USA) as the Student Voice movement.

(ii) Opportunities for students to take on or help with more particular tasks or responsibilities within the school such as peer mentoring, peer mediation when conflicts arise, supervising younger children for certain activities, looking after a communal garden, helping to plan and/or contribute a whole-school assembly or other official activity, etc.

Unfortunately, particularly in the Student Voice area, what happens in practice can differ markedly from what may be presented as official school policy. It seems, for instance, that many school councils offer students merely a token form of consultation rather than engaging meaningfully with issues that the students themselves sees as important and wish to discuss. (On this see, for instance, Rowe (2006); Morrison (2009); and Goodman & Ehren (2013)) This however means foregoing the considerable learning opportunities generated when meaningful dialogue can take place, and when virtues such as courage, self-control, tolerance and patience may well be called for, exercised and tested on all sides.

Moreover, in spite of what is often an initial scepticism on the part of adults about whether young people can or will engage in such opportunities in a responsible manner or that this will benefit the school generally, as Goodman and Eren (op.cit.) have shown citing numerous sources, there now exists a considerable body of literature which suggests otherwise: that, given the chance and with appropriate safeguards and support, the young "do accept opportunities for agency", with positive results both for the particular individuals involved and for the school in general.

Perhaps the following powerful statements of, respectively, Edmund Burke and J S Mill capture the general point here, and indeed provide the ultimate rationale for taking the

potential inherent in this area seriously: "I have never yet seen any plan", wrote Burke in 1790 (parag.280) "which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business." (This, in the context of criticising self-confident intellectuals who ignore the grass-roots knowledge and experience of ordinary people). And the point has, in effect, been underlined by Mill (1859 p.77) with these words: "All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility" – something which seems to reach to the heart of any willingness to enter into a meaningful discussion or dialogue with others.

 These two fundamental areas - the disciplinary measures, and the quality of relationships in general, including the extent to which students themselves feel they can contribute, - can obviously affect the every day 'way of life' that the student experiences at school and will enhance (or detract from) a sense of belonging to and identification with it. In fact, as regards the other broad area I will draw attention to below, the dynamics generated as the school functions everyday as a corporate entity would seem to form an inevitable background environment which can potentially undergird or adversely affect everything else which might be attempted in the area of moral or social education.

(c) In addition to harnessing (and, one hopes, turning to good account) the layer of human interaction generated through the numerous tasks and challenges that crop up within the daily round of institutional life, other opportunities can be created specifically for the purpose of bringing about what one might see as an added injection of what Dewey called 'associated life' or community building. I am referring to opportunities for interpersonal encounters which, taking place outside of the everyday operating framework of the school, can sometimes develop a sort of independent life of their own, which may, indeed, on occasion, feed back into and affect the ambience that prevails within that everyday setting.

In particular, unless the general atmosphere is really unfavourable, within the school overall it may always be possible for *small-scale enclaves of social interaction* to come into being where good work can still take place in spite of the predominant tone set in the background. Similarly *large-scale or whole-schools events*, if well staged, can take on a life of their own which can have a powerful effect on those directly involved. I discuss each respectively under **(i)** and **(ii)** below.

(i) Here I am referring to small individual pockets of such activity where there are opportunities for meaningful interaction and learning to take place outside of what the student may see as the main operating framework of the school. I am thinking of a host of more particular activities and interest groups where individuals have the opportunity to interact with others and develop valuable social skills, often in a relatively informal climate where there is the chance to find a niche for themselves and shine outside the normal school and classroom environment.

There are a variety of terms for such activities including 'extra-curricular', 'co-curricular', 'enrichment', 'electives', 'learning outside the classroom', and (in China) 'after-school education'. This variety of terms, reflecting different ways of looking at this area, may indicate that, while there seems to be a vague sense in the educational world that there is something of worth which such groups can contribute to the education of the child, there appears to be no settled view of just why or how. In fact, in the light of the picture of the principal dimensions of human experience that I have outlined, it is these small interactive groups especially, with their often fluid dynamics and ready interchange of energies - where the child can be an active player in an unfolding scene working with others towards an end-product - that can elicit a great deal of social and moral learning as the participants manage (in the end) to work cooperatively together in spite of individual differences of temperament and ability. (On this sort of activity one might compare Inglis (1975, p.44) and Eddison (2013) describing the challenges involved in putting on a school play.)

With such groups, of course, much can depend on the initiative and social skills of the member(s) of staff (or other adults) interacting with and supporting a particular group of students. But such groups (I am thinking, for instance, of drama, music-making, and sports teams) can generate a micro-environment of their own with a group spirit which can inspire intense loyalty and real pride in any joint achievement.

As for the variety of terms used here, from an organisational point of view one might usefully distinguish between, 'co'-curricular, 'extra'- curricular, and timetabled 'enrichment' (or 'elective') programmes.

At present 'co'- and 'extra'- can be used interchangeably and it does seem that, however one distinguishes them, there is bound to be some overlap. However, it may be best to use *co-curricular* to refer mainly to activities which are designed to connect with and enliven an aspect (or aspects) of the student's official course of study, but which also enable them to come into contact with others (in a field, residential, work or community-service setting, for instance) in ways which may be as significant for their personal and social development as for their academic progress. Here one might mention visits to so-called 'Forest Schools', a movement originating in Denmark mainly for younger children, which introduces them to woodland crafts, cooking outdoors, and other practical activities which encourage the development of both individual initiative and cooperative teamwork. Ritchie (2009 p.24) reports a class tutor saying that, "When they come and talk to you about their visit and what they have done, children who don't usually have any confidence in the classroom are really proud……it's amazing to see the transformation". The same writer cites research which has found that children who took part in these activities "gained greater self confidence, the ability to work in a team, more motivation to learn, and pride in their surroundings."

On the other hand, one can use *'extra-curricular'* to refer to activities, which are generally either voluntary or where there is an element of choice, and where it is hoped the child may gain experiences which bear on those aspects of his or her wider personality development which might otherwise escape the net of formal learning. I have mentioned drama, music-making and sport – to which one might add debating, Outward Bound type activities, or the joint pursuit of some other interest or hobby. In Britain these may take place in the early morning as 'breakfast clubs', at lunchtime, or after school. The actor and playwright Lennie James (2015 pp.30-1) has vividly described the part that being in his school rugby team played in his life. "None of us", he recounts, "had any idea about rugby". He continues:

> We were a ragtag bunch of kids who were only on the field because we couldn't get into the football team. Mr Miller had to teach us the game from scratch. And he did – brilliantly. The squad ended up being a fantastic side. We got so much buzz out of not just playing the game but playing it well. We went to Yorkshire….Holland….France [and] beat everybody there. It gave us this huge confidence, which Mr Miller inspired us to apply to our studies. We took that spirit into the classrooms."

While this is a spectacular example, a similar rationale may underlie the setting up of a programme of *'enrichment' or 'elective' activities* which is built into the timetabled curriculum, but where staff-student interaction can be less formal and a different kind of relationship can develop free from the pressure of working to achieve high test and examination results. In Britain students are generally given some choice regarding which activity they take, although this is not always the case here or elsewhere if they are expected to experience a wide range of such activities. (In fact this could be seen as a potential strong point in such programmes: that they can introduce students to certain pursuits which they might not have been interested in beforehand, but which, when actually experienced, they might find enjoyable.)

(ii) We can look now at the potential within the macro setting: that is, large-scale or whole school events **-** such as assemblies, student performances, shows or other end of term events in front of the whole school or a year-group, charity/fundraising days involving active student participation, guest speakers or artists on a stage with a question and answer session, and so on. In particular, in the words of Tom Finn-Kelcey:

> Assembly is a great place to showcase the great writers, artists, musicians   and orators of the school – something we do not do nearly enough of. It is also a necessary focal point in bad times; if anyone connected to the school is struck by misfortune or tragedy, it is vital to gather together and show solidarity (2013, pp.24-5).

Something seems to happen when a large group of individuals can laugh together, share their sorrows, celebrate together, or just find that they are experiencing something remarkable in common; and such events can bring out something of the more subtle and implicit aspects of a communal sensibility which it can be difficult to capture in words or express otherwise. In fact these sorts of event can build on and deepen what is happening in the other main areas above, and so both reflect and serve to enhance a wider community spirit.

As with the state of the school's everyday relationship life, it has to be admitted that the groups and activities falling within *(c)* can be similarly affected by a wider trends in education. In much of the English-speaking world there has been a long tradition of seeing participation in both these small-scale and larger-scale social activities as an

important part of a child's educational experience and as particularly relevant to character building. And there are still many who see the need for and value of them if a school is to fulfil such an educational remit. However, in recent years, due to budget cuts, an increasingly instrumental climate together with the attitude that 'if you can't measure it, it doesn't count', there have been fears expressed, particularly in England, that, however socially and morally formative, the energy and sense of purpose undergirding such activities is being sapped - something which is adversely affecting their viability in some schools (cf. Leigh 2001, Kent (2011), and Kashefpakdel et al. 2018).

The overall scene

What I have tried to bring out above are key elements of what one might see as a 'deep structure' underlying the emergence of what Durkheim called the "spirit of association", and Dewey (as we have noted) "the associated life".

To recapitulate: these elements, which, it appears, may have their counterparts in any organisation, are:

(a) **basic behavioural boundaries or a disciplinary code**: a set of do's and don'ts which ensure a reasonable degree of harmonious interaction in the everyday environment; and which in some schools form the mainstay of a haven of stability and security in the face of what some have seen as a weakening or breakdown of many traditional patterns of living and relating across large swathes of society at large.

b) **the wider interactive life generated within the everyday environment of the institution** as people go about their business and come into contact. Here, from the perspective we are concerned with, it is a matter of harnessing and turning to good account the potential inherent in the fact that the school consists of a conglomeration of individuals thrown together who, in spite of inevitable jealousies, misunderstandings, clashes of temperament and conflicts of interest, etc., have to learn to get on together and, as far as possible, create a flourishing and humane community. This, of course, assumes that such natural human interaction is allowed a degree of expression and is not being continually suppressed; that there is a recognition that the learning which can take place in this area can contribute significantly to the developing sociality of the child – a critical factor in the wider development of the personality. But as I have implied, to release, oversee, and responsibly harness the potential here, if it can be immensely

rewarding, is probably not a job for the fainthearted or insecure. However, the whole question of the qualities required in this sort of context is something I will come back to in following chapters.

If in the above one is largely concerned with, in a sense, unleashing, and subsequently 'fielding' the issues which arise, there is also the possibility of:

(c) **the more deliberate creation of areas of social interchange** through a rich programme of *co-, extra-curricular, and enrichment(or elective) activities.* Similarly, any business organisation can arrange for small groups of its workforce to take part in exercises of a team-building or morale-boosting nature away from the normal working environment. It can also put on large-scale events of a socially bonding, celebratory or aspirational nature which, it is hoped, will feed back to increase motivation in that everyday environment.

The significance of the resulting ethos

These three key areas of school life, particularly if they can be brought into alignment and then coalesce, can have a decisive effect on the type of *ethos* that prevails in an institution – something which can have a significant effect on the everyday atmosphere or 'human environment', and thus on the morale of everyone on the premises.

This phenomenon may be very real, almost palpable, when experienced, although, as McLaughlin has noted, the concept is "notoriously difficult" to pin down and analyse (2005, p.308) not least because, as he says, it is "closely akin to, and often described in terms of, related notions such as 'ambience', 'atmosphere', 'climate', 'culture', 'ethical environment' and the like." But a study by Allder (1993), concludes that it refers to the human environment created in an institution as its various activities take place; it tends to be picked up and recognised in an experiential way rather than apprehended at the cognitive level; it refers to a mood or moods which are pervasive within this environment, to norms rather than exceptions, and to something which may well be *unique* to the institution.

Others have drawn more particular attention to the normative implications of this (e.g. Eisner, and Glover & Coleman (cited in Mclaughlin)); and (specifically on the effect of a school's 'moral atmosphere' on transgressive or prosocial behaviour) Foa et al. 2012).

But on the wider point here I cannot do better than quote McLaughlin's approving words on Eisner here. For him, he says:

> ethos refers to '…..the underlying deep structure of a culture, the values that animate it, that collectively constitute its way of life' …….[He] sees ethos as relating to the core values of the school and to that which is deep and fundamental in its life and work (op.cit.p.310).

In this light perhaps one can understand that, at its strongest, the influence of an ethos can be seen "in the shaping of human perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, dispositions and the like in a distinctive way" (p.312); and, one might add, in the process helping to form or impede those 'habits of the heart' that Bellah (1985) and others have seen as vital for sustaining civil society.

At this point I can not embark on a more extended discussion of this phenomenon, whether about its effect (for good or ill) on the morale and productive efficiency of *any* group of individuals engaged in some 'conjoint activity' (to borrow Dewey's words); or about the dangers which can arise if intense solidarity, group-think, and in-group loyalty are being generated at the expense of individuality and independence of thought (although this is a theme I take up in the following chapter).

However, to return to the present educational scene, we may note that - while the essential insight into the dynamics here was, in the early 20th century, strongly prefigured in the work of, among others, Baldwin, Dewey, and Durkheim (compare Baldwin's concept of the 'socius' (in Sherblom 2012)) - more recently a number of writers and reports have been concerned to bring this concept afresh to the attention of educators as something which itself has considerable educative potential and which can usefully complement more explicit forms of teaching and learning in any educational (or indeed business) setting. (On this, see Burns 2016, citing the *Harvard Business Review*; and (on schools as such) the Scottish Government 2018).)

In the wake of such studies, some of which offer their own breakdown of the numerous aspects of school life which can contribute to the emergence of an ethos (McLaughlin (p.309) refers to reports listing 12, 13 and 21 respectively), a more synoptic or 'big picture' view such as I have suggested, depicting some crucial underlying areas, may have its uses in understanding and getting to grips with this pervasive, potent, but complex phenomenon.

7

Managing the powerful human dynamics

I have been arguing that, if schools are to provide more effectively for the wider social and moral development of their charges, they need to create a rich body of interactive lifeworld experience, particularly in the areas I have mentioned; and that, ideally, there should be a coalescence of such activity into a strong communal ethos. In this chapter and the next, however, I will consider how one might view and respond to some of the hard practical issues which can arise at the level of actual implementation.

While there may be a general direction of effort along the lines suggested in a particular school, the very nature of this kind of educative experience is likely to generate its own stresses and strains between the parties involved.   While not pitchforking students into these areas of human interaction without regard to their age or level of maturity, ultimately, in opening up the ground for the wider personality to find expression, one is also opening the door to what at times may seem a veritable maelstrom of forces unleashed by its many-sided and sometimes rough-hewn facets..

Of course, this is just one side of the coin, so to speak. One should not forget that engaging with students in this way can also bring (sometimes unexpected) rewards, and that, while still needing to be socialised, the young also appear to have a natural desire to imitate and emulate. But at any age, in providing experience which by its very nature may call for and test such qualities as self-control, courage, compassion and generosity one will be dealing with experience which may well prove irksome, 'near the knuckle', lit with flashes of anger, and even at times humiliating to the participants. In the very space in which courage can express itself there is the space for fear; in the space for magnanimity, anger; and in the space for altruism, selfishness. In fact this aspect was already implicit in my original description of this category of experience as that in which 'alchemical action' can take place between the world of these directly encountered situations and the world of one's own basic wants, hopes, fears and complexes, etc.

All this will obviously demand qualities on the part of whichever adults are involved that are equal to these rough-hewn aspects (particularly at the secondary (11plus) age level) so that they can continue to enfold such elements, no matter how seemingly coarse at the time, into a process which works to further the overall character development of the individual. This, of course, is more easily said than done. Here, the words of Richard Reeves (2008), an experienced youth worker, seem apposite. Raising children to have good character, he has said, "is itself character testing, and for some, character building".

But can one say something more about how this whole area of provision might be handled in a constructive way? Faced with such challenges one can ask whether there is a strategy based on some first principles which could provide practitioners with more definite bearings and sense of direction as they negotiate a course through this sometimes rough and uncertain terrain. Here, I suggest we need to look further at some powerful forces operating at the very heart of the human condition as we undergo *any* process of socialisation – a term so easy to refer to as a large-scale general process but which, when it comes down to the experience of particular individuals undergoing it, may give little indication of the personal dramas and traumas generated by the forces at work. In fact there appears to be a whole way of thinking, rightly or wrongly associated with the term in the popular imagination, which can be questioned in the light of a deeper understanding of the potent forces actually at work as we, beings of a certain sort, both undergo *and engage with* the world we are thrown into. In fact acknowledging and coming to terms with the dynamic interplay and tension between these basic forces might well be considered the most central, important, and at the same time difficult task which any of us faces. However at this point perhaps one should bring all this down to earth by reminding ourselves of some key aspects of our encounter with life at this level, caught up, as we often are, in a powerful web of sometimes conflicting dynamics.

Two potentially antithetical factors

As a way into this I will cite some observations of Durkheim.He certainly saw the need for socialisation and, in general, the educative potential of social and community life. But he was also well aware that the relation between the individual and the collective was not always an untroubled one. He writes that while "a society has all that is necessary to arouse the sensation of the divine in minds, merely by the power it has over

them", on the other hand there are times when we must "submit ourselves to rules of conduct and thought we have never made nor desired, and which are sometimes contrary even to our most fundamental inclinations and instincts" (in Thompson 2005, p.89).

His words may serve to remind us that there is something demanding and irksome (as well as at times inspirational) which is central to our development as the child interacts with others and encounters social norms. There seem to be two considerations here that one needs, as at were, to hold together in productive tension.

On the one hand, as a number of figures have pointed out, especially in recent years (but echoing much that one can find in the work of Burke, Tocqueville and Hegel) the conventions, norms and other structures that individuals encounter in their immediate environment can serve to enable as well as constrain: that it is only by experiencing, engaging with and using such structures – which initially may have seemed rather uncongenial and alien – that we are able to find our own way of being. By finding the potentially unlimited ways in which one might conceivably experience and encounter the world already ordered in some ways rather than others we, so to speak, learn to use that sort of language, learning to orientate and express ourselves within it. The child's initial free-ranging and often transient impulses will normally encounter a set of norms that will contain and, to some extent, indeed, constrain them. In the process certain of these impulses may well be encouraged and stabilised; others will be discouraged - with the result that our freedom, although in some ways restricted, is in other ways greatly enhanced. The process, in Bantock's words, serves to "release human capacities" as well as "contain them"(1967, p.13); while Weinsheimer, commenting on Gadamer, states that the 'second nature' that one acquires through custom and habit "is actually the first in so far as through the latter one becomes more fully what one is" (1985, p.80).

On the other hand, in this process one has to be prepared for the recalcitrance of the child's initial unhabituated and sometimes rather volatile nature. Hobbes observed that "Man is born inapt for society" (in Ryan 2019, p.30); and similarly Dewey has reminded us that "The natural or native impulses of the young do not agree with the life-customs of the group into which they are born" (1916, p.39). One might recall the picture in chapter 4 of the child seeing life as a 'carnival of possibilities' but encountering the obduracy of hard reality. As adults who have generally left much of this behind and built up a fairly

comfortable and predictable "umwelt" (Husserl's term), it might be easy to forget the "vale of tears" (Barrett 1987 p.92) that we once had to go through to reach this state. (This may be one reason one does not seem to find much in the mainstream philosophical, sociological, or even psychological literature relating to education which really opens up and engages with such basic ground, and looks at the considerable implications which can arise for practice).

Resolving the tension and striking a balance

But, if there is always an element of resistance at work as one acquires such a 'second nature', this appears to be necessary and, indeed, healthy if we are not to turn out as mere ciphers of society assimilating social norms in identical ways. Rather than this, there tends be a process of fusion or alchemical interaction between the primary drives we find within us and the acquisition of culture. Here we are back with what I suggested earlier (in chapter 4) was perhaps *the* basic human predicament involving a clash of elemental forces. And, to expand on what was briefly referred to there, this presents us with a dilemma which, although probably as old as civilisation itself, continues across the world to exercise the minds of each generation in the circumstances in which it finds itself.

It was certainly expressed by Locke writing in the late 17th century. In 'Some Thoughts Concerning Education' (1693/1947) he maintained that "the true secret of education" rested on attaining a balance between too forceful or rigid an imposition in this area – so that the child's nature is curbed but his spirit becomes dejected or timorous – and too little, so that he ends up with no mastery over his inclinations and is "never good for anything". He concludes: "To avoid the danger that is on either hand is the great art; and he that has found a way to keep a child's spirit easy, active and free, and yet at the same time to restrain him from many things he hath a mind to, and to draw him to things that are uneasy to him, he, I say, that knows how to reconcile these seeming contradictions, has, in my opinion, got the true secret of education" (paras.45-6). Dewey's approach to this issue, although expressed very differently, is ultimately very similar (1916, pp.44 and 52). And delving more widely into the world of social thinkers, we find that Cooley (1962, p.343 ff.) discussed the twin evils of what he termed "formalism" and "disorganisation"; Durkheim saw the dangers both of too much authority, which could be oppressive, and of too little, which could result in anomie (in Coser 1971, pp.132-6);

while Simmel seems to encapsulate as well as anyone the central dilemma here in writing of the ineradicable tension which arises as individuals engage with "objective" cultural values. An individual can reach a cultivated state only by appropriating the values that surround him. But these values always threaten to engulf and subjugate the individual (Coser op.cit. p.191).

Nevertheless, in spite of such warnings, it may be an indication of how difficult it can be to hold on to this perspective and maintain a healthy balance that, over the last hundred years or so, the English-speaking world in particular appears to have experienced a number of swings between these two polarities, both in education and more widely. It seems that we continue to veer periodically from one to the other, although, of course, each generation will be pursuing its own agenda within these parameters.

The first half of the 20th century, for instance, was generally a time when social norms were strong and local communities could exert considerable pressure on the individual. This, while perhaps providing sufficient opportunities for many, could limit opportunities for others who might find it difficult to go against the grain of local expectation. This was an era, after all, when in Britain stereotypical gender roles were largely unquestioned, teenage girls who today might well in the 1960s be considered to be sexually liberated could be committed to mental hospitals, and a child could be punished at school if seen to be writing with the left hand.

On the other hand, during the later 20th century, due in good part to the rise of the complex of more socially dissolving forces I described in chapter 1 and particularly, perhaps, during the heyday of the vogue for 'postmodernism' around the 80s and 90s, social structures of any sort could be considered to be at best arbitrary and at worst part of a great conspiracy by vested interests to control and subjugate the lives of ordinary people. (Certain strands within Foucault's work, which was very popular in intellectual circles at the time, could certainly be interpreted in this way.) It was in this atmosphere that, among others, Waldron(1996) celebrated the disintegration of large-scale frameworks and the apparent rise of a culture consisting of many incommensurable fragments.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, a reaction set in. Looking at the apparent effect of this breakdown on stable family life, Etzioni (1993) saw an increasing 'parental deficit' where the upbringing of children was concerned. There was much talk in Britain of a 'moral panic' fuelled by a fear that children were growing up without the wherewithal to gain a sense of right and wrong. Kekes had commented that "we make out children free without teaching them how to use this freedom" (1989 p.244). And there was a general surge of publications arguing for a more community orientated approach to the problems society was facing reflected in, for example, Sandel (1982), Bellah et al. (1985), and Taylor (1992). It may say something about the climate of the time, however, that in 1993, a philosopher of education presented a paper to a conference at Cambridge making, in the end, much the same point that I presented above (that structures and norms were necessary and could be enabling for the individual), then commented - and at the time it seemed justified – that: "All this has only recently been appreciated" (Marples 1993).

Naturally, education had also been affected by these developments. From a time 30 or so years ago when in Britain some teachers seem to have been wary of the very word 'discipline' and of making moral judgements about their pupils' behaviour, there is now a general recognition (reinforced by government inspectors and their publications) of the need for firm boundaries to be set for children and for schools to have a 'effective' policy in this area. The pendulum has indeed been swinging back. But whether the sort of balance that Locke drew attention to is being taken into account is another matter. This latest swing seems driven largely by more mundane considerations such as a perceived need to impose *some* set of stable normative structures within the school in view of the increasing instability in the family life of many children outside it; and/or because of a desire to clamp down on overly disruptive behaviour in the attempt to ensure that nothing should interfere with the school's ability to deliver ever improving test scores and examination results.

In the attempt to satisfy such apparently pressing demands it seems only too easy to lose sight of the benefits of a more constructive amalgam of energies at the level of everyday human interaction as the child, a striving human organism with a certain integrity of its own, nevertheless needs to become substantially informed by cultural norms. From the late 90s there seem to have been increasing expressions of concern about the tendency

for some schools to try to impose a rather forbidding regime more concerned, as Rodger put it, with 'socializing children into an institution rather than a community' (2000, p.469). In particular Skillen (1997b, p.61) referred to the 'etiolated moral environment' of his son's school, overly concerned with such rules as not running in corridors and not scrapping with others, but where, apart from a concern for getting good academic grades, there was very little that was positive in the moral environment. He concluded that it was "the monitoring, conquering, taming, subjugating and punishing" practices that were now seen as "the main mode of moralisation". In a similar vein Standish pointed to the danger of imagining that "morality is centrally a matter of regulative rules" since in this case the regulative can come "to usurp the place of meaning in our moral geography" (1997 p.52). In 2006 Goodman in a much quoted article tellingly called 'School Discipline in Moral Disarray', and commenting on the situation in the USA, made essentially the same point; while more recently one might cite Brewin (2018), and Goodman again (2019).

In these circumstances, rather than engage with the real challenge of Locke's 'great art' there is a tendency to follow uncritically whatever the current zeitgeist favours in this respect. This, as I have suggested, certainly seems to be reflected in the dramatic swings of the pendulum in Britain over the years. As one frustrated teacher writing in the *Times Educational Supplement* put it: rather than lurching from one extreme to the other, "You'd hope that one day, for the sake of the children, we'd find some middle ground…that combined the best of both" (Briggs, 2014, p.12).

The international scene: different cultures, but universal propensities?

In fact one suspects that, either way, a serious imbalance here is likely to cause problems for *any* society sooner or later. Looking at the global scene, one reads numerous accounts indicating that where, as in the Far East, the stress is on maintaining collective solidarity and social cohesion, this tends to be at the expense of the voice of the individual and creative innovation (see below); while those societies in the West which lay stress on individual expression and personal fulfilment could be said to run the risk of undermining social cohesion and any sense of a greater common good.

To elaborate: social solidarity, if heavily emphasised, can produce a state of herd-like 'group-think' and an unwillingness even to question blatant corruption or other forms of

malpractice and inefficiency, whether in the workplace or elsewhere, for fear of 'rocking the boat' – factors which appear to have played a significant part in the lead- up to, or the aftermath of, the disasters which took place at the nuclear facilities at Chernobyl in 1986, at Fukushima in Japan in 2011, and at the Tianjin chemical storage plant in China in 2015. Having read various accounts of the events surrounding these disasters, I would cite the conclusions of an independent commission authorised by the Japanese parliament as particularly significant. While specifically addressing the situation at Fukushima, the report appears to illustrate a more general mindset which one can discern at work, to a greater or lesser extent, in all three accidents. The commission concluded that:

> [The disaster's] causes are to be found in the ingrained conventions of
> Japanese culture: our reflexive obedience; our reluctance to question authority;
> our devotion to 'sticking with the program': our groupism: and our insularity
> (in Harlan 2012).

And it goes on to refer to:

> the collective mindset of the Japanese bureaucracy, by which the first duty of
> any individual is to defend the interests of his organisation (ibid.)

On the other hand, it has to be said that a bias the other way can result in a 'me first' individualism which some have seen reflected in a 'greed is good' mindset adopted by certain highfliers in the world of business and finance, and particularly, it seems, some years ago, by those in investment banking. In fact the single-minded pursuit of profit regardless of the wider public good appears to have played no small part in causing the global financial crisis which started around 2008 in the West.[12]

Goodman and Uzun, although not writing directly about these contexts, could have been summing up the effect of the two extremes here when they conclude that:

> Authority by itself becomes tyranny and liberty becomes license…..
> Each of these terms destroys itself at the very moment when it destroys the
> other term by its excess (Goodman & Uzun 2013, p.5).

In a very real sense, then, whether East or West, there may be a high price to pay if we allow too much weight to be put on one or the other side of this axis.

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[12] On this compare Cohan (2009) who has given us a ringside seat of the sheer greed, arrogance and stupidity of those managing Bear Stearns at the time of the crash; Comer & Vega (2011) who have edited a collection of essays on the typical moral dilemmas and seductive inducements individuals can be subject to in the frenetic world of high finance; and Goldin (2018).

In fact there have been a number of calls in some quarters for such deeply ingrained cultural attitudes to be modified. In China periodically, and in Japan, South Korea and Singapore more generally, for instance, concerns have been raised about the heavy reliance on unquestioning rote-learning in their education systems which can lead to the assimilation of facts and formulas without real understanding or any stimulation of creative thought[13]. While in the USA Robert Putnam's analysis of the state of 'social capital' in his book 'Bowling Alone'(2000) is (as we have seen) indicative of a theme taken up by a number of writers pointing to the dangers of a breakdown in community life. Ideally perhaps, one may hope that things will gradually move in the direction envisaged by Goodman and Uzun (op.cit.) who, drawing on Harter, suggest that:

> The tradition of contrasting the Western ideal of autonomy and individualism with the Eastern one of relatedness and self-subordination to others is being replaced by a combined ideal that fosters both throughout life (p.5).

However, there is much that I have skated over here, and the situation is far more complex than this very general East-West picture might suggest. Whatever the dominant bias in a society overall, forms of its polar opposite can still arise in certain institutional settings. It is as if both propensities are embedded as potential in the human frame and neither can be completely suppressed by culture. Thus in the West a study by Spicer and Alveston reported in *The New Scientist* found that even highly trained and talented individuals, once they found themselves in a strong corporate culture, in the natural desire to fit in and belong, tend to switch off their critical faculties for fear of appearing to be disloyal and to criticise those in authority – a phenomenon the authors termed 'functional stupidity' (Adee, 2013, pp.30-33). On the other hand Tom Doctoroff (2012) has observed that in China forms of individual greed and personal ambition continue to arise in institutional settings although affected by the wider collectivist climate, particularly a fear of 'losing face'.

In fact there appears to be a universal fault-line here reflected in the dynamics operating in *any* human institution, whether, for instance, family, school, business organisation, or government department. We all, it seems, have a basic need for structure on the one

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[13] On this see, for example, Ripley (2011); Trafford 2014; and Stewart (2015).

hand, and for a degree of self-expression on the other. It is certainly reflected in one of the two main axes in Rimbaum's well-known studies of parenting styles which can range from the authoritarian and over-controlling to the permissive and laissez-faire (1971 and 1991). Again, much of what one can read across the whole field of organisation and management theory appears to betray a tension between the same two endemic tendencies although, of course, I am not claiming that everything in this area can be seen in this light. There does, however, seem to be a constant temptation to veer either towards an overly controlling 'micromanagement' approach which in the name of detailed protocols and tight oversight can stifle individual initiative and discount grass-roots knowledge; or towards one where the control is too dispersed or weak to stop individuals milking the system for their own ends and /or different departments zealously trying to further their own sphere of activity and ending up working as much against each other as for the organisation as a whole. (The present writer cannot claim to be fully conversant with the mountain of literature in this field, but from the reading he *has* done would cite the following in support of the general case being made: Solomon (1999); Fuller & Unwin (2004); and Geert Hofstede's 'Cultural Dimensions Theory' of organisations (1984 and 2001)).[14]

The underlying issue: implications for education.

Clearly the question of balance and accommodation between the potent forces at work here is crucial. In fact one might say that this is central to our very formation as persons - particularly to the kind of moral beings we become, and to human wellbeing in general.

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[14] The fact that there is this fundamental polarity lying at the heart of human existence appears to be supported by some comparatively recent work of Haidt, Graham, and their colleagues in what has been termed Moral Foundations Theory (MFT). It is claimed that there are certain universal elements or intuitions which give rise to our moral beliefs and ideals and that these can be grouped into two broad categories: *individualising*, concerned with individual rights and personal fulfilment; and *binding*, focusing more on group identity and communal ties (Haidt 2013; Wright & Baril 2013; and Vauclair et al. 2014 p.56). And while we each have all the original elements written into our neurobiological make-up, which cluster actually gets triggered is determined by the particular cultural environment one finds oneself in. Yet if these developments in MFT appear to reflect a widespread recognition of the basic individual/collective axis operating in human life, there does not appear to be anything like the same acknowledgement, at least in academic circles, of the often rugged dynamics, the trauma and drama involved, as the striving human organism, with its own particular cluster of energies and affinities actually engages with *whatever* socio-cultural norms it happens to encounter. In fact one might get the impression from much of the MFT literature that the individual is little more than a hapless sponge helplessly soaking up whatever the main social influence is in this respect.

To paraphrase the words of Locke: while the often volatile energies of the child need to be made subject to some effective discipline and constructively channelled, too heavy-handed or forceful an approach here can result in something central to the very spirit of the child becoming muzzled, numbed, or cowed, with its inherent potential never allowed to unfold and see the light of day.

In fact since Locke's time, far from these matters getting resolved or fading in importance, they are still the subject of continuing debate and controversy. Educational thinkers, for instance, from Dewey (1916) to Biesta (2009) nearly a century later have asked basic questions about whether we wish to produce individuals who will grow up docilely replicating whatever norms and practices they encounter in life's various settings so that they become virtually interchangeable units or cogs reproducing some greater collectivist pattern; or whether we want individuals who can bring and contribute something of themselves to these practices so that the latter can be reinvigorated, refined and can evolve rather than being allowed to ossify or become fetishised. Here much depends, of course, on the significance one attaches to the individual uniqueness that, in Arendt's words, "distinguishes every human being from every other" (Arendt 2006, p.185). One can view this as a potentially valuable resource which can be tapped and harnessed for the benefit of society in general; or, in the pursuit of what Dewey termed "social efficiency" combined with rather jaundiced (Hobbesian) view of human nature, one can view the expression of individuality as at best an annoying nuisance, and at worst a threat to the existing social order. Dewey's view was that whenever some distinctive individual quality is developed, "distinction of personality results, and with it, greater promise of a social service…". And, perhaps more tellingly, he asks "For how can there be a society really worth serving unless it is constituted of individuals of significant personal qualities?" (1916 p.121). Biesta himself (2009) adopts what is ultimately a similar stance but is, perhaps, more explicit about some of the implications. He maintains that while education certainly has an important *socialising function* (concerned with transmitting the values and traditions of an existing social order), it also needs to accommodate an 'opposite' *individuating* (his preferred term is *subjectification*) *function* so that space can be opened up "for uniqueness to come into the world" and "the individual can actively contribute to society's shaping" as well as being shaped by it.

But if it is easy to state the issue in such clear terms, it seems, as I have indicated, to be far from easy to balance, reconcile and generally manage the forces at work within these two sometimes competing tendencies when it comes to actual practice on the ground. If one is aiming to do justice both to the native spirit of the child and to the cultural norms (s)he is expected to acquire so that a productive mesh between the two can be created and a healthy balance maintained, can one identify some more specific elements of an approach which might provide more concrete guidelines, some more definite bearings, for practitioners?

Below, drawing on a variety of sources, I will consider some key elements of an approach that might bring these general considerations more down to earth and thus put us in a better position to engage constructively with Locke's "great art". In particular I will take a look at:

(i) **Two key principles, (a) and (b) below, which appear to follow from the basic existential factors that I have drawn attention to above.**

(ii) **I will then look at some wider practical implications if these principles are to be combined in a productive way**. In fact it is the balancing and combining of them in particular circumstances which can be so challenging. It goes to the heart of how one sees, values and treats others, and clearly calls for judgment. Finally, under:

(iii) **I will consider how such an approach relates to, or is at variance with, the so-called 'classical' stage developmental theories of, for instance, Piaget and Kohlberg.**

(i) **(a)** On the one hand, to do justice to the socio-cultural norms that form the moral sinews of a society (if it is to function *as* a society rather than a loose collection of individuals), what seems needed are firm disciplinary foundations based on a clear set of behavioural expectations which reflect the kind of universal values needed for any reasonably harmonious dealings with others over time (cf. Hand op.cit.), as well, of course, as many of the more particular social conventions in operation at any one time. In any case norms, social structures and general acculturation can (as I put it in an earlier section citing Bantock) serve to stimulate, channel and release – as well as at times constrain – the energies and capacities of the individual.

(b) On the other hand, too forceful or heavy handed an imposition here can dull or stifle the human spirit in some important respects so that a child may grow up docilely accepting whatever group norms happen to be prevalent among his or her peers, and then later in the workplace or elsewhere - regardless of injustice, corrupt practices, or the wider common good. If one wants to keep alive something of the unique spirit and gifts of the individual – even as (s)he is learning to adjust and fit in with a particular cultural environment – then it would seem short-sighted, even counterproductive, to go about socialising the child in a unfeeling, brusque or heavy-handed way as though designed to produce mere interchangeable units of social functioning. It is true that, as Krappmann has put it (1993, p.362), "Children may mechanically copy the demanded behaviour of adults and neglect their own constructive capacities". But this is hardly likely to bring about a constructive mesh between the potent drives and energies of the individual and the norms (s)he is expected to adopt. In fact while it may result in a show of compliance on the part of the child, there may be little in the way of personal appreciation of, or feeling for, the norms being followed – beyond a dull adherence to the line of least resistance. As well as an underlying firmness then, one needs more empathetic elements - for instance a generally supportive and personally encouraging atmosphere which is conducive to keeping the child willingly 'on-side' rather than 'turned off' or disaffected, and within which something of the child's own spirit can feel free to unfold in a secure environment,.

These two elements – firmness along with warm and humane support - appear to sit well with attention to some key aspects of institutional life that were brought into relief in the previous chapter: i.e. a layer of basic discipline from which more expansive and convivial types of social interaction could take off and thrive. This does not mean, of course, that there has to be any rigid divide between the way one establishes basic 'dos' and 'don'ts', and the way one relates to children on a wider, more everyday basis. The following words of a teacher of nine-year olds might illustrate this point nicely.
"My children", she says,

> need to be disciplined and at times strongly. But a reprimand carries infinitely more weight when students know that it stems from care, not dominion (in Ryan & Bohlin 1999, p.177); (cf. Noddings (2005, p.xxv), who says that when we have to refuse or correct a child, "we still try to support a caring relation".)

Such a twofold approach also appears to accord well with what one can read in a variety of sources about factors which are key to the healthy psychological development of children. Referring to Diana Baumrind again, perhaps we can take her findings (1971 and 1991) on the effect of different styles of parenting as pointing to a consensus that seems to be emerging from a number of converging strands. This is (and I acknowledge that it is just the *gist* of her findings) that outcomes are best for the child on a number of fronts if (s)he can experience just this combination of discipline (the words 'control' and 'demandingness' figure a lot here) together with warmth and personal support. One can find what is essentially the same combination of elements recommended in a range of literature from the academic, for example Staub (1993 p.348), Hoffman (1984) and Pratt et al.(2004), to the more popular educational work of Lemov (2010), Boddy (2012), and Lenon (2017).

In fact I would suggest that the implications here for how to get the best out of people are much more far-reaching than this: that the same crucial factors are at work and can play a crucial role in any area of human life where the individual encounters and has to come to terms with group norms, including, for example, the workplace. Perhaps at any age we are just 'king-size kids' when it comes to having to satisfy our basic needs for discipline and structure on the one hand, and for some sense of personal recognition and encouragement on the other. In fact these key aspects were strongly implicit in a classic work of J.A.C. Brown (1954) looking at the importance of establishing positive human relationships across industry in general. For reasons of space I can not go further into this here; but the reader who wishes to pursue this will, I believe, find many parallels today in the world of management theory, particularly among those such as Charles Handy, Marvin Bower and, in some respects, Peter Drucker, who have been influenced by the Human Relations movement.

However, while such work indicates what, in an empirical way, appears to result in the best outcome for the child in terms of general character development and psychological health, it may be that it is only in the light of the wider existential background that I have drawn attention to – including the fraught dynamics often evoked as the individual engages with the collective and the need for each side of this equation, as it were, to maintain something of its own 'voice' and integrity – that we will see more clearly just

why such an approach appears to work, as opposed to noting *that* it works as an observable phenomenon. Further, I would suggest that, given such an understanding of the basic forces at work - involving, in Agnes Heller's words (1996 p.206), "a tension between becoming what we are to be by the norms… of the socio-cultural a priori, and becoming what we are through our specific endowments" - further implications for practice seem to follow which might serve to fill out such an approach, and thus bring things more down to earth.

(ii) wider practical implications.

In some of the literature referred to above one might gain the impression that getting the child (or indeed adult) willingly on-side is mainly a matter of habituation accompanied by a warm cajoling approach so that (s)he is swept along in a general 'feel-good' atmosphere. And there is certainly a sense in which such warmth and encouragement *can* be manipulative – simply designed to induce an apparently contented but unthinking compliance with whatever a particular regime might wish to impose.[15] But, as Straughan has pointed out:

> We cannot say that a person is engaged in…...moral operations if he does what he does merely because he has been told to do it, without exercising some degree of independent judgment himself (1988, p.35).

Similarly, one might cite Green (quoted in Resnick (2008, p.110) who has stated that:

> Norm acquisition cannot be understood as the acquisition of blind habit. It entails the acquisition of judgment and a sense of propriety.

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[15] In fact Mario Di Paolantonio (2017) has vividly described the way that in the work situation even the desire to demonstrate creativity and pursue self-actualisation can result in 'the subjugation of the soul itself to work processes'. Particularly in 'hi-tech' and 'creative' industries where 'in a hyper individualized and competitive environment' there is 'an enthusiastic embracement and over-identification with doing one's job', one may feel one has never given enough; and with work becoming the central focus of psychic and emotional investment, this can result in 'an all out assault on and impoverishment of the soul since all learning, creativity, pleasure, communication and cooperation' is, in fact, 'already predetermined calculated and valorised within the logic of economy and utility'. In this way 'the performance principle (which reduces and justifies everything to an economic calculus …..) expands its sway and penetrates our interiority: the very recesses where we find a chance to work out in our own most way what it might mean to be human.'
Of course I do not wish to imply that all workers in the 'high tech' sector will inevitably end up in such an environment. Nevertheless, it would be as well to be aware that the human spirit *can* be suborned in this way, with concepts of creativity and self-actualisation in effect appropriated so that workers feel they have to give their all to whatever 'the system' seems to demand.

But if this is to happen there must surely be some real fusion between the dynamic sensibilities of the individual and the norms (s)he is expected to acquire. This implies that besides mere habituation, however induced, one also needs to evoke some inner sense of resonance with, and thus authentic endorsement of, such norms. There has to be something which, as it were, strikes a chord with the child's own sense of what is right, good, or humane. In other words, rather than simply being content to impose things in a manner in which the child feels (s)he just has to acquiesce (although that may be necessary on some occasions), one will also be concerned to (re)awaken and to nourish the fragile shoots of his or her 'higher' or 'better' nature - or in Mill's words, the "tender plant" of "nobler feelings" (1863, p.9). In doing so, one will be tapping into and drawing on certain propensities which just seem to be part of our natural endowment as human beings, although if they have remained undeveloped or been overlaid in a unfavourable environment, they may need to be rekindled – something which may not be easy.

As for what to appeal *to*, what are the natural impulses one can nourish and develop, there is now a range of studies which indicate that, even in young children, one can find and build on the first seeds of, for instance:

- *empathy,* which can transmute into compassion (Damon,1988; Hoffman, 2000; and Hinton, 2010);

- *a sense of fairness or justice* (Gibbs,1991; Kristjansson, 2006/2017; Ulber et al. 2015)

- *a 'desire to know' and deepen one's understanding* (Donaldson 1978; Melanie Klein 1989; Gopnik 2009);

- *a desire to gain a sense of competence, achievement or mastery* in the face of challenges (R. White 1959; Rawls (drawing on Aristotle),1972; Lepper & Green 1973);

- *a need to belong and gain a sense of recognition* from others (Kohut 1971/2009; Wolf 1993); Honneth 1995)

- *a more general sense* (perhaps encompassing some of the above but wider) *of what is right, of intrinsic value or of sheer worth* (Aristotle 1955 p.60 et passim; Hume 1751/1983; Nunner-Winkler 1993, pp.269-270).[16]   .

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[16] I suggest that none of these typical human aspirations would feel alien to those 'growth' or 'humanistic' psychologists who have favoured the development of a 'mature' or 'humanistic' conscience, as opposed to an 'immature' or 'authoritarian' one (to cite Allport and Fromm respectively). In fact the list above might well serve to illustrate key aspects of the former. Looking at how 'conscience' has been seen more generally in the literature, it has tended to be viewed either as 'the interiorized voice of the herd' or (perhaps reflecting elements of Hume) as

I will say something more about the significance and implications of such impulses in the young in the following section. [17]   More generally on this subject, however, there appears to be a considerable task here for someone to review and draw together the work of, among others, such 18th century 'moral sense' philosophers as Shaftesbury, Hutchison and Hume; the insights of more modern figures such as Matthews (1980), Hoffman (2000), and Turiel (1983) into the early emergence in children of, respectively, potent rational capacities, empathy, and of distinctively moral intuitions; the more overarching motivational theories of, for instance, Maslow (1954), Narvaez (2008) and Deci & Ryan (2012); and the work of evolutionary psycho-biologists such as Robert Wright (1996), Marc Hauser(2006), and Dennis Krebs (2011).

(iii) classical stage theory in this light.

This whole approach, based on tapping into and building on a child's own propensities – motivating impulses that appear to be an intrinsic part of our human endowment – runs somewhat counter to what has been called the 'classical stage theory' of psychological development, particularly as worked out in the moral domain by such figures as Piaget and Kohlberg, and which at one time was said to be "the major… reference point for moral education the world over" (Sanz 1997 p.498).

According to the latter, a stage of 'heteronomy' (unilateral respect on the part of the child for an exterior authority or conventional rules) precedes the emergence of a more autonomous and personally authentic level of functioning. This may on the face of it

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'the still small voice of humanity' within us. (I have culled these latter quotes from Sherblom (2012, pp.123-5))

[17] But at this stage one might note the potential role of such impulses in a process which, due to the work of a number of researchers including Hoffman (2000, p.150ff.), has become increasingly favoured in recent times; that is, 'induction'. Very briefly, in this context it involves bringing home to the child the human distress caused by a particular act ('Look at what you've done. How do you think (s)he must feel?') thus evoking his or her more prosocial feelings. But it also involves, in discussion with the child, bringing *reason* to bear on the issues arising through, for instance, considering the validity of a moral rule or guideline that may apply and /or looking at possible acts of reparation. In other words, the child will be encouraged to filter any spontaneous intuitions by subjecting them to wider tests of justifiability. Such an approach appears to be more effective in promoting moral development than either coercive power assertion or the withdrawal of warmth and affection. While Hoffman has drawn particular attention to eliciting and refining empathy here, there seems to be no reason why, in conjunction with reasoning, one could not also appeal to any one or a combination of the above impulses – depending, of course, on what is appropriate in a particular situation.

provide a convenient rationale for certain regimes to become fixated on imposing sets of norms on children regardless of how this is done. It may be thought, particularly at a time of social instability and change, that just getting a child to the so-called 'conventional' stage is itself a difficult enough job; whereas how this is achieved can be regarded as a relatively minor matter.

However, in the light of more recent findings on the human dynamics operating as the child assimilates any body of social norms, this seems to oversimplify the situation considerably. We are now getting a more nuanced picture of the way (s)he engages with the immediate social environment; and this appears to confirm that (as I argued in chapter 4) the child is not a mere receptor of such external forces, but is already a burgeoning complex of forces which has some sense of its own way of being - a unique configuration of sensibility which, unless prevented, will interact with, and bring something of itself to bear on, what it encounters. One indication of this is that, as Wang et al. have pointed out (2008, p.57):

> Cross-cultural studies suggest that children do not internalise and copy what they encounter in the environment. Rather, they transform the strategies used by adults and peers and make them their own through elaboration and appropriation (cf. Turiel 2003).

But young children also seem to be able to draw on their own capacities and powers to do something more radical than simply elaborate – or devise variations on a given theme. In the moral area, for instance, far from the child at the 'conventional' stage showing unilateral respect for authority, according to Turiel many researchers have begun "to view children as possessing moral capacities, not imposed by adult authorities, at early ages" (2008 p.284). As for what these are, Turiel (ibid.) mentions, in particular, spontaneously helping others and sharing things with them, and goes on to discuss the emergence of empathy and a sense of justice in this context. Similarly Nunner-Winkler refers to "the spontaneous display of altruistic behaviour" in children (1993 p.371). It seems that it is due to such basic capacities that, as Maxwell and Beaulac note, children seem able to differentiate between the relatively arbitrary and culturally–specific dictates of a social authority, and more universal and non-arbitrary moral norms, from "at least as early as age 5…. and possibly as young as 2 and a half" (2013 p.377).

If this goes somewhat against the stage theories of Piaget and Kohlberg in the moral realm as such, it does accord well with other more recent studies such as those of Matthews (1980), Hart (2003), and Gopnik (2009) which have looked at a wide range of capacities and powers that young people can exhibit early in their lives, and which appear to enable them to engage actively with what they encounter even as they are being socialised. In fact Gheaus (2009), surveying a range of literature dealing with young children's cognitive, aesthetic, moral, imaginative and creative powers, has concluded that in some ways these may be sharper and more penetrating than found in many adults, since in later life such powers may fade and become jaded - if not completely overridden.

Given these considerations, the early stages of 'classical theory' might be seen not merely as low-level precursors to some ultimately flowering end-state, but rather as age-appropriate scaffolding which may well serve to contain and inform, but also within these parameters act as a channels within which something of the child's individual spirit can find expression and unfold. To discount this would seem to ignore the fact that the child is in fact often a lively participating entity throughout these so-called preliminary stages. Given this, one might, with Goodman and Uzun, see personal autonomy itself not as "a final developmental outcome to be released at the end of childhood," but as "woven into the process of growing a sense of competence…" (2013 p.4). In this light, indeed, one might even understand the striking words of Winnicott, someone who, as a result of his own extensive experience of working with children, felt able to write that:

> The fiercest morality is that of early infancy, and this persists as a streak in human nature that can be discerned throughout an individual's life. Immorality for the infant *is to comply at the expense of a personal way of life (*1966 p.102).

And encapsulating much of the case I have been making in this chapter, he continues:

> Compliance brings immediate rewards, and adults too easily mistake compliance for growth. The [normal] maturational process can be bypassed by a series of identifications so that what shows clinically is a false acting self, a copy of someone perhaps (ibid).

This, as I hope will be clear by now, does not mean that children do not need clear behavioural boundaries, and there will certainly be times when, in view of an

individual's volatile or violent behaviour, one will have to clamp down and create a firm 'holding situation' for the child. But even here one can still keep open the possibility of eventually appealing to and evoking some positive inner response. Without this, as I have suggested, there may well be some show of compliance, but if it is without any inner identification or commitment it could be seen as a rather hollow achievement.

To return, then, to the wider general theme of this chapter:

While Winnicott above appears to focus on the need to respect rather than smother the very spirit of the child, the overall approach here has been to stress the need for *each side* of the individual/collective axis to be able to maintain something of its own 'voice' and integrity so that a productive mesh between the potent forces at work may emerge.

From one point of view it could be argued that I am making too much of this whole issue of the relationship between these two elements. Is it not, one may ask, a rather old and well-worn theme? One may indeed find numerous statements to the effect that, for instance, there is an ongoing 'dialectic' between the individual and the society (s)he inhabits. It is:

> [a] dialectic which comes into being with the very first phases of socialisation and continues to unfold throughout the individual's existence in society. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.180).

Likewise, Hogan has referred to the conception of educational practice itself as being essentially:

> an interplay between the emergent sensibilities and identities of learners on the one hand, and the range of voices of tradition on the other (1990 p.24).

However, such general statements tend to gloss over the fact that there may be a real difference between what is involved in passing on and renewing existing bodies of knowledge or skill which, as I have indicated, may well remain relatively discrete from the psychic base of the personality, and passing on and renewing our everyday moral and social practices which are generally acquired through direct lifeworld interaction, and which may well involve animated (and sometimes fraught) encounters of the sort alluded to at the start of this chapter. It is in such lifeworld situations that, as I put it

(p.150) 'the whole business of practical living and getting on with others is picked up and practised. In particular, it is our interpersonal life – in the to and fro of 'me against you', 'me helping you', 'me meeting you half-way' etc, - that seems to constitute the ultimate crucible in which our rough-hewn elements can be challenged and our core attitudes exposed and informed'.

Given this difference, what I have attempted to do here is to bring home something of the full dimensions of any such 'dialectic' or 'interplay' which takes place at this lifeworld level and engages with the basic attitudes and dispositions of the individual. The very potency of such interaction may well, as I have said, generate considerable stresses and strains and that, on a wide range of our human capacities.

Endpiece

As a coda here, I would like to come back to the suggestion that this perspective, deriving from a consideration of basic forces at work in the very shaping of us as human beings, may provide some ultimate grounding for, and lend additional credence to, a number of more particular studies and initiatives taking place across a range of fields where problems can arise as the individual engages with collective norms. (Compare pages 175-6, 178-181, and 185-6 on this.) In other words, in this light one may be able to see more clearly *why* certain approaches appear to work – as opposed to noting *that* they work as an observable phenomenon, which is all that the recent vogue (particularly in Britain) for 'evidence-based practice' may require. Many of these studies, I would claim, while not viewing things in this precise context, nevertheless indicate that a productive mesh between the same potent forces is the key to a good outcome both for the individual and the institution of which (s)he is a part - and whether the focus is on , for example, child rearing, education, or managing a workforce. In this connection I have already referred to the work of some prominent figures in these particular fields, but at present such underlying connections remain, it seems, to be explored more fully, and I realise that one would probably need another whole thesis to do anything like justice to this proposition. At this stage I am just suggesting it as a deep underlying factor which may be worth exploring further across a wide range of contexts.

8

Reviving a uniquely 'practical' type of human discipline

I will begin this chapter with two quotations, the first from Dewey:

> The best and deepest moral training is that which one gets by having to enter into proper relations with others (in Lickona, 1991 p.89);

the second from Noddings:

> Learning about human relations is one of the toughest tasks any of us faces (2005, p.55).

If one can assume that, for Noddings, 'learning about' will also involve learning through *engaging in* human relationships, these passages may remind us that, whatever one's underlying philosophy, we still have to face and come to terms with a host of personal challenges which inevitably seem to arise as human interaction takes place at the lifeworld level. In the very process, for instance, of establishing firm boundaries and/or appealing to the child's better nature, since one is not dealing with nicely predictable machines but with fallible and sometimes temperamental human beings, a whole host of contingent psychological and situational factors can enter the picture and, whatever one's efforts, drastically affect the outcome.

At various points in previous chapters I have had occasion to mention some of these factors which appear to be an inherent feature of human interaction at this level.   But I now propose to take a closer look at a number of these, which can be viewed as a kind of mutually reinforcing constellation. This may shed further light both on the opportunities opened up, and the personal demands that arise, as such interaction takes place. Again, looking at things 'in the round' may enable one to appreciate how coping with such contingencies can give rise to a virtual whole way of life in the midst of them – something which, as Aristotle seems to have understood, can be considered as a type of human discipline in its own right, and which, I would argue, we may now need to recognise again and make more central to our lives.

Below I will focus on eight factors which appear to play a significant part here, although they may not all be present to the same extent at any one time.

(i) *An inherent unpredictability and uncertainty.*

This is a fundamental aspect of lifeworld encounters which I have already drawn attention to and it hardly needs further discussion here. Very briefly however, in attempting to act for the best in the world among others who will often bring their own agendas to bear and who will be reacting in their own ways to what one is doing, all kinds of unanticipated variables can enter the picture and contribute to what Arendt has called 'the frailty of human affairs' (1958, pp.195-6), so that the result of such encounters can never be certain. As Dewey put it, referring to the knowledge we have in such situations: "A distinctive characteristic……, one which cannot be eliminated, is the uncertainty which attends it" (in Heilbronn 2008, p. 94). One is engaging with what Vico and Locke would see as the world of 'the probable', as opposed to the more stable and predictable aspects of the world studied by science, and these philosophers fully accepted the need to embrace and come to terms with life at this level. Now however, too often, as Richard Smith, quoting from a novel by Hari Kunzu, points out:

> 'We want to abolish the unknown'……It is a common enough desire. As humans, we want to know what is lurking outside our perimeter, beyond our flickering circle of firelight……..We have drenched the world in information in the hope that the unknown will finally and definitively go away (2006 p.102).

It might be salutary to remember, however, that Maslow saw 'the toleration of uncertainty' as one of the traits that marked a high level of personal development.

(ii) *Elements of opportunism*

A corollary of such uncertainty is that any teaching and learning that takes place may well on occasion be opportunistic. In these situations much will depend on the personal strengths and vulnerabilities of both adults and children which a particular situation may happen to elicit - qualities which may find themselves being developed and tested on the spot, sometimes unexpectedly. If this is to happen, things cannot be too rigidly itemised or predetermined beforehand. As Goodman has pointed out: in any individual case "Just what response will prick the conscience cannot be prescribed" (2006a p.114). More fundamentally perhaps, Turner and Chambers suggest that:

a portion , if not most, of moral learning, occurs without planned intervention. It is likely that no social setting can be seen as totally unstructured, but it also seems likely that   a significant portion of moral learning occurs in social settings with a minimum of structure having the expressed purpose of transmitting morality (2006 p.366).

Of course, in many cases someone will have a good idea of how they want a situation to develop; but this need not stop one being alert to possibilities which may open up heuristically.

(iii) *The inherent potency of such interaction.* (Again, I will not dwell on this, having already commented on it – not least in the previous chapter.)

It can have a potentially powerful formative effect because (to draw on my original words here), compared with the learning which takes place as we acquire more particular bodies of knowledge or skill, one is not so much examining or learning to master an aspect of the world within preset parameters from a safe observatory position, but is engaging in and being confronted by situations, not necessarily of one's own choosing, in which being, so to speak, an actor on the stage rather then a spectator in the auditorium, any facet of the personality may find expression in, or become prey to, the give and take, the unexpected twist of the moment. In this way the door is open for engagement to be made, and alchemical action to take place, between the world of these relatively open situations and the world of one's own primary wants, complexes, hopes, fears, etc.

Opening up the ground here, and being prepared to deal with what may be unleashed may appear to be a daunting prospect in the school setting, and the writer has already stressed that there is no need to 'pitchfork' students into areas of human interaction without regard to their age and maturity. However, just in the everyday process of peer-group and adult/student interaction, since we are individuals with a range of diverse abilities, vulnerabilities and interests, there are bound to be encounters which will be taxing as well as, at times, uplifting and convivial. At one extreme one might cite Victor Goddard (2011), head-teacher of an 'academy' school in Essex (England) who in front of TV cameras, when sympathising with one of his staff (who was in the throes of dealing with a very difficult student), remarked in a heartfelt way, "That's what this job is. It's a series of getting bruises". At the other, the writer himself has experienced the

almost palpable surge of camaraderie, goodwill and gratitude which young people can display when, after working together and overcoming obstacles on an outdoor expedition, a musical or dramatic production, a positive outcome ensues and a hard-won goal is achieved.

(iv) *The role of the relational element.*

In the midst of such encounters it should be obvious that the quality of the relationships being forged can make all the difference to the educational outcome. This may be particularly important when it comes to engaging with disaffected students. As Battisch has acknowledged, "Establishing a positive relationship with children who have come to see adults and the world as uncaring or even hostile is difficult" (in Sanger and Osguthorpe 2009, p.24). But, he concludes, it is just this relational element that can play a critical role in a child's social and moral development. In fact it may well be that it is precisely such 'difficult' students who are most in need of such an approach.

With 'mainstream' students too, however, the quality of the interpersonal contact that takes place within a school can, it seems, contribute significantly to the educational dynamics at work. Dunne has referred to the pedagogical relationship itself as:

> The setting of a field of psychic tension, with its own forces of
> attraction and repulsion that must intrinsically affect whatever 'content'
> may loom up within it (1993 p.5);

and a large number of other studies have drawn attention to the crucial importance of the 'manner'(Hansen 2001), 'presence' (Rodgers & Raider, 2006), or 'state of being' (Boddy 2012) of the teacher when engaging with students. All these will be indicative of the sort of relationship being forged, and can be seen as *sui generis* lifeworld elements of the teaching situation which will inevitably colour any communication of content; and which, for better or worse, will directly affect what the child actually experiences.

In fact there is now a considerable body of research which indicates that the affective and relational aspects of teaching rather than just the transmission and reception of knowledge are of prime importance, not just because of a sense of wellbeing that can be created, but because such relationships create conditions that favour the effective

transmission of knowledge in the first place. Lovat and Clement, for instance, cite evidence which suggests that "the establishing of an empathetic relationship precedes the engagement of learning in depth" (2008, pp.5-6).

One might sum things up by saying that whether one is teaching a subject in the classroom, dealing with a difficult student, or picking up that a particular student is in some distress, it is not so much a matter of *what* one does, but *how* one goes about it that counts here – whether one treats people generally with consideration, taking the trouble to explain and justify what one is doing, or whether one simply adopts a more impersonal, brusque or intimidating approach.

All this may seem obvious, even platitudinous. Any teacher worth his or her salt, one may think, will see the importance of establishing and maintaining good relationships. However, particularly when faced with a plethora of other demands (for instance to satisfy various 'accountability measures' by which (s)he is assessed), or when finding herself in a fraught situation with a student, it can seem much less personally demanding simply to lapse into a more impersonal or authoritarian stance – in effect a default position which erects a relational barrier between teacher and student. (On the onerous demands which can get in the way of establishing good relationships see Barnard (2000), Wright(2008), and Hazell (2018)). As Wenman has put it:

> Sadly, our obsession with judging children's education statistically tends to diminish the extent to which we credit schools for helping pupils develop as people (2008a).

However, as I have indicated, there are now numerous studies which suggest that this whole relational element, far from being seen as mere 'icing on the cake', should be considered a key ingredient in the overall mix which makes up a good education.

(v) *The moral dimension.*

Above I have drawn attention to the fact that in any meaningful interaction, besides what is explicitly expressed, what is actually experienced is likely to be affected by the general manner, presence, or state of being of the individuals involved. And central to this, particularly when engaging with others, will surely be the moral dimension of

one's functioning – something which Green (2011), following Lovibond, terms one's 'ethical formation' (2011, p.122ff.). She and others have made the point that the level of one's awareness in this area can drastically affect what one perceives and therefore takes into account when dealing with others. Unless, for instance, one has developed some personal appreciation of and authentic feeling for the potential human distress (or indeed wellbeing) which can be caused by certain conditions or actions, one will just be blind to certain morally salient aspects of a situation which may well be blindingly obvious to others. Carr puts the point in this way:

> Progress in virtue is not just a matter of behaving differently… but as McDowell has argued, of becoming perceptively and affectively tuned to moral aspects of experience that the less morally virtuous cannot even discern (2003, p.262).

As these words suggest, this is not primarily a matter of cognitive ability, or of acquiring particular techniques or skills, but rather, in Carr's words (ibid) of "deepened moral perception" or "well-ordered affect". Sherblom seems to capture the general point well in stating that:

> Compassion and empathy bring things to awareness that then changes one's reasoning and even what seems reasonable (2012 p.132).

To return to what Green has to say about the importance of such 'ethical formation', this, she says, if it has become a settled disposition, provides the agent with

> that necessary antecedent sense of what is of value to a human life – what matters and doesn't matter – and the capacity to apply that sense to deciding in the here and now (op.cit. p.122).

It thus supplies "the animating values….inner resources and character" which underlie and contribute to particular acts of judgement (p.105).

(vi) *the need for judgment in applying general principles*

Above I have stressed the many situational factors at work in these lifeworld encounters where uncertainty and the personal strengths and vulnerabilities of the participants can play a central part. But this is not to say, of course, that general principles, aims or underlying values can not usefully inform practice in this area. It *is* to say, however,

that since every human situation or predicament will be to some extent unique, just how any such general considerations will be applied to the actual circumstances one is confronted with should be a matter of judgment. Richard Smith, citing Aristotle on this point, gives us some down-to-earth examples of this in the educational setting. In one, a child has transgressed and the teacher then asks his class-mates. "What shall we do? Jason has broken our rule that we walk down corridors." The following exchanges then take place between children and teacher.

"Make him lose his playtime for a week, Miss!"
"On the other hand, he was running after Melanie to tell her she'd dropped her scarf"
"But he was running, Miss, he should lose his playtimes" -
"For a month, Miss!"
"For the rest of the term!" (1997 p.108)

Another example again illustrates the need for judgment and, when appropriate, flexibility. Smith suggests that rather than automatically condemning an instance of 'cheating':

> [W]e take the trouble to distinguish the behaviour of the child who has casually plundered the work of his peers from that of the child who has worked collaboratively, in good faith, where collaborative work was inappropriate (p.115) .

He concludes (p.117) that:

We want those around us, including children, to be generally honest, loyal, truthful people, and we want them to have principles which they maintain 'for the most part', using their judgment to make exceptions for good reasons.... [18]

(vii) *Evolving rather than fixed conceptions are often involved*

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[18] These points about judgement, particularly in connection with young children, may seem rather trite and facile. However there are wide and serious implications here for human life in general, well expressed by Arthur Lovejoy in *The Great Chain of Being* (1936 p.312). He writes: "The delicate and difficult art of life is to find, in each new turn of experience, the *via media* between two extremes…..to have and apply standards, and yet to be on guard against their desensitizing and stupefying influence, their tendency to blind us to the diversities of concrete situations and to previously unrecognized values; to know when to tolerate, when to embrace, and when to fight. And in that art, since no fixed and comprehensive rule can be laid down for it, we shall doubtless never acquire perfection."

Operating in this way is generally not, it seems, a matter of simply making a judgement followed by action. It may well be more of a continuous process of refining one's judgement by modifying it in the light of what happens as a result of one's actions, which could be followed by further action, and so on. There can be a sequence of insight and decision; a step into lifeworld activity and encounter; a subsequent modification or reinforcement of one's stance; then further activity. In terms of the three primary modes of human functioning that were outlined in chapter four, there will be an evolving progression in which one alternates mainly between the first (lifeworld activity) and the third (concerned with interpretation and evaluation) modes, where the insights achieved are, to borrow Dunne's words, "turned back into experience which is in this way constantly reconstructed and enriched." (1993, p.293)

For similar reasons it appears that there can be no simple teleological scheme of predetermined means leading to preconceived ends. Rather, the relation of means and ends will be a reciprocal one as one's insights become continually refined in the light of experience. As Dewey put it, intelligent action does not mean having ends that are fixed and set in stone, but rather having "ends in view" which are adaptable in the light of changing circumstances (1916, p.104 ff).

(viii)   *The key role of direct personal experience and its tacit dimension.*

Finally, if only because one has to draw on and learn from one's own strengths and weaknesses, the ability to act well in such situations cannot just be acquired vicariously through formal teaching or study. . In this area one has to learn 'on the job', as it were, through direct experience – to use Dewey's sort of language, through 'doing and being done to'. Further, because much of the knowledge gained will be personal to the individual, unless one will be constantly monitoring oneself, noting every successful or unsuccessful aspect of one's functioning as one goes through life, much of this 'knowledge' (if indeed it can be called that) will be absorbed subconsciously and may well remain tacit rather than explicitly formulated.

Of course, there will always be attempts to identify and promote good practice by reducing it to a series of examples, protocols and rules. This can be useful in so far as it gives practitioners some idea of what is expected of them and provides general

guidelines. But in the end, in view of the numerous and complex variables which human situations give rise to, it is, as we have seen, up to the individual to interpret and apply them responsibly in the actual circumstances prevailing at the time; and this is an art which, it seems, can only be learned *in situ,* as the wealth of factors continually being generated as we humans lead our lives will always outrun any attempt to corral them into a neat or comprehensive system.

The current educational climate: towards a different kind of human 'discipline'

The implications of these factors – for instance, a willingness to accept a measure of uncertainty, to take advantage of learning opportunities that spontaneously arise, to use one's judgement when applying rules, to establish good relationships with those one is dealing with – might appear to be just matters of common sense to many of those actually engaged with young people (or, indeed, working with others) at this level. More to the point perhaps, grappling with this challenging array of factors which, as I indicated, may draw on and test a wide range of our basic capacities across all three primary modes of our functioning[19], may afford the sort of opportunities for personal growth which might well culminate in what Aristotle saw as the key virtue of *phronesis.* This is often translated as 'practical wisdom', and denotes the ability to show good sense, particularly in one's interpersonal dealings.

However, this way of working with a degree of flexibility amid the contingencies and complexities of everyday life does appear to fly very much in the face of a widespread trend which I originally drew attention to in chapter 3 and which in recent years has come to dominate many areas of our working, and to some extent personal, lives. Inspired in good part by market-based 'scientific management' principles, the object has been to tighten control over practice by reducing tasks to an explicit and standardised format: to a precisely worked out system, the parts of which can be broken down into particular skills or units of information which, it is assumed, can be methodically acquired in a prescribed way. This, it is argued, will bring about effective quality

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[19] To amplify: In **(vii)** above I drew attention to the need for conceptions in this area to evolve, and for this to take place mainly through a feedback loop consisting of lifeworld activity, reflective evaluation, followed by further activity in the light of this reflection, and so on. This loop, in effect alternating between the first and third primary modes of our functioning that I outlined in chapter 4, does seem to capture most of what goes on here in the normal course of events. However there may well also be occasions when one also needs to consider and draw on relevant material from one or more of the more established disciplines.(i.e. the second mode originally discussed) – a point that is made on p.204 below.

control and thus improve outcomes or 'productivity' – both seen in terms of results which can be assessed in a quantifiable way. To ensure compliance and to promote accountability, practitioners are monitored and assessed by having to meet a series of targets or performance-indicators at set stages.

Saito, among others, has commented on the spread of this trend (incorporating elements of what has been termed 'performativity', 'scientism', 'technicism', 'technical rationality' and/or 'managerialism') to education itself and on a global scale. The result she says, is that schools are becoming increasingly dominated by "procedures of standardisation and quantification in the name of efficiency and effectiveness" (2005, p.128); while Hager and Halliday note that learning is now being seen as "a kind of transparent product that can be minutely pre-specified" (2009, p.236).

In the light of the eight factors discussed above we can, perhaps, now see more clearly why this way of closely structuring and standardising material may well cause one to miss the potential inherent in a particular human situation as its fluid dynamics unfold and learning opportunities arise on the spot. It is true that, in the face of a breakdown of much previously accepted consensus and tradition, and in a world where it is easy to lose one's bearings, such pre-structured systems, each with its own array of procedures and protocols, appear to offer a validity that is independent of the personal qualities (and therefore possible failings) of those who make use of them, and so provide practitioners with (in theory) a clear-cut and workable structure they can rely on to justify what they are doing. This may be one reason why such systems have been able to spread so rapidly.

However, as Green and others have pointed out, this whole juggernaut of a movement, in getting practice to conform to some standardised mould of efficiency, can stifle grass-roots initiative, hamper the development of personal insight and judgement, and prevent the emergence of other individual strengths which might greatly benefit practice and themselves contribute to enhancing outcomes. Far from encouraging such qualities, the result of such measures can mean, as Green points out, that for those working in this sort of environment:

> The main thing is always to prove that one has met whatever pre-specified objectives, targets, outcomes, standards, benchmarks or

> indicators have been set. This is how those who work in professional
> contexts are expected to account for themselves (op.cit. p.102).

In fact in the service and caring professions, such systems, however much they purport to embody 'best practice', may well in this way lead practitioners to identify more with the outer 'husk' rather than the essential core of the approach needed, as they become preoccupied with pre-specified procedures and box-ticking requirements rather than feeling able to express the very spirit of care, concern and commitment which, ironically, such a system may have been set up to capture and disseminate in the first place. At the extreme, with practice having to conform to a preconceived mould, and practitioners themselves viewed largely as interchangeable units dedicated to serving the system, what is left of the individual can become, as Van Siegelhelm has said of those slavishly following a virtual instruction manual on parenting, "like an empty vessel or residual self", reliant on such props to validate their every move (2010, p.354)[20].

To return to the kind of meaningful lifeworld interaction with the features that have been described, it is clearly inappropriate for those engaging with others at this level to feel hampered by having to observe such a systematised format – if only because, as Aristotle has pointed out epitomising the underlying point here (I am quoting from Thomson's translation of the Nicomachean Ethics): "the data of human behaviour [ta practica] simply will not be reduced to uniformity" (book 5, chapter 10, my bracketed insertion). In fact Aristotle distinguishes this whole sphere of 'the practical' (we might prefer to talk about 'practical living') from the more readily structured *productive* and what we might call *scientific* fields (both of which the present writer would include under organised bodies of knowledge or skill).   In his use of the term, 'the practical' refers, in effect, to any area where one interacts with others at the lifeworld level and engages in purposeful activity – whether as parents, teachers, managers, leaders in any area, and not least those engaged in the ups and downs of practical politics. To quote Schwab on this: for Aristotle, he writes, the practical disciplines were ethics and politics.

> But for us, in modern times, ethics and politics would include not only
> each individual effort to lead and examine a deliberate life…. but also the

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[20] For more comments on the tendency of this trend to spread to parenting itself, and for critiques of the effect of this, see Hart (1993); Ramaekers & Suissa (2012); and Reece (2013).

> difficult and terrifying business of being parents, of being teachers *deliberately* and not as automatons…….I need not add that of all the things the schools might do, they do least of this (1975, p.257).

This whole area, Aristotle implies, has a sort of integrity of its own, and must be approached and, as far as possible, mastered on its own terms. It cannot be reduced to or grasped by the kind of systematising methods that serve us so well in the productive and scientific fields.

Apart from Aristotle, Vico, Locke, Dewey, Oakeshott, and Dunne, to name but a few, have concluded similarly that there is a definite distinction between how one acquires the experienced-based learning needed to act well as one encounters the vicissitudes inherent in everyday life, and the more technical or scientific ways of understanding those aspects of the world which *do* lend themselves to such reductive and specialised treatment. There is, of course, no reason why, amidst such vicissitudes, we should not *draw on* these more structured disciplines to inform one's decision making. But in the end, in view of the changing, fluid, and contingent nature of much that takes place as we interact with others, one cannot expect life at this level to conform to nicely predetermined and well-ordered procedures without serious distortion to the human dynamics involved.

However, in spite of the work of such figures (including, from the world of education, Hogan (1990), Richard Smith (1997), Heilbronn(2008) and Doddington (2014)), who have argued, in effect, that we need to recover and rehabilitate the whole idea of a different type of human endeavour or 'discipline' relevant to such purposeful interaction, any such realisation has yet, it seems, to enter mainstream thinking and gain traction or what one might call 'taxonomic bite'. Part of the problem may be the plethora of terms presently used to refer to this basic area of life and learning. The writer has come across the following, all of which give some idea of what is involved, but none appears to convey the full import of what is at stake: 'a (different) kind of rationality', 'science', or 'discipline'; 'a (different) type of 'knowledge and truth' or 'human accomplishment'. This may give the impression that it is all rather difficult to pin down, and that we do not really know what we are dealing with here.

There does, however, seem to be a growing realisation in certain circles that attempts to reduce life to forms of technological expertise come at a cost; that there is a need to recognise both the importance and distinctiveness of the learning that takes place amid the contingencies and complexities of everyday human interaction; and that there may well be a need for schools to recognise this sort of learning and to make provision for it. The writer would add that, particularly in the light of this present study, while this area of 'lifeworld' provision cannot be expected to conform to the well-structured formats of conventional subjects, it nevertheless would seem to merit recognition and a status of its own, reflecting its key role in contributing to the social and moral development of the individual.

In fact it could be argued that a such a 'discipline' which constructively engages with such experience and helps develops the capacity to act for the best amid the complexities of life at this level might justifiably be seen as a truly 'foundational' or 'master' area of life and learning; one which undergirds all the other more conventional disciplines in so far as it helps to create the basic conditions of life - a benign social and psychological milieu - in which the more specialist fields can grow and flourish.

Finally, some wider considerations

To return to the context in which I have been discussing the issues raised in this and the previous chapter: I have been concerned to address the challenges which can arise as a result of provision in this area. (The reader may recall the image of having to withstand a veritable 'maelstrom' at times). Here, especially, it seems, in view of what may be stirred up, one may well find oneself, as it were, plunged into the existential heart of life, with encounters that evoke basic attitudes, emotions, dispositions, even passions, both on the part of those one is dealing with *and* within oneself. In the process, one may feel that one's very being is being questioned and put to the test.

It is particularly in these circumstances that, in order to maintain a sense of purpose, one may well feel the need for a sound rationale to support and justify what one is doing. In the last chapter I suggested that there was a question of how one creates a balance (or better, a 'productive mesh') between the individual and collective forces we are subject to. I would maintain that bearing in mind these polarities and working to achieve this -

something which would, as I have said, appear to be central to our very formation as human beings and will involve deploying a variety of educative practices - could itself provide some underlying sense of purpose here. At any rate, since this dimension of our functioning appears to lie at the heart of what makes for 'a good life', 'human flourishing', 'social wellbeing' – or whatever one sees as an ultimate goal – it needs to be taken seriously when providing a body of lifeworld experience which, since it has the potential to reach into and affect the psychic base of the individual, can clearly have an effect on the balance between these polarities.

On the other hand, in this chapter I have suggested that one needs to accept that, whatever one's underlying rationale, realising it in the complexities that prevail in the everyday lifeworld, in the midst of human encounter and interaction, is bound to throw up its own challenges. These need to be approached and (remembering the eight features I have outlined) engaged with as a *sui generis* type of human endeavour – a virtual 'discipline' in its own right.

Lastly, if one is to take this type of learning seriously, it seems important to understand something of the fears of those who think that any way of operating which dispenses with tight control over practice in the name of greater flexibility is bound to lead to falling standards, unreliable methods and a general lack of rigour. Practice, it is feared, may become too unaccountable and ungrounded. However, as I have tried to show, dealing with the complexities of human interaction at this level, which can give rise to its own disciplinary practices, need not mean adopting a sloppy or slipshod approach. And, as Richard Smith has pointed out (p.198-9) above), there is certainly a place for guidelines (which s*hould* guide, not dictate), general principles, and underlying values. But these general considerations can inform practice in a way that those using them can appropriate personally, making them their own as they adapt them to the particular circumstances they face and their own particular strengths. In this way such principles can anchor and ground practice while still allowing a measure of flexibility.

9

Concluding thoughts

"Slowly we are waking up to the need for a new model of education" (McNeill, 2018)

From the later 20th century onwards there seem to have been increasing calls for a radical rethink of the school curriculum. Richard Pring, for example, has argued that:

> It is a critical time…..Old patterns of education and its provision are less and less suitable for facing the twenty-first century. Modes of communication ….have changed radically in just a few years. …The economic context has been transformed, affecting the skills and knowledge needed for employment. The social world of young people raises fresh demands, hopes and fears (2013, p.1).

And he goes on to mention the effects of the global recession on young people, "making quality of life and self-fulfilment ever more difficult to attain" (ibid). He concludes (p.175) that with all the changes we have witnessed, particularly over the last few decades, we should now be questioning whether the sort of 'school' we have inherited is still an appropriate institution for educating young people.

To elaborate on the challenges that education faces now: In the midst of a world of change and instability – where relationships, particularly family relationships are becoming less secure; where a child can be subject to a dazzling array of images and lifestyles pouring from a variety of electronic media; and where in many places across the world an alluring 'culture of consumption' has arisen which, as Odea (2001) has warned, can encourage the very sense of self to be seen in terms of its material possessions – is there a way of getting to the basic elements of what schools now need to focus on and deliver? In particular, given the effect on the lives of many children of the sort of socially fragmenting trends mentioned above and described in greater detail in chapter 1 (the loosening of social ties, greater individualism, a pervasive culture of consumption, etc.), one may legitimately wonder whether schools need to make more meaningful provision for the moral and social development of the child; and perhaps enable this constant but challenging 'third strand' of educational endeavour to come more to the fore rather than being continually marginalised in the way that, as I have shown in chapters 2 and 3, normally happens.

However, in spite of flurries of interest generated by a variety of approaches over the years, we are, it seems, still unsure about how to get to grips in practical terms with such a task. That this appears to be a stubbornly perennial challenge for those who wish to engage with it can be gauged by the fact that, while I have cited John Wilson commenting on this in 1974, Kat Arney, writing over forty years later, has been similarly scathing about whether any real progress is being made in this area. Commenting on the present state of character education, she refers to a veritable 'gold-rush' of effort and enthusiasm now that "has acquired all the hallmarks of a fad" with various fashionable approaches of, for example, Dweck (focussing on a 'growth mind-set'), Duckworth (concerned with developing 'grit') and James Arthur (who draws attention to the 'civic and moral virtues') all gaining followers (Arney 2016, p.33). But with different character educators talking about different things, and sometimes even particular terms such as 'growth mind-set' being used in seemingly different ways, she concludes that there is:

> Little evidence about what makes for a successful curriculum of character education that can be rolled out across the country. Frustratingly there is no rule book (p.34)……[further] We seem to be in the odd situation where schools are racing to adopt new ideas while the researchers who are painstakingly piecing together the evidence to support these trendy interventions are struggling to catch up (ibid.p.36).

It is against this background that I have suggested the need for a more radical perspective on educational provision in general which reaches beneath the usual divisions of knowledge, culture etc, and brings out more underlying ways in which we engage with life and function as human beings. One can then ask whether and to what extent schools do or could address and cater for these fundamental modalities; whether in this light education needs to reshape the pattern of its existing priorities; and indeed whether this sort of basic framework, in so far as it brings into relief key dimensions of our functioning, might itself provide an sound foundation on which to base the whole business of educating the young.

To remind readers of the account I gave of these key ways of being in and engaging with the world in *chapter 4*, they are:

1) *General day-to-day 'life-world' experience* consisting of first-hand encounters with other people and things in which potentially any facet of the personality may find expression in, or become prey to, the give and take, the unexpected twist of the moment. It is in such lifeworld situations the whole business of practical living and getting on with others is picked up and practised. In particular, it is our interpersonal life – in the to-and-fro of 'me against you', 'me helping you', 'me meeting you half-way' that seems to constitute the ultimate crucible in which our rough-hewn elements can be challenged and our core attitudes exposed and informed.

2) *Organised bodies of knowledge or skill* which usually form the staple fare of the school curriculum. These generally narrow down and concentrate one's focus so that one can acquire a deeper understanding and mastery over very particular aspects of the world we encounter.

3) *The overall 'sense-making' or evaluative dimension of one's functioning,* reflecting a desire to make some inner 'sense' of what one experiences in 1 or 2 above. Here one is concerned with assessing, evaluating, and integrating such experience with one's basic dispositions and aspirations.

Such a perspective, I suggest, and particularly the subsequent discussion of the role and relationship between these modalities in **chapter 5**, does provide a larger context from which to judge the significance of many of the varied activities which take place under the heading of education. In this light the traditional more specialist and knowledge-based subject areas of the curriculum can definitely be seen to represent just one (albeit important) dimension of human learning, while the place and importance of other ways in which we engage with the world is brought into sharper focus and seen to be crucial to the wider character development of the child.

In particular, this account points to the significance and pivotal importance of what the child experiences directly at the day-to-day lifeworld level.

Learning directly 'from' as opposed to 'about' life in this way appears to have the potential to inform basic attitudes and dispositions in a way that talking about things from an observatory position may well not. Tony Skillen has put it that no amount of mere discussion or comment "can substitute for an absence or shortfall of ethically charged experience in the densities, responsibilities, vulnerabilities and conflictual subtleties of everyday life" (1997b, p.65). And as regards the child's social and moral

development, the account emphatically brings out the significance of, and need for, the child to have an adequate body of direct interpersonal experience at the lifeworld level if that development is to be soundly based.

In this light one might see a focus on providing contexts for such meaningful interaction as an essential part of what, to borrow the term from Ackerman (1982 p.159), could be thought of as the 'Great Sphere' of educational endeavour: where, if children start off on this sphere "at different points depending on their primary culture", from these initial limits they should be helped to progressively expand their understanding and horizons. The implication here is that our educational effort should now be directed as much to expanding this area of direct human interaction as to any more conventional systems of knowledge or belief.

This seems all the more important since it is through such interactive experiences with particular others, as we develop capacities for mutual engagement and mutual responsiveness, that we can become aware of an underlying human commonality; for while encountering our particular cultures, we also, as Carrithers has argued, develop certain species-wide competences upon which cultures are ultimately built and through which they are themselves sustained[21]. As an illustration he quotes Nicolas Humphrey who points out that in many situations of human interaction we must be able to:

> calculate the consequences of our own behaviour, to calculate the likely behaviour of others, to calculate the balance of advantage and loss, - and all this in a context where the evidence on which [such] calculations are based is ephemeral, liable to change, not least as a consequence of our own actions (Carrithers 1992 p.42).

He adds that:

> "In such a situation 'social skill' goes hand in hand with [the development of] intellect, and here at last the intellectual faculties required are those of the highest order" (ibid).

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[21] Among the writers who have argued in this way for the underlying commonality, even 'psychic unity' of humankind are, besides Carrithers: Strawson (1959 &1974), Horton (1982), Nussbaum (1993) and Lukes (2009). This does not mean, of course, that the precise manner in which a particular human quality is expressed will be the same in all cultures. On occasion it may require some patience and effort to understand a particular cultural style. (Carrithers (p.159) gives a good example of the initial confusion which can be caused here.) Nevertheless it seems that, given goodwill, there will be enough commonality of human experience to gain a foothold sufficient to significantly enhance understanding in such situations.

At present, however, it is precisely the width, consistency and wider humanity of such social experience that, for many, is a cause of increasing concern in today's world given the rise of a 'culture of consumption' together with the socially dislocating forces previously mentioned. In fact while we may be living in a richer *material* world, there is a concern that we may be growing up in a more impoverished *human* one. Indeed it can be argued that what has taken place from the latter half of the twentieth century onwards has tended to demonstrate just the reverse of what the great economist Keynes optimistically predicted in his 1930 essay 'Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren': that as we became more affluent and got ourselves "out of the turmoil of economic necessity", we would "be free to return to the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue".

Whatever the large-scale trends affecting our social and moral lives, however, perhaps the best ultimate justification for such provision is on the basis of a fundamental human need I have already referred to as 'sociality': the desire for positive social connection and mutually affirming relationships. This is considered by Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci 2017) to be one of three basic psychological needs that are universal across cultures. (The others are for 'competence' (or a sense of self efficacy), and for a degree of autonomy or self determination). In one sense the first might be seen as the most fundamental, in so far as how we relate to and interact with others appears to be crucial to the emergence of any spirit of humanity or goodwill towards our fellows - something which can reach and inform many other aspects of our development.

To return to the role that schools might play here, from this perspective it seems particularly unfortunate that the present educational climate, particularly in Britain and the USA, far from encouraging practitioners to see this whole area of provision as an essential part of the 'Great Sphere' of educational endeavour, too often, it seems, predisposes them to downgrade the very activities which could play a vital part in this. In a milieu in which they are constantly under pressure to focus attention elsewhere – principally on success in terms of their students achieving ever better test and examination grades – the very sense of being on educational ground that feels secure and familiar can come to be virtually identified with this latter type of closely structured learning. In such a case the school can become, as several commentators

have concluded, little more than an 'examination factory'. (Compare the pessimistic conclusions of Nevin in The Institute of Directors report 'Lifelong Learning' (2016 p.14) along with the research of Hutchings (2015) in this area.)

It is especially in this sort of climate that the very characteristics of such direct lifeworld experience may conspire to make it appear rather alien and even a distraction from the 'real' business of the school. If there is little understanding of the essential features of such experience, then compared with the relatively straightforward way subject matter in the academic and technical fields can be processed and handled (which can generally be reduced to carefully graded units of information or skill which can be readily quantified and assessed), there may be only a hazy conception of the very nature of what one is dealing with and how it should be handled when it comes to learning through such direct interpersonal experience.

The practical implications of this approach.

 It is in just this situation, however, that I would argue that, if schools are to make a more meaningful contribution to the child's moral and social development, the rather different perspective on the fundamentals of educational provision that I have suggested might come into its own. In this light the whole area of learning through social interaction can be seen as a key element in - indeed as essentially underpinning – the whole business of educating the young. (This is something which I hope has been brought out in chapter 5.)

Given this larger context and an understanding of the real challenges involved in such provision, rather than feeling that they are on uncertain ground, practitioners might be able to gain more of a sense of surety, of being on some educational *terra firma* when working in this area; and while, perhaps, not able to achieve all that they might like, at least feel confident that they are working on the right lines. And, as regards making progress in practical terms, in chapters 6 to 8 I have pointed to key issues which are likely to arise in this area and how one might go about creating and managing such provision in a constructive way. To remind readers:

In **chapter 6** I drew attention to the principal contexts within the school for such work. In the course of this I drew a rough but not rigid distinction between the need to create

definite boundaries and a milieu of stability (mainly but not solely through firm but fair disciplinary procedures), and providing a wider body of experience reflecting something of the sheer richness, variety and formative potency of our interpersonal life. A community based on such principles might develop what Dewey termed a mode of 'associated living' where each has to "refer his actions to that of others and to consider the actions of others to give point and direction to his own" (1916, p.87). One can understand that as a result a strong communal *ethos* can arise. One should not, of course, forget the possible shadow side of this, where a powerful collective can silence the voice of the individual. But provided one can guard against this, there appear to be good reasons for fostering a strong (or 'high stage') as opposed to weak (or 'low stage') feeling of community in the sense I advocated when discussing the potential importance of a school's 'ethos' in that chapter. Overall then, given the present state of social fragmentation in society at large and the general weakening of social ties, we should, perhaps, bear in mind the words of Resnick (2008, p.110) that: "As Dewey taught us, schools *as* societies are the best school *for* society that we have".

The point about a possible overly coercive ethos relates directly to the issue discussed in *chapter 7* where I looked at the considerable implications of engaging with Locke's 'great art' (i.e. the need to forge a constructive mesh between the needs of the individual and the needs and expectations of society at large). This process, so easy to refer to as 'socialization', can, for the individuals subject to it, involve an intense and sometimes traumatic struggle between the potent forces at work. There are deep issues here to do with the extent to which one is seeking to create a society of largely passive conformists who will unthinkingly follow the group, or of individuals who can contribute in their own way to the development of the collective - but who are not merely 'individualists' lacking responsibility for the wider common good. At any rate, from the perspective of providing for the child's wider character development, it can be argued that the particular type of learning which can occur in this area should be considered at least as important as that which normally takes place through a study of the more conventional subjects on the curriculum.

In *chapter 8* I considered why handling the powerful constellation of dynamics which can be evoked through this and other aspects of meaningful interaction at the lifeworld level could itself be seen as constituting a 'discipline' in its own right – perhaps,

indeed, a 'master' human discipline that we may now need to recover drawing on ancient sources, particularly Aristotle. In fact a full appreciation of the issues raised in this and the previous two chapters might be seen as pointing to a need to recover a general sense that everyday practical living, as we interact with others in a host of different ways, should be the occasion for engaging in a kind of personally formative discipline – one which, perhaps uniquely, might serve to develop some really basic aspects of one's character.[22]

Other approaches pointing to the need for such provision

Whatever the difficulties and personal demands, the need to focus on this dimension of human experience appears to lend added weight to elements in a range of current approaches. A number of reports and studies implicitly or explicitly highlight the importance of meaningful provision in this area, though sometimes, it seems, with little attention to the distinctive qualities of the territory likely to be opened up, or the full implications of seriously engaging with it.

I only have space to mention a few of these here. But, on the need for children to experience positive human qualities directly, we read that the 'Character plus Way' movement in the USA aims to build a general environment that is conducive to this, based on the way everyday business is carried out in the school, opportunities for community activities are created, and the way human relationships in general are fostered. As a result, shared social conventions and feelings of belonging arise which have "an impact on pro-social behaviour" including "how students treat each other, bullying, stealing and gang activity" (Marshall J C et al. 2011 p.53).

In Britain Richard Pring (2013) similarly has stressed the need the need for group participation in order to "acquire those virtues which are essential for living harmoniously together, for disagreeing without being personally aggressive, for cooperating in shared tasks and concerns" (p.97). Developing the point, he writes. "You do not learn how to be a good citizen by reading books…. But by engaging in

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[22] However, as I hope I have made clear, this sort of 'discipline' is rather different from those concerned with mastering more conventional academic and technical fields. Compared with the latter, for instance, learning in this area is often opportunistic and may not easily be reduced to predetermined or precisely graded steps without artificially limiting the real learning possibilities which may always arise on the spot.

citizen- type activities" (p.182). And in words which seem to capture neatly the underlying point here he writes:

> We are constantly deceived by the false idea that we think and then we act. Rather, it is the case that we learn practically and then we come to reflect on one's understandings embodied within the practice or activity (ibid).

To return to the USA, D.G.Mulcahy has also been concerned to promote such down-to-earth practical interaction in schools. He cites with approval the later stance of Paul Hirst who (some would say belatedly) recognised the fundamental importance of such 'practical knowledge' even if one is to understand the real significance of 'theoretical knowledge' itself (2013 p.161). Elaborating on this point, Mulcahy writes that:

> As long as we rely upon a theory of the nature and structure of knowledge …..as the principle of curriculum organization, we are likely to end up with a conception of education …that favours a focus upon the student as knower rather than the student as agent or actor"(ibid. p.165).

He also comments favourably on the work of Jane Roland Martin who has criticised the original 'forms of knowledge' approach of Peters and Hirst which, she says, can result in an incomplete and unbalanced development lacking in the "3 Cs of care, commitment and connection" (p.159).   Thus, too often, as the British columnist Jenni Russell (2019) has recently put it in stark terms, "People learn maths, but not how to handle shame or rage, [to] be kind, [or to] forgive".

As for the place of such 'practical knowledge' in the curriculum as a whole, Mulcahy favours creating a space "in which it may stand alongside, rather than in a subordinate position to, theoretical knowledge" (op.cit.165).[23] He concludes (p.177) that, in this light, the whole "idea of a general education and the associated idea of the educated person need to be recast" - a point with which Pring would probably agree, given that the latter laments that "there has not been a deeper consideration of what it means to be an educated person in this day and age" (2013, p.52) and states that "There is much more to becoming human than academic success" (p.188).

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[23] More radically, he suggests organizing the curriculum itself around the 'practical activities of living' rather than academic subjects. These he identifies as 'the work demands of living, the recreational demands.., the practical demands.., and the philosophical demands' (p.166)

As I have said, I have only mentioned a few of the current educational approaches which implicitly or explicitly stress the importance of providing for such interactive experience. (Mulcahy (p.169) also cites Bereiter, Shore, and John White in support of his general position). I have also mentioned the work being done in the Jubilee Centre in England which has gathered information on a host of initiatives and good practice across the whole field of moral and social education in schools. However, without some deeper perspective on the key dimensions of our human functioning such as I have discussed, while there may be some intuitive sense of its importance, there may be no clear recognition of the absolute primacy of such experience and the role it plays in life as a whole, particularly the crucial part it can play in the development of our humanity; while, at the grass-roots level, without a clear understanding of the place and role of such experience in some wider scheme of things, interest in making such provision may well flag, particularly in the face of other pressures practitioners may find themselves subject to.

Pulling all this together, the implication is that educators need to:

(a) get clear about the fundamental importance of this first (lifeworld) dimension of human experience as I have outlined it; and see the academic and other more conventional forms of knowledge and skill in perspective against this way of engaging with the world, which itself can be profoundly educative.

(b) provide the child with meaningful opportunities to experience the sort of learning which can take place at this level, particularly in the field of social interaction, by creating a body of such experience that is rich in its own right.

(c) recognize the distinctive characteristics of this sort of learning. In this way one may be able to get more of a 'purchase' on this whole area, see how it should be handled, and be better able to justify such provision.

(I would add that many of the approaches referred to above also point to the need, besides raw interactive experience, for reflection and some critical analysis of that experience; i.e. for some help with, and practice in, the third more 'synoptic' or 'sense-

making' mode of engaging with life that I have discussed earlier. This is clearly important. But, to remind readers of the conclusion reached after examining the comparative role and effect of these modes of functioning (in chapter 5): all the sense-making endeavour in the world can only take one so far unless one can also, at times, follow up insights by taking action in one's actual lifeworld situation.)

Some objections to such a policy.

Before concluding, I will look briefly at 3 major interlinked issues which bear on the basic feasibility of this whole approach. These are:

i) Just how realistic is it to expect that through such provision schools can have much of an effect on the wider character development of students, particularly in the face of the many other influences that the child may be subject to in life?

ii) Will not attention to such provision detract from a school's more conventional academic mission?

iii) At points in chapters 7 and 8 the potentially demanding implications of working with young people in this way were discussed. Since not all staff will be equally well suited to this, what does this imply for managing and rewarding those involved?

I will now discuss these in order.

i) *The effect of such provision when set against other forces.*
Looking at this issue plunges us into some really deep and problematic matters which it can be difficult to get to grips with. There appear to be two main issues here. On the one hand one can consider the effect of this sort of provision in the school in the face of other social factors, and I shall take the family as one of the strongest influences here. On the other, some recent research has revisited the question of whether, particularly in the area of character formation, the school can have much of an effect compared with the apparent primacy and potency of the child's own genetically determined propensities – perhaps the latest version of the so-called 'nature/nurture' debate.

I will look briefly at each of these factors under **(a)** and **(b)** below, but would maintain that in both cases it is not so much a matter of seeing educational provision as being necessarily in competition with, or indeed seeking to trump these other factors; but rather that, if schools could give more serious attention to this life-world dimension of

human experience, they could be more effective, perhaps much more effective, than they often are.[24]

To amplify this general point: A number of studies, including a large one undertaken in the U.S. in 2010 and much commented on since, have concluded that character education programmes in general appear to have little or no significant effect on a child's actual character development over time (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The large-scale studies here have tended to look at the overall effect of various different approaches in schools, ranging, for example, from classroom discussion, specific study modules, to more direct experiential encounter through 'service learning'. But, in the absence of some larger perspective on the key dimensions of human experience and functioning, there appears to be little overt recognition of the fundamental primacy and potential role of such interactive experience, whether in character education itself or in any larger educational scheme of things; and thus there is usually no special attention paid to the general quality, consistency or richness of the interactive life being generated within a school as a potentially crucial factor here.

   (a) *Regarding the potential of such provision in relation to the effect of the family*:
   If, as Leichter has said of this institution, it is:

> an arena in which virtually the entire range of human experience can take place. Warfare, violence, love, tenderness, honesty, deceit, private property, communal sharing, power manipulation, informed consent, formal status hierarchies, egalitarian decision-making – all can be found (cited in Halstead 1999, p.266),

then it is also true that a vast range of such human experience can also be encountered in the ups and downs of peer group relationships, staff-student interaction, and within the whole complex of formal and informal practices which a student can encounter everyday within the school setting.

There are clearly certain types of more intimate interaction which properly belong within the family setting, but this still leaves room for a great deal of meaningful interaction and learning which can take place outside it. In fact in some respects the school, by virtue of its wider corporate character, offers

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[24] Of course just how effective in any individual case will depend on a number of variables operating at any one time, frequently a complex of factors the precise effect of which it may be difficult to predict - something which I will refer to again in the following section on genetic influences.

possibilities of its own for such learning, as I hope I have made clear by pointing to the wealth of contexts in which this can take place in chapter 6. In particular I would draw attention to the rough distinction I have suggested between the school acting has a haven of security and stability in order to establish some basic ground rules and discipline in the face of what, for some children, can be arbitrary and impulsive behaviour in their family background; and the school's potentially more expansive role in providing a body of social experience that is rich in its own right and which will allow something of the individual's personal strengths and unique spirit to unfold. Creating and maintaining a healthy balance between these two impulses will, of course, require judgment and can be demanding, however ultimately rewarding.

Finally, it may say something about the relationship between parenting and the role of the school in today's world that the psychologist Michael Carr-Greg, interviewed for the *Times Educational Supplement,* has argued that, since "parenting with intelligence, with a loving but firm hand, is increasingly rare", in so far as schools can combine these elements, we should be "asking parents to become more like schools" (in Vonow, 2016 p.44). In other words, this type of educational practice, combining firmness with respect for the individual, might usefully inform the practice of parenting too.

 Just how far one might realistically expect this direction of influence to go is, of course, another matter. But such a statement may also serve to remind us, whether as parents, teachers, or managers, that, as pointed out in chapter seven, when it comes to practices conducive to getting the best out of individuals of *any* age as they engage with collective norms, there are now a number of converging trends pointing in the same direction.

(b) *As for the effect of genetic factors*, one might gain the impression from the recent work of behavioural geneticist Robert Plomin – someone who has looked hard at the implications of his work for education - that, whatever schools do to promote the moral or social development of the child, they do not make any real difference. While they 'matter' (in the sense that a child's behaviour may well change as a result of pressure to conform to socially approved norms), they 'do not

make a difference' because, in spite of such a constraining framework, the child's own genetically determined propensities or the lack of them (for instance for kindness, honesty and conscientiousness) will still be there and will ultimately make their presence felt if such constraints are lifted (Plomin, 2019 p.86ff.).

Generally, however, it is accepted in this field that genetic and environmental factors work *in concert* as we are growing up, to produce an overall dispositional and behavioural outcome. For instance, while genetic factors do typically account for around 50 per cent of the degree of variation between individuals in the strength of a particular trait, this still leaves a good part of this difference due largely to environmental factors. But if this is so, then surely the type and quality of the environment can play an important part in this amalgam. And in so far as I have shown that direct and meaningful human interaction appears to be the most potent environmental factor in a person's moral and social development, it would certainly seem worthwhile to do what one can in schools to create a milieu that is rich and positive in this respect.

On the other hand, Plomin himself, at points, appears to assume that it is sufficient for educational purposes if schools induce some outward show of compliance on the part of their students, whether or not they feel any authentic sense of identification with the norms they are expected to follow. But this is exactly what I have argued against in chapter 7 (except as a temporary or stopgap measure). Rather, I have been concerned with how one might appeal to and bring out some personal sense of identification with, and thus real commitment to, what just 'rings true' or 'strikes a chord' within as a child experiences the norms (s)he is subject to. In fact it can be argued that in this very process one will be appealing to a series of deeply rooted genetic propensities, although these may well vary in strength and intensity from person to person, or indeed in the extent to which they may have been hitherto stifled in an adverse environment.

Overall however, I would see the approach I have advocated as very much in line with Plomin's suggestion that education generally should try to work *with* the grain of a person's genetic predispositions rather than attempting to ignore or ride roughshod over them (p.172 ff). In particular, the importance I have attached to opening up space for meaningful human interaction in a variety of settings across

the school appears to sit well with research he quotes which indicates that what is needed for an individual to flourish is not an encounter with a rigidly systematised or completely fixed environment, but the flexibility that is typically found in social 'micro-climates' which individuals can actively contribute to and, in a sense, create for themselves: where there is room for a certain amount of 'give' as different individual configurations of sensibility can both affect and be affected by what is happening in particular social encounters.[25]

Finally, on this question of the effect of heredity, there remains the key issue of the extent to which our genetic 'nudges' (Plomin) or 'predispositions' (Mitchell 2018) are something we just have to accept as set determinations of fate or whether they are factors we can, to a greater or lesser extent, become aware of and consciously work with, or, indeed, work to mitigate. Plomin himself and others such as Lone Frank (2012) and James Arthur (in Young 2018) have seen the latter as a real possibility since, as beings who can grow in self-awareness and develop reflective faculties, we can in this way become more self determining.[26]

ii) *I now turn to the question of whether a focus on such provision is bound to have an adverse effect on the more conventional academic work of the school.*

Is it not bound to detract from what many would consider to be the school's principle function: that is to enable students to get good results and recognised qualifications in the academic and technical fields? For some there would appear to be an inescapable conflict of interest here. To quote the words of James Park (2000) in Antidote:

> It is as if nobody can see a way to resolve the apparent contradiction between academic excellence and the development of a rounded individual.

More recently, as I have noted, there seems to have been a tendency for some schools to turn themselves into virtual 'examination factories' in the face of external pressures to achieve ever better test and examination results. (cf. Hutchings 2015 p.18; and Nevin 2016, p.14).

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[25] These comments on Plomin's work have also been informed by his contribution to several BBC programmes on this subject including those presented by Toby Young (2018), and Sackur (2019).
[26] More controversially perhaps, there is now a body of literature developing which stresses the inherent 'plasticity' of our brain structures and the extent to which these can be modified by our own decisions and actions as we go through life.(cf. Begley (2009); Frank 2012; and Mitchell (2018).

However, if one takes just one aspect of this wider area of provision which is typical of many character and value education programmes – the creation of a rich vein of co- and extra-curricular activities - I have already (in chapter 6) given examples of how, if a child's enthusiasm and sense of achievement are aroused, this can spill over to affect attitudes to the school in general and the learning it offers. One could give a host of examples here and, of course, things do not always work out like this. But I will now give another striking instance to underline the point.

Ken Robinson is here quoting the words of a drama teacher in a primary school:

> When the topic was archaeology in Roman times, we performed adapted versions of *Julius Caesar.* Because they had become comfortable with the process, when it came time to put on the school plays, the kids were confident and desperate to be involved, to perform, sew costumes, build set, write, sing, and dance. …….They were using their imaginations in ways they never had before. Kids who had never excelled at anything suddenly found they could shine….and quite a few discovered they could act, entertain, write, debate, and stand up with confidence to address an entire group. The standard of all their work improved dramatically (Robinson 2009, p.240).

In the same vein one might compare Mansell (2004 p.5) on drama; Revell (2005 p.27) on the benefits of Outward Bound type activities; and Maddern (2009 p.30) on the Extra Mile project for more disadvantaged pupils.

As such examples may indicate, beside the many opportunities to expand horizons and develop particular interests, it is the quality of the relationships that can be generated through such activities that seems to be equally important, both in enhancing the experience of the activity itself and in having a positive effect on the child's attitude towards the school and its culture of learning in general.[27]

If so far I have been largely concerned with the effect of such provision on *academic* outcomes, the need for a focus on this area also appears to be underlined in more *vocational* fields by increasing calls on the part of employers

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[27] If the examples above tend to be based on personal observation, there are now a number of more formal research studies which point in the same direction. Arthur, O'Shaughnessy and Earl (2018) cite nine UK and US studies on the effect of Character Education programmes and conclude that "the evidence highlights the positive impact [they] can have on students' behaviour and well-being, and the favourable effect this can have on academic attainment." Similarly, one could cite Lovat (2017) on the effect on academic outcomes of the Australian government's Values Education Program.

for schools to put more emphasis on equipping students with so-called 'soft' skills, particularly those that are thought to enable their employees to handle interpersonal situations well – as opposed to just equipping them with more narrow job-specific skills.

Due to the changing nature of work in an uncertain and rapidly changing world, including a vast increase in service-sector jobs and the decline of many sectors requiring traditional manual skills, wider human qualities to do with an individual's general attitude to life, work, and particularly the ability to get on well with others, are now seen as increasingly important in the workplace. In the words of one recent large study of this issue in Britain (Kashefpakdel, Newton, and Clark 2018) the message now is: "Recruit for attitude, and train the skill" (pp.20-21) since:

> Employers have been consistently clear that what they need to fill the current skill shortages is not individuals who have more academic qualifications but those with transferable employability skills that enable them to thrive in any business environment (ibid p.8).

In the literature one can find a wide range of basic human qualities which someone or other has seen as falling under the heading of such skills including 'mental and emotional dexterity', 'social and leadership skills', 'communication and team working', the capacity 'to show empathy and ethical awareness', 'to take responsibility', and 'to demonstrate resilience, drive, confidence and reflection'. Such qualities seem to betray aspects of what can be deep-seated attitudes inherent in ways of approaching and managing the roller-coaster of ups and downs that can be readily experienced in lifeworld situations, particularly when interacting with others. But, I have argued, it is precisely the provision of a rich body of such experience for students at the lifeworld level, sometimes happily welcomed, sometimes no doubt more gruelling for particular individuals, that offers the most fruitful and effective means of reaching and affecting such underlying dispositions and attitudes - a fact which the study referred to above appears to acknowledge in pointing to the part which can be played in promoting such wider human traits and skills through a school's extra-curricular activities and the general state of its human relationships.

In fact there appears to be a real correspondence between the types of human capacity needed to function well amid the contingencies and vicissitudes that can beset lifeworld situations generally, and the sort of qualities that the advocates of such soft skills wish to promote. Underlying common factors would include, for instance, the need to develop moral awareness and insight, to form good relationships with colleagues and peers, to use sound judgement in applying general rules and principles, and to have strategies which can be adaptable, not blindly pursued predetermined goals – just the sort of qualities which it was suggested in chapter 8 are needed if one is to cope well when interacting with others in lifeworld situations in general.[28]

iii) *Given that not all staff will be well suited to this sort of work with young people, what are the management implications?*

The reader may remember that at points in chapters 7 and 8 I drew attention to the demands that can be made on the judgment, interpersonal skills, and moral and emotional resources of those actively involved in the area. In fact a full appreciation of the issues raised could well, as I have suggested, be seen as pointing to a need to recover a sense that such everyday practical living and relating should be the occasion for engaging in a kind of personally formative discipline- one which, perhaps uniquely, may enable many basic aspects of one's character to be developed. However, all such 'practical' (in Aristotle's sense) areas of human life, including ethics and the (often fraught) encounters within politics, appear to present continual challenges to our all too human and limited capacities. As a telling illustration of this, one might note that Albert Einstein, when asked why physicists were able to devise nuclear weapons, but politicians were hard-pressed to control them, replied "because politics is more difficult than physics" (quoted by Von Drehle, 2016).

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[28] For the reader who wishes to follow up what some have said about the need, particularly in the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution that is now upon us, to value the skills that humans possess and which computers cannot provide us with, see Nevin (2016) pp14-15);Hyman .(2017); Kashefpakdel, Newton and Clark (2018); and Conway (2019). The latter, citing the economist Richard Baldwin, writes: "The great irony is that our education systems are taking us in precisely the wrong direction to confront this challenge [of jobs being replaced by computer algorithms]. For all sorts of….reasons they prioritise the teaching of STEM skills: science, technology, engineering and maths. Yet jobs related to those skills are the very occupations most at risk of being taken by robots. "Baldwin's controversial suggestion is that, in future, education should put more emphasis on teaching students 'soft' skills: interpersonal relationships, working in groups, showing empathy, being ethical. Less brain, more heart."

Of course, not all direct encounters that take place at this lifeworld level will throw up difficult or testing issues. As we know in our everyday existence, many can be handled in a congenial and relatively straightforward way. However it has to be admitted that since we are creatures who are imperfect, frail and vulnerable in our own particular ways, not all staff will be equally adept at handling the potentially powerful dynamics which can be evoked in such work, or wish to be fully engaged with it. In this light it might appear rather cavalier, even counterproductive, to expect all members of staff to be equally involved. What does seem important is that the educational value of provision in this area should be recognised by the 'powers that be' in a school; that a critical mass of individuals emerge who, in their own particular ways, *are* committed to initiating and sustaining such work; and that overall an ethos is created which is definitely conducive rather than inimical to such work.

To further this outcome, it may be that the work of individuals who do show aptitude and commitment here should be valued on a par with those who find that their metier lies elsewhere, for instance in concentrating on enhancing the purely academic performance of students. In one important sense, of course, there need not be a strict either/or dichotomy or division of labour here. One might recall the points made in the last section above, as well as earlier (pp.196-7) about the role and importance within teaching itself of establishing good human relationships, as opposed to the mere transmission of knowledge. As I put it there, the former can "create the conditions for the effective transmission of knowledge in the first place". But while all teaching staff may need to be aware of this, there is a difference between establishing a good personal rapport with one's own students in the classroom, and a more proactive interest in creating and exploiting the potential wealth of interactive contexts across the school more widely as a resource for social and moral learning.

Concluding thoughts: coming to terms with the powerful legacy of the past.

I will end by returning to the wider historical context in which I have set this study, the long-term effect of which, I have suggested, means that such provision is becoming ever more urgent in today's world.

Here, (to draw at times on some of my original words from chapter 2), it is necessary to go back to the alluring vision which was stirring in the minds of some of the leading thinkers such as Bacon, Galileo and Descartes around the beginning of the seventeenth century – a vision of a brave new world which would come into being as a result of setting knowledge at last onto an apparently secure and rational footing. This movement sensed the immense possibilities which could be opened up if old frameworks of thinking, based largely on custom, tradition and authority, could be discarded, and the intellect became free to operate in a more open, empirical and rigorously rational way, particularly when seeking to understand the physical world and the forces at work in it. It is in Bacon's thought in particular that we catch a glimpse of the implications of this vision for education.

Compared to the largely humanist and literary tradition of his day, he wanted more emphasis put on a strictly methodical and logical training of the intellect, in part by making detailed observations of natural phenomena and rigorously analysing the resulting data. In this way, he thought, one would gain an understanding of many of the laws underlying these phenomena, gain power over nature, and thus improve the general condition of humankind. This visionary impulse has, of course, been gathering momentum and working itself out over the centuries ever since, particularly through the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century and the spectacular growth of specialist fields of knowledge of all kinds which has taken place over the last 150 or so years.

I have argued that one of the effects of this way of thinking has been to shift the whole focus of human learning and endeavour away from the tradition going back to Greek and Roman times (which was as much, if not more, concerned with leading a 'good' life – with the promotion of virtue, ethical conduct, and with attaining mastery over a potentially wayward self – as it was with more speculative and technical knowledge), and towards an increasing preoccupation with understanding, and gaining mastery over, aspects of the external world. Further, I have suggested that, in order to gain

academic respectability particularly at a time of lack of confidence in wider human values, the sort of strictly empirical and apparently verifiable methods successfully used to discover such scientific laws, and then create systems of expertise, have now been pressed into wider service in order to study *any* area of human life in depth, whether or not this is always appropriate.

Whatever the original context in which this impulse took root, it can be argued that there is a natural tendency for any society, as it becomes more rationally organised and technologically sophisticated, to become preoccupied with such high status and systematised bodies of knowledge and skill at the expense of the sort of learning which takes place at the base of life, and which can even be regarded as a sort of messy preliminary to the emergence of these more rational and clear-cut systems. It is as if, in striving to develop certain of our human powers, attention to other aspects of our multifaceted humanity, including the state of our ethical development, has, as it were, 'taken a back seat', although it is the latter that may well determine when and how the now prodigious scientific and technological powers we have developed will be used.

But I would argue that, in the face of a virtual collapse of much social and moral tradition in society at large, the learning which takes place at this level now needs to be accorded a status that reflects its importance in contributing to the psychic base of the personality. We should remember that the lessons learned here, although generally falling outside the paradigm of well-structured subject fields, can, it seems, be as profoundly educative as anything which takes place in these more conventional areas of study. At present, however, it is only too easy for this whole area of provision to be regarded as peripheral to the 'main business' of the school, with the sort of interactive contexts I have listed in chapter 6 seen as, perhaps desirable, but dispensable add-ons rather than lying at the heart of what education should be concerned with if it is to provide more effectively for the wider social and moral development of the child.

Ultimately it seems, the issue comes down to whether we can be satisfied with turning out academics and technicians who, however competent they may be in particular subject areas, may well remain deficient in the social and moral

dimensions of everyday living and relating. Over the years there have been many warnings about the effect of what can be seen as a serious imbalance in the way our human faculties are developing. Besides the writers on this theme mentioned in chapter 2, the following have also brought their own perspectives to bear on this.

Over a century ago Tagore, noting the way our lives were becoming increasingly one-dimensional as we were falling under the spell of just what can be measured in material terms, wrote:

> History has come to a stage when the moral man, the complete man, is more and more giving way, almost without knowing it, to make room for the…..commercial man, the man of limited purpose. This, aided by the wonderful progress in science, is assuming gigantic proportion and power, causing the upset of man's moral balance, obscuring his human side under the shadow of soul-less organization (Tagore and Ray 2007, p.448).

In 1965 John Macmurray, appalled by the number of professional people he met who, "For all their learning in a particular field, …were patently and pedantically stupid", concluded that the major cause was "the rapid development of specialism, and education for specialism: particularly technological specialism" (p.3). He continued:

> Side by side with this vast increase in the scope and efficiency of Science and Technology there has gone a steady decay of the….kind of knowledge which is concerned with values, with choice of ends and objectives, with the satisfactory organisation of priorities (p.10).

Similarly, a few years later in 1967 when there seemed to be definite signs of a weakening or breakdown of many of our traditional patterns of living and relating, John Wilson suggested that the sources sustaining our humanity and moral life in general were no longer being renewed, and wondered whether we were now just trying to live on past capital in this respect (Wilson, Williams & Sugarman 1967, p.15).

All this appears to lend support to my point in chapter 2 earlier that, from a situation four centuries ago when Bacon was calling for a new type of education to develop a more outward-looking and scientific spirit – while 'the seasoning of youth to moral virtues' was (he implied) already taken care of – we have now come full circle and

are facing a situation which seems to be just the reverse, the mirror image, of that which he confronted.

Actually, in the past few years, making a point which is in some ways strikingly similar to the above, Jeanne-Marie Gescher, referring to the present situation in China and commenting on her book *All Under Heaven: China's Dream of Order,* has said that:

> [W]e now seem to have a situation where not only does science develop in silos, but science and scientific experts have been privileged over those who talk about morality. Now it is absolutely true that in centuries past those who talked about morality were privileged above those who wanted to do early natural philosophy or science; but it seems to me that, just like the moral dimension became unbalanced in our past, the scientific dimension is becoming unbalanced in our present (Gescher, 2015).

From this one might conclude that there is a case, if not for totally reversing Bacon's emphasis, at least for reviewing it in the light of the situation at present; and becoming more generally aware both of the direction in which, over a considerable time now, our faculties have been developing, and of the implications of this.

In fact it has been claimed that Character Education, at any rate in Britain and the USA, has been making something of a comeback in recent years (O'Shaughnessy, 2014); although again, as Kat Arney has pointed out (op. cit.), in spite half a century of educational endeavour in this area, we are still unsure about how to handle it.

It is in this context that I would argue that the 3-fold framework that I have outlined, bringing out basic ways in which we find ourselves in and engaging with the world, might provide some key conceptual foundations, not only for education in general, but particularly for any work which aims to bring the wider character development of the individual within its remit; and, I would suggest, it provides a more weighted and thus, in a sense, more three-dimensional model for this purpose than many others. Beginning in effect with what one might see as the real 'rough ground' of human existence (where one can encounter the full range and intensity of the psychic forces at work as we interact with others in situations where interests do not always coincide, and where, in the ups and downs of such interaction, we are

largely forged as social and moral beings); I then looked at the role and burgeoning development of our more high status bodies of knowledge and skill which usually make up the staple fare of the school curriculum; and then at how, as sense making creatures, we try to come to terms more generally with the multitude of influences we find ourselves subject to as we engage with life.

This model, with its close attention to the (sometimes fraught) dynamics involved within each area, appears to give a more humanly contoured picture of the challenges that face us, particularly in education, than, for instance, Biesta's more purely diagnostic analysis of the 3 major functions of education itself as 'socialization', 'qualification', and 'subjectivization' (2009)[29]. In particular it brings out the real role and comparative significance of each of these modes of engagement within human life as a whole. In this light, we can see the crucial role that 'life-world experience' (especially of human interaction) tends to play in creating a host environment - the basic psychic soil, as it were - in which, for better or worse, everything else takes root. To return to the telling words of Raymond Gaita, our humanity (or lack of it) which results "passes through us like the thread through a needle. Everything we do is stitched with its colour" (2000 p.283). Mill seems to have expressed the same basic point, arguing in his 1867 *Inaugural Address* that:

> Men (sic) are men before they are lawyers, physicians, merchants or manufacturers, and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers or physicians (in Garforth, 1979, p.207).

Finally, Ron Barnett has attempted to show how it is that, in relation to learning, "ontology trumps epistemology" (2008, p.6): that the state of a student's very being is *as*, if not *more*, important to the whole process of learning, and the use one makes of it, as the mere acquisition of any particular type of knowledge or specialist skill.

These statements could well sum up much that we may intuitively feel about the way our human faculties should be developing and the increasing danger of an imbalance in this respect; but this is an impulse, which, it seems, we find difficult to translate into actual educational practice. In this study I have tried to bring out the full dimensions of this problem, and in doing so hope I have shed some light on the real

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[29] As far as the author can tell, Biesta's scheme was published long after his own 3-fold one, set out in his MA dissertation (Marshall 1980), had been in the public domain.

implications of coming to terms with what is, arguably, one of the key challenges that humankind, and education in particular, now faces.

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