

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Wolfson College

Course: True Function of Education

Speaker: Professor Professor Allott

Chair: Welcome to Wolfson College Humanities Society and a very special welcome to our speaker this evening, Professor Philip Allott, who probably needs no introduction for many of you. He's Emeritus Professor of International Public Law in the Faculty of Law here at the University of Cambridge and he's a Fellow of Trinity College. He became a Fellow in 1973 and a member of the Law Faculty in 1976, having previously had a very distinguished career in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and in the Diplomatic Service where he was also an adviser to the EU, a legal adviser. In fact, he was the first legal adviser to the UK Permanent Delegation in Brussels at the beginning of the EU and also legal adviser to the British Military Government in Berlin in the early sixties. He then went on to be one of five, only five, international professors who advised the head of legal for the EU from different countries in the world. So that's a very interesting background that he brings to us. He's a Fellow of the British Academy and he's a barrister of Gray's Inn, but Philip is particularly important, I believe, for the way that he has philosophised and conceived international law as a society for all. So, for instance, he believes – and do correct me if I'm wrong, Philip, and this may come out in your talk – that law internationally and the global community should be characterised by what he calls social idealism, which he divides into two categories, ideas and ideals. So, you can see from that the true function of education, his talk this evening is not too far away from that principle. So, thank you, Philip, for agreeing to speak to us here at Wolfson College.

Speaker: Well, thank you, Jane, for inviting me and thank you for introducing me so nicely. I should say that I regard you as experimental subjects. It doesn't sound very polite, but that's how I see this occasion, because what I want to do is to change, rather fundamentally, your idea of education. You may find it extremely eccentric, but it will be in the line of what you've referred to as social idealism; how could one reconceive the whole idea of education? That's what I'm going to do. This hand-out, which looks a bit formidable, I'm going to zip through quite quickly and it's following a new form of lecturing that I've invented, called HRT, which is not hormone replacement therapy, it's Hear, Read, Think. It's trying to negate completely Powerpoint, which I believe is destroying the human mind. The idea here is that you hear me say all this stuff and then you take it away and, God willing, you may actually think thereafter. So, don't be worried that this looks as though it could easily last an hour and a half – which it could.

So, I begin with some supposedly inspirational texts at the top of the first sheet. The first one is "Upon the education of the people of this country, the fate of this country depends." That was a sort of epigraph of the government White Paper that led to the Butler Act in 1944, probably written by R A Butler himself, wonderfully banal statement. Second is J S Mill, "Education is one of the subjects which is most essentially required to be considered by various minds and from a variety of points of view." Again, another banal statement, but obviously true. Then something more interesting, "Whatever is given", Seamus Heaney says, "can always be re-imagined." That's my whole philosophy of life. Then a wonderful saying from Diderot, "Le sophisme de l'éphémère", which he puts into the mouth of a character in "D'Alembert's Dream",

that means the sophism of the ephemeral; the idea that people have, that what exists is natural and justified. Those of us who take the opposite view, that on the contrary, it must all be changed. Then the great hero of the Italian renaissance, really one of the founders of the modern mind, quote, "We can become what we choose to be", that's from Pico in "The Dignity of Man". So you get a bit of the flavour from that. Well, then I begin with my conclusion, which is in bold type. "The true function of education is to help human beings to become better human beings. Education is socially-organised personal development contributing to the wellbeing of the human individual and the wellbeing of human society." That's the proposition that I'm going to try and defend.

So, first question is why does it matter now? Well, it's very hard to get into one's mind the extraordinary nature of the present condition of education, what I call here mega-education. It's a huge industry. From 1870, the start of general education in Britain, it now takes up £90 billion of public money. Imagine that. Second only to the health service and defence. Then there's a huge opportunity cost; this is taking up 20 something years of people's lives. That may be a quarter or even a third of people's lives is devoted to this peculiar thing which, quite honestly, we don't know what it's for. But the state takes over and does what I call here, human engineering. It takes children and turns them into something that society apparently wants. I call it here mental eugenics. It's trying to get people to be like some idea that society has. It's re-breeding children. I regard it as totalitarian in character, education; it's yet another mental totalitarianism. We live under, some of them, religion, science and capitalism, so I say here, it's a scion of Leviathan. It's Benthamite engineering. So, I'm just trying to get into your mind the extraordinary nature, we just take absolutely for granted, of what's going on.

Well, then in point three, why does it matter always? I suggest here four tasks of education, which are not terribly controversial. The first is to develop the better capacities of the human being. The second is to transmit collective social consciousness. The third is to enable human beings to participate socially and the fourth is to contribute to making the future of society. I'm going to speak about each of those.

On the first one, human capacities, in point four I have a list of my view – you would have your own view – of desirable human capacities which education should be fostering. I'll read them extremely fast – self-awareness; self-governing; self-judging; self-perfecting; self-expression in rhetoric and elocution; expanding horizons of consciousness up to the whole universe; memory; rationality; imagination; integrity of character; spiritual sense; moral sense; aesthetic sense; social sense; judgement; affective intelligence; practical intelligence; enthusiasm; perseverance; generosity of spirit and sociability, and healthiness. Locke in his thoughts on education in 1698 [1693] went on about healthiness and the Victorians, of course, did. People should be healthy. Locke said they should eat a lot of apples, children. Actually he said, "It can't do them any harm and might do them some good", eating apples. Then happiness, that might be a purpose for education, happiness. Excellence, eudaimonia. *Arête*. *virtus*, *virtu*. *Geistigkeit* even. We don't have an English word for *Geistigkeit*. Intellectuality, imagine that as a purpose of schools; to teach people intellectuality. So it's the self-perfecting of the private mind of the individual human being and thereby the public mind. And so education, I say here, is a leading medium of human self-evolving.

Then, point five, on social consciousness. Well, the modern view – well, it's not modern, it's goes back to Plato, is that society is an accumulation of consciousness, an inherited conglomerate, as Gilbert Murray said. It's conserved in physical forms and in institutions and laws and customs and collective behaviour and in the minds and behaviour of citizens. Each citizen internalises social consciousness and contributes to the making of social consciousness.

That's what we all do. So the private mind and the public mind of society form each other. So education is the leading medium of social consciousness, out and in, to social consciousness.

Then point six, on social participation. Well, the wellbeing of a society depends on the successful reconciling of our two identities, human being and citizen; on the well-organised integrating of the energies of the citizens and on the effective preparation of citizens for their different social roles. So education is a leading medium of social integration through differentiation.

Then, on point seven about the social future. Society is permanently self-creating, re-forming itself from day to day. So what society does is it uses its social past and its social present to form its social future. So it makes use, society does, of individual and collective creativity within the limits of our potentialities to ensure human survival and prospering. So, we manage the social future, that's a huge part of what society does by politics, arguing about the application of values; economics, planning the system; law, controlling the system; education, enlightening everybody involved. So education is a leading medium of purposive social change.

Well, so that's what any sensible person might say education is for. Then, in part B, I've tried to have a little look at what education is actually now.

Well, point one above, my general definition, contained two values, better and wellbeing. Those are judgemental things, so let us judge the current state of education – and you may be more familiar with it than I am; I'm a mere bachelor Fellow of Trinity; it's not a very good basis of experience.

So, my First Judgment: in Western democracies, education is failing abysmally in all four of its tasks.

Point nine, as regards (a), developing the human being, it has surrendered to crude testing. That has now become a self-justifying end in itself, a spurious *raison d'être*. So testing - there's a lot of discussion about it, exams - has a terribly fundamental effect. It predetermines what is taught and how. For me that is a very serious problem in relation to the so-called public schools or private schools. The private schools were invented in the 19th century to enable the new middle class to join the ruling classes. That was the purpose of the public schools. Then later on, with the Education Act of 1870, it was "We must educate our new masters" now that that franchise had been greatly extended to large numbers of the working class. So this was the idea, but now the public schools have done a terrible thing, they had sold out to the state. Public schools at the cost of £30,000 a year to the parents, are now exam-machines, like the state schools. It is a terrible betrayal and we probably are to blame in this university, universities, because we look a very great deal at exam results. So we sort of retroactively determine the destruction of education.

In point 11, the surrender to totalitarian uniformity. Mass production education negates human potentiality. Everybody goes through this great industrial mill, but a good society requires elites, requires people exceptionally well-prepared to exercise exceptional social responsibility. But a good society must also use education to overcome the crushing and terrible consequences of birth and circumstances for human development.

So, society leaves, residually, millions of people in mental poverty. Isn't that terrible? I don't care about social mobility, who would want to join the middle class? But I care desperately about human mobility, that people should be able to better themselves in their own

way, in their own potentialities. So 90 percent, I would say, of people in society are under-developed human beings. Isn't that terrible? A terrible, terrible waste. The remaining ten percent, which is obviously everybody in this room, are still not terribly well-developed, I don't know you personally but I'm guessing.

Then 12, the surrender to science. The default hegemony of technology. The human species' future. Now, the 21st century is being ruled by the triumphalist cleverness of science and engineering, engineering being science's brilliant co-worker. Well, this has led to a pathetic self-abnegating of humanism, the humanities. It is – and I'll be coming back to this a little bit later – humanism makes the society that makes science possible. We are prior to science; in some sense we are above and beyond science in the humanities.

Then, in 13, now, again, you all know infinitely more about this: the average experience of education as it is.

Primary [education], point 13: literacy to read advertisements, as H G Wells put it in "William Clissold" and now to manage computers. Some self-discipline; some social skills; social consciousness mostly from outside; mostly from the mass media. That's primary education.

Secondary education, what is it doing? Testing skills, exams. Peer group social skills, no lifelong knowledge at all. Social consciousness mostly from outside.

And the university: teaching more testing skills; some professional skills; some rhetorical skills; minimal lifelong knowledge; peer group social skills. Then, social consciousness again in the university is mostly from outside. Total disillusionment with the life of the mind; stifling of individuality, originality, creativity, mental energy and enthusiasm.

Then, after, after university, education stops as a form of social education, except in the Open University or U3A.

So, in 14 I make the obvious suggestion that universities are engines of higher dis-education; mindless participants in human de-civilising; they should be closed until they could be re-founded on new principles. The mass production of books and articles is not high culture.

So then at 15, Second Judgement. Education in its present form, therefore, at all three levels, is a waste of time and public money. It is damaging the young; it's threatening the survival of high culture and hence the civilisation at its best; it is preventing human beings and human society from becoming what they could be.

And while this is going on, worldwide social chaos and intellectual atrophy and spiritual alienation across the world are conditioning a future ruled by mind- surpassing mind-made systems and technology.

Then, in brackets [on the handout], the cavalry of the educational industrial complex to the rescue. MOOCademia – I'm sure you know what MOOC means, Mass Open Online Courses. Everybody all over the world can go to the university, just press a button. Dreadful nonsense. I call it here a cultural imperialism of semi-literacy meets the universal thirst for self-development in a sort of global entertainment industry - these mass universities, part of the entertainment industry. Now I have seen about a new one called OER [Open Education Resources]: every book in the world is going to be put on the internet, as if there was a single person left reading any books. A Gutenberg Galaxy for a post-Gutenberg world. Madness.

So C, what education might ideally be. Well, the first point is in 17, it's to remember that we live in two habitats. We use and modify the natural world, particularly through science. And we create the human world. The human world is entirely our creation. That's what we humans are concerned with.

So, 18, true education is a mental universe of two universalisms: a natural universalism, naturalism, aims to know all that can be known about the natural world and its usefulness to humanity. Human universalism, humanism, aims to know all that can be known about the human world and the human mind with a view to human self-effecting and human self-evolving. And I'm so glad to be saying this in a society which is called the Humanities Society. Isn't that wonderful?

So, point 19, what I call holistic naturalism, which is essentially science. From the universal to the particular, to the universal from the particular, to the particular from universal. That is my theory of the scientific method. That could be the subject of another talk, I think. But what science does is it starts off with universals; looks at particulars; revises the universal; looks at particulars; revises the universal. That is the wonder and brilliance of science and that has given fabulous power to the human race.

Holistic humanism. I rather controversially - forgive me, scientists who are present... All animals do science. I just saw a piece of recent research that shows that animals universalise the world around them in order to particularise what they need to eat etc. A very interesting piece of actual research, scientific research. So all animals do science, but the human animal has the extraordinary characteristic that it studies itself, as a thinking animal.

That's what we call the humanities. Humanism makes the human world in which science happens.

So then, in 20, I suggest a simple view of an ideal education which is very Victorian really; learning everything about something and something about everything. That's what we should be aiming at: what I call here vertical and horizontal knowledge – that's deep and wide knowledge – and [thereby] improving the functioning of the human brain. The human brain, we're only at the beginning of the capacities of the human brain. Science is obviously, like mathematics, incredible achievements of the human brain, but we've got an unlimited possibility of developing the human brain and then, what I called before, human mobility; that people shouldn't be left in this terrible under-developed condition.

So, 21, the true function of universities, to generate and communicate ideas at the highest level throughout our two worlds, the natural world and the human world. And I say that in this university we have two of the great gods of the sciences and humanities, namely Francis Bacon, who was the mastermind of the new humanism, which has totally determined the modern world; Isaac Newton mastermind of the new scientism, which has totally taken over the power over the human world, both alumni of this university. So we should regard ourselves as being on the shoulders of giants, as Bernard of Chartres put it in famous phrase, we should see further. That should be the feeling of a university.

So, in 22, this is the most practical that I get; you may not think it's terribly practical,. The Universalist University of the future, or in the American formula, Uni-U. This is assisted self-education from the cradle to the grave. Education should be lifelong and those of us who

are very old know that it's incredibly interesting in old age and in retirement, self-education is a fantastic advantage of old age.

But it should be happening all along. Many students when they come back in their thirties and forties say, "Oh, I wish I could have gone on learning, I've no time to read, I can't do anything and there's so much to know." It's terrible. So it's got to be a permanent university.

So then I suggest two new quinquiviums, which is a good medieval term.

Five Faculties of Humanism – and humanism I'm now defining as universal anthropology. That's anthropology in the sense that Immanuel Kant used it, not in the modern sense of anthropology.

Anthropology, the study of the human being. So, the five faculties are: Philosophy, studying the human mind.

History, studying how the human world has been made;

Culture, human self-exploring through literature, art, music, including languages as a cross-temporal and cross-cultural key to human self-exploring.

Politics, that's in the Aristotelian sense, the structure of the polis; studying the structure and functioning of human society including law.

Then Human Naturalism, which is science as required by the humanities, incredibly important that we should know a great deal about our place in the natural universe. I suggest here physics, physiology, biology, history of science. We've got to develop a way of making humanists scientifically intelligent.

Then five Faculties of Naturalism, the sciences: Mathematics. Matter. Life. Brain. Machine.

So, in 23, another conclusion. Education is the medium of a self-empowering universalism in the making of a better human future and the further self-evolving of the human species.

Now, I'm going to call some witnesses and I'll leave them more or less to speak for themselves. I might have to do one bit of editorialising, but otherwise I'll just let them speak. They're not necessarily witnesses for the prosecution, but some of them are, perhaps, witnesses for the defence.

So, another boring statement from J S Mill, 24, "What mode is there of determining whether a thing is fit to exist without first considering what purposes it exists for and whether it be still capable of fulfilling them?" That was in an essay on Coleridge when he was trying to come to terms with Coleridge's politics, which is an uphill endeavour.

25, "You are right to say that it is impossible to form an *Émile*, but I cannot believe that you take the book which bears his name for a true treatise on education. It's rather a philosophical work on the principle man is naturally good." Then a different source, "It is intended to show how vice and error, alien to its constitution, are introduced to it from – into the constitution, his constitution – are introduced to it from outside and imperceptibly distorted."

Now, here I have to editorialise a little bit, Rousseau is a great hero in what I am saying, because he is a great follower of Plato and as you see here, he called "Plato's Republic", "le plus beau traité d'éducation qu'on ait jamais fait", the finest treatise on education. So that's his famous view that "Plato's Republic" is a book about education, which I utterly agree with. What

he's referring to here, if you see the bottom line of point 25, is a huge underlying debate in the philosophy of education.

Are we educating human beings or citizens? Socrates and Protagoras the Sophist argued about this. Athens and Sparta, Sparta thought that Athens was a feeble lot of useless people; Athens thought Sparta was inhumane. That is, as you see, has been at the root of what I've been saying. I'm trying to say that we should be educating both the human being and the citizen, and the human being is at least as important [as the citizen].

Then, 26, D H Lawrence, treating him as an authority on something, "The fact is, our process of universal education is today so uncouth, so psychologically barbaric that it's the most terrible menace in existence for our race. We seize hold of our children and by parent compulsion we force into them a set of mental tricks; by unnatural and unhealthy compulsion we force them into a certain amount of cerebral activity and then after a few years, with a certain number of windmills in their head, we turn them loose, like so many inferior Don Quixotes, to make a mess of life. All that they've learnt in their heads has no reference at all to their dynamic souls; the windmills spin and spin in a wind of words." I won't editorialise on that.

27, this is T S Eliot, "For there is no doubt that in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards, destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans." Well, that's very characteristic T S Eliot.

28, this is from Schiller, 1794, "But now necessity – *Bedürfnis* - rules and makes declining humanity bend under its tyrannical yoke. Now utility – *Nutzen* – is the great ideal which all powers must serve and all talents must honour. Weighed in that mighty scale the spiritual value of art has no weight and robbed of its invigorating strength, it steals away from the bustling marketplace of present times and the spirit of philosophical enquiry itself takes from one area after another the power of imagination and the boundaries of art are reduced to the frontiers of knowledge or science – *Wissenschaft* – are extended." That's 1794! They were already complaining that the world is becoming dominated by the market and higher thought is going down the drain.

Now, 29, from William Whewell, when he was Master of Trinity College, "I may add my decided opinion that no system of education which is governed entirely, or even mainly, by examinations could be otherwise than a bad discipline. Intellectual education requires that the mind should be habitually employed in the acquisition of knowledge with a certain considerable degree of clear insight and independent activity. This is universally provoked by the daily teaching of the lecture room, with the sympathy and interest that the mutual action of various minds produces. It is not necessarily or greatly promoted by the prospect of an examination."

Then, 30, quotations from a great hero of the story of the philosophy of education, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and I'll come back to him at the very end, "The true end of man is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole. Science changes much around us but not within us."

Then, an uncharacteristically interesting thing from Wittgenstein, "We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all." Then, a really interesting sentence, "Perhaps one day this civilisation will produce a culture." Isn't that interesting?

Then, 31, letter from George Eliot, it says it's to Mrs Ponsonby, but I think it was actually to Richard Dawkins and this is what she says, "I think we must not take every great physicist or other 'ist' for an apostle, but be ready to suspect him of some crudity concerning relations which lie outside his special studies if his exposition strands us on results that seem to stultify the most ardent massive experience of mankind and hem up the best part of our feelings in stagnation." Wonderful.

Then, J S Mill, in his address when he became President [of St Andrews University], that is much later in [his] life; I think he spoke for three hours. I don't think students would tolerate three hours now. "The purpose of the university is to make capable and cultivated human beings" and this is about how important science is, "The most obvious part of the value of scientific instruction, the mere information it gives, speaks for itself. We are born into a world which we have not made; a world whose phenomena take place according to fixed laws, of which we do not bring any knowledge into the world with us. In such a world we are appointed to live and in it, all our work is to be done. Our whole working power depends on knowing the laws of the world, in other words, the properties of the things we have to work with and work among and work upon." He strongly advocated that humanists should know about science.

Then I have to pop in a bit about my own world, "To these studies" says Mill, "I would add international law, which I decidedly think should be taught in all universities and should form part of all liberal education. The need for it is far from being limited to diplomatists and lawyers; it extends to every citizen. He's not a good man who without a protest allows wrong to be committed in his name and with a means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject. It depends on the habit of attending to and looking into public transactions and on the degree of information and solid judgement respecting them that exists in the community whether the conduct of the nation as a nation, both within itself and towards others, shall be selfish, corrupt and tyrannical or rational and enlightened, just and noble."

33, then, a quotation from Samuel Butler's amazingly prescient book, "Erewhon". This is 1872! "The venerable professor of worldly wisdom was one of those who carried most weight in the university and had the reputation of having done more, perhaps, than any other living man to suppress any kind of originality. It is not our business, he said, to help students to think for themselves, surely this is the very last thing which one who wishes them well should encourage them to do. Our duty is to ensure that they shall think as we do, or at any rate as we hold it expedient to say that we do. In some respects, however, he was thought to hold somewhat radical opinions, for he was president of the society for the suppression of useless knowledge and for the complete obliteration of the past." That was 1872.

Then another incredible thing from his chapter on machines, "Is it not plain that the machines are gaining ground upon us? When we reflect on the increasing number of those who are bowing down to them as slaves and of those who devote their whole souls to the advancement of the mechanical kingdom, are we not ourselves creating our successors in the supremacy of the earth; daily adding to the beauty and delicacy of their organisation; daily giving them greater skill and supplying more and more of that self-regulating, self-acting power which will be better than any intellect?" Well, that could have been written yesterday, incredible.

Now, in 34, this may seem a trifle eccentric, but if you are wondering about human progress I thought I would indicate that there is such a thing as the history of the progress of the human mind. It seems very unlikely. So I list it very quickly here: in the Upanishads: "Thou art that, we belong to the universe and to each other." Gnothi seauton: we can study ourselves, we

must study ourselves. Metanoia: we can transform ourselves. The Italian Renaissance that I quoted earlier: we are self-creating human beings. The Baconian revolution: knowledge is power. The French Enlightenment: *écrasez l'infâme*, get rid of all the bad old ideas. The great 19th century triumphalism: nothing is impossible, Brunel's saying, "Nothing is impossible to an engineer." Then the 20th century goes even more triumphalist: everything is possible. Then, in the 21st century, Social Idealism, which I won't say more about.

Now, I was going to stop there, but then looking through this I realised I had to add one other paragraph, because there's a historical pattern in what I've been saying and I thought it might be worth just very quickly drawing that out in point 35. It's really the link between social change and educational innovation, going from the past to the future.

This is point 35. So, we started with Rousseau, first the human being and then the citizen, which he got from Plato. Then the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the citizen; that was from Rousseau. Freedom and equality under the law for man first, and the citizen second. Modern human rights has blurred that distinction. It's now mostly legal, modern human rights. Very sad.

Then (c), Immanuel Kant in his essay in 1798 about which is the most important faculty in the university, particularly philosophy or theology. But it was really a hidden {message} to the King of Prussia about the education of a free people, not merely servants of the state. Then, about 1800 the European mind went into great, great crisis about all these questions, wonderfully interesting. They created a new humanism; they called themselves, some of them, humanist, some of them listed here. They, as Godwin and Mill and countless others in this country did, they discussed what should we be doing to improve the human race? I wish to goodness we could have that discussion again.

Then, in (e). Wilhelm von Humboldt then set up the new university of Berlin, which was the model of all modern universities, including this one: a serious university studying everything. Then, in Britain, the Reform Act 1832 created new voters and that led to new and renewed public schools and grammar schools educating new members of the ruling classes. Then, in G, London University 1936, I think University College were a little bit earlier than that, created by J S Mill and others - negating the [then] awfulness of Oxford and Cambridge, which were [then] a complete disgrace, obviously, at that time - and reflecting the great Scottish universities of the 18th century.

Then in H, the UK's second Reform Act, with more new voters leading to the Elementary Education Act 1870 and what somebody said in Parliament, "We must educate our masters", and then, about 1870, fundamental reform of Oxford and Cambridge, terribly slow and late, and the beginning of the admission of women students. It's worth keeping [repeating] that, Cambridge didn't give women degrees until 1948. It's impossible to believe. Lunacy.

Then point J, the general election of 1945 which was a sort of virtual social revolution in this country, completely new society after 1945, and the Education Act was ready and waiting, leading to comprehensive education. I'm suggesting that, circa 2000, we're into a completely new civilisation which briefly could be called internet civilisation, so we need a new new humanist education and a new kind of university.

So it's back to 1800, in my view, it's exactly the situation, crisis of the human mind that they faced in 1800 and indeed in 1900. Isn't it odd that at these turns of centuries [there is] complete collapse of the self-confidence of the human mind? So that's all I have to say.

Chair: Thank you very much. Well, you've really stretched our minds there, I think, with a whole host of fundamental concepts and challenges of ideas that we can pick up. I don't know who would like to be first, but there's so much meat here that we could get... or food for thought that we could discuss. Anybody like to pass any comments or ask a question?

Participant: Well, change in the getting on for half a century that I've been here is that students seem to expect to be fed information more, less thinking for themselves; so that they also want to know how to do well in exams, so they're given that information.

Chair: Yes. Do you think that's influenced at all by the Confucian method in this global society? You know, where the educator is seen as the master; that the students accept—

Speaker: I wish it were true. I do, I think they see us as plumbers of some sort, maybe. We've got a—

Chair: Underpaid. Paid less than plumbers. Have you got any thoughts on that, Philip?

Speaker: Well, I share your experience utterly. I gave up supervising the first moment that Trinity College allowed it, because in supervision they started coming in with notebooks and the glory of supervisions used to be that you would sit with a glass of sherry and discuss. But then they came in with notebooks and said, "Can we do some exam answers?" I'm afraid I gave up at that point.

Participant: The late Dr Squires said once, a joke he made in the lectures, was recognised as a piece of information and reappeared as the answer to exam questions.

Speaker: I used to say that if you said, "Would you please open the window?" They [would write it down]. "Please open the window".

Chair: Yes. At the back, somebody, no. Yes.

Participant: Do you not think that is driven then by [inaudible 45.21] in terms of career and looking further beyond that? This focus on exams is now being looked at more and more by employers, so it's becoming more important to students as well.

Speaker: I read an employer recently who said that they were not terribly interested in the class of degree; they were more interested in the class of the person they were about to employ. They know there's been a great grade inflation of degrees. And people may be very good at degrees, but not very good at running Barclays Bank. (Nobody's very good at running Barclays Bank). But that's also the point about continuing education. At the moment there's this huge rush of education to get yourself a career. I want education to be this humanising thing, at the end of which, obviously, you've got to start earning money and not costing your parents money, but education should then continue, even in your career. There should be sabbaticals, big sabbaticals.

Chair: Owen, yes.

Participant: In the professions – and I'm a physician – obviously you have to take your exams to be regarded as competent and recognised by the GMC. In medicine we have been credited each year and you have to read your "Lancets" and your "BMJ".

Speaker: Right.

Participant: That's part of your contract. Of course, in your personal lives then you go along to galleries and museums, which are part of the university plan. You read, so I don't see any sort of problem between one's education and exams and one future and one's career. That must happen in law, surely. You have to keep and maintain your competence; an accountant must do the same and develop their values and their intellect in other ways.

Speaker: Right.

Participant: I don't see any competition there.

Speaker: Well, these are matters of judgement. You must know... In medicine, I think it's a miracle how people keep up with medicine, it must be incredibly difficult to keep up with it—

Participant: You don't have to keep up with it all; you keep up with your specialty.

Speaker: With your specialty. Similarly in law, actually, you know your bit of the law extremely well and have to bring it up to date. But the other side of what you say is the controversial side, whether people do go on educating themselves and that's a matter of judgement and I take a more negative view than you're implying.

Participant: Well, I think I looked [inaudible 48.09]. I remember one time going on holiday and I spoke to a Jewish journalist who had been from one city to the other ahead of the Nazis and he said in every town he'd been to there'd always been an orchestra of physicians, but never one of lawyers or accountants, so some professions made that naturally developments are [inaudible 48.37].

Speaker: Right. Well, you'd better not—

Participant: [Inaudible 48.40]

Speaker: Yes. You'd better not start me on my other theme, which is that culture is almost completely down the drain. It is now part of the entertainment industry. But that is for another occasion. I feel terribly strongly about it. Everything now—

Chair: [Inaudible 49.00]

Speaker: Please.

Participant: I may have misunderstood, but I didn't follow, if you think that education ought to be lifelong – and I think most of us would agree with that – why are you against MOOCs and the Gutenberg, all books available online?

Speaker: Well, because in the meantime, until we get a new concept of education, this is just playing the game. I regard education reforms – I won't mention the name of any reformer in particular at the moment – as sort of party games on the sinking Titanic. It's all sort of trying to rescue something and MOOC is, well, I can't find the words strong enough. I won't be able to convince you, but the idea of 15 million people in some country listening to Harvard professors – I don't know what they'll do with it. Harvard professors speak extremely clearly so they may

actually physically understand it. I think in the sciences it may be different; in engineering it may be different, there may be some sense in global lectures, but in the humanities I don't attach any importance to it because of what William Whewell said, in a way, that learning is not just reading and listening, it's a complicated process of interacting with something and that was our job in this university. We were interactors and in between us and the students was what people had written and we used to say, "That is rubbish" or "That is brilliant" and that was a very important moment in a person's life, when they, you know, understood. Again, I won't mention which countries, but people from certain countries where they have very rigorous education, used to come up to me and say, "I'd never realised we were supposed to disagree with teachers." And I said, "I'm terribly sorry, at these universities, that is the whole point", because that develops the brain. Sorry, I didn't...

Chair: Lady in front.

Participant: So, you've identified the tasks of education, as you see them, how then do you see the role of the teacher?

Speaker: Well, my main thing about teachers is two words, enthusiasm and sharing. I regard teaching as sharing. I always have regarded it as that. We've been messing around with all this stuff for years and then people come and sit in front of you and I think it's the most wonderful thing, sharing it with them. So I think that's what we do. Then they react and then we share a bit more and I think what worries me so much about the modern university is not only the lack of intellectualism, but the lack of enthusiasm. You know, it's an incredible process and if it takes up a quarter of a person's life, you know, it should be exciting in some way. That may sound totally ridiculous and vague, but that's what I would like to get back to, where it's the excitement of sharing something that one cares desperately about oneself as a teacher and that they can then respond with enthusiasm, which is, I'm afraid, not a very practical answer.

Chair: I think that's still an ideal in teacher training, isn't it?

Speaker: Is it, yes? I hope to goodness it is. Yes.

Participant: And it still happens.

Chair: It does, yes. Yes, that's right.

Participant: If I may express a bit of disagreement here on the—

Speaker: Please.

Participant: I'm trying to make sense of how philosophy works in here and I'm afraid I can't. I find it sort of contradictory. So, I mean, there is an educational ideal you'll be aware of, the understanding [inaudible 53.10] Aristotle [or even? 53.10] Socrates, which the mediaevals were quite taken by, the [inaudible 53.17] and the superiority of the theoretical life to the practical life, the subordination of the practical to the theoretical. Francis Bacon is arguably one of the people most responsible for the undoing of that ideal and his idea of subordination of theoretical knowledge for its own sake [inaudible 53.37] so that we can have knowledge for technological advance and manipulation and control of nature. So that seems to me a fundamental contradiction. But also the idea that philosophy studies the human mind, I find that a bizarre definition of what philosophy does. I mean, I thought philosophy studied the fundamental structures of reality, what the mind knows, what it does and doesn't know, so there's a definition

of philosophy, I think, that would serve your proposal which speaks of it as what Edmund Husserl called general science; so it studies all the things that special sciences take for granted, things like what is knowledge; what is truth; what is a thing; what is thinking and it leaves no stone unturned, it examines everything. That really [inaudible 54.22] this project in a certain way, because it goes well beyond the sciences, because it shows that the sciences start with assumptions that are not examined here. As [Husserl? 54.29] says, they're exact, but they're not rigorous. That shows, it seems to me, that the way in which science is human activity in a very powerful way, but not this self-referential ideal of what philosophers is some kind of Cartesian study of their own mind. I mean, I think that's a betrayal of the meaning of philosophy.

Speaker: Well, how wonderful, I could not disagree with you more. On Bacon, if you happen to be free on March 14th I'm going to preach, as they call it, in Trinity College Chapel, on Francis Bacon, because the exact reverse of what you've said, Bacon... The scientific side of Bacon is of very little interest and this is what Macaulay said in his essay on Bacon. The interesting side of Bacon was almost entirely what I've been saying, that the human mind is undeveloped; it has been dominated by dead ideas from the past. It could, tomorrow, completely recreate itself and re-emerge itself. That's what he called the advancement of learning, or the great instauration, a totally new approach to the human mind. So, probably we would never agree on that. On your second point, I'm amazed. I mean, philosophy studies the mind is Hegel's definition of philosophy and I don't mean that we sit, gazing at our mental navels, as it were. The mind has created everything that God or evolution didn't create; we've created it all. So studying the mind is studying all that the mind has created and for Husserl to try and introduce the word science is a total error. It's got nothing to do with science; science has an absolutely wonderful and special role. Science in the old Greek sense might be possible, but it's very undesirable to use it... The human sciences, when that came in, in the 1840s, was a terrible mistake. They're not... humanism is the proper word for human beings studying the human being. I can only just say the opposite of what you say.

Participant: Yes, my response would be to like these [inaudible 56.58]. Talk at dinner if you...

Speaker: Yes.

Participant: Just briefly, the point that what he means there, the idea of understanding things in terms of their causes and so on is in continuity with the ancient ideal, but the point about Bacon, just briefly, is it's the subordination of the theoretical life of the mind to the practical life. That's not about the emancipation of the mind from dead ideas, I mean, that's where the point was, anyway.

Chair: So there's a fundamental disagreement about the nature of Bacon here.

Speaker: There is, but it's a very important disagreement.

Chair: Very interesting for you, for your events at Trinity. I think we had two other people that indicated they wanted questions. Yes.

Participant: Thank you for your talk. I mean, considering what your definition, point number one and sort of thinking over when you say education is socially organised personal development, and what a range forms of social organisation exists, for example the family is a form of social organisation. But your talk looked very specifically at formal organisations, so there isn't a differentiation between schooling and education, for example. I wonder if you could

say a little bit about what you thought... It seems implicit in what you're saying is there's an ideal form of social organisation which is conducive to educating, effectively, but I didn't hear you say explicitly what you think that form of social organisation is.

Speaker: No, except that you mention the family and John Locke on thoughts on education, is obviously more about bringing-up [of young children]. I should have mentioned that. Let's say, bringing up of children at *Erziehung* as opposed to *Bildung*, which is education, and Humboldt's most marvellous word, *Ausbildung*, which is genuine education of the whole human being [point 30]. So there are those three things and the family does *Erziehung*] bringing up the children and I hope that bringing up the children then would reflect an enlightened society and reflect an enlightened society's idea of education in general, because the parents would be conditioned by society to that extent. Then there would be separate people who for religious reasons, or philosophical reasons, wanted a different form of *Erziehung*. But the social organisation then becomes the central question and I've just in general terms been trying to suggest the present form of social education, social organisation is a total disaster, which we've inherited. It's been going for 150 years now and it's incredible; it just sits there like a great lump, this stuff from 1870 to the present day. So my main aim, obviously, is to attack this great lump of a thing called education and just ask, if we were with a blank sheet of paper, what would we want? Obviously, I haven't had time to go into it in any... but you get the drift, which is that the human being matters more than the socially-conditioned citizen. That's central. How you do that, I simply can't say at the moment.

Participant: I'd suggest that perhaps something which contributes to the kind of education you would like are, well, lectures, public lectures, so this is an example and also the radio, because you hear of some very interesting ideas being proposed on the radio.

Speaker: Yes, but the radio's an interesting example also in that they do, particularly on Radio 4 and to some extent on Radio 3, do have remarkable things. Very high standard. In the old days, those of us who knew the old Third Programme think it's all gone downhill dreadfully, but that illustrates the problem that people... People often refer me to these things that they've heard on Radio 3 and Radio 4, but the problem is that they say that to me because there's no follow-up. They can say it to their husband or their wife, "My goodness there was an interesting thing", or sometimes on BBC television, there's terribly interesting things, but that can't enter into their self-development because, to put it extremely crudely, one week later one can't remember what the programme was.

Participant: Unless there's a transcript.

Speaker: Unless there's a transcript or unless it's on iPlayer or whatever it is. That's the problem. Education entails interaction.

Chair: But then that surely poses a problem how you follow up on that.

Speaker: Yes.

Chair: I mean, if you were to then translate that need to follow-up on it into social organisation of some sort, just picking up on the gentleman's point over there, then you're up against exams again, aren't you? I mean, is it not possible to argue that exams are a natural effect of the evolution of economic development; of cultural development etc, that as more people become educated, you have to have exams, it's just a form of social organisation that you can't totally

divorce yourself from. I mean, I take your point that you want to address the philosophy of education, but it's running two parallels that don't meet, as far as you're concerned—

Speaker: Right.

Chair: —on the one hand there's the social organisation, on the other there's the philosophical. Do you see them meeting at all?

Speaker: Well, exams have – excuse me – have one great advantage; they may contribute to the teaching of self-discipline because to do well in exams, as unquestionably our students now work very hard, much, much harder than they used, much harder than they did in my day when nobody did a damn thing but we all went to the theatre and went to exhibitions and went to London to concerts in my day. So they teach self-discipline, at their best, but I would like some way of finding another form of self-discipline; some way of them being so sharp and so sudden, stopping them being so sharp and so sudden, and so that there's some other way of judging our students when they get to the end. We all hate writing reference letters; it's terrible agony, but in a sense we've lived with these people in the Oxford and Cambridge system, in very close contact, we know them extremely well, so our reference letters should be extremely good. I've always felt open to bribery, but sadly nobody's ever bribed me, but for a small sum I'd be willing to say anything. But, in principle, our reference letters, except when we send them to America, because in America, unless you say, "This is about the third cleverest person I've ever met in the whole of my life", they won't get a job [*laughter*].

Chair: Here, yes.

Participant: If the essence is interaction, how do we raise the status of the teacher, because the status of the teacher in this country is not as high as it is in many other cultures?

Speaker: Right. That they particularly say about Finland, don't they? Why Finland has such an incredibly successful educational system and they always say one of the reasons is that the teachers are extremely highly-trained; extremely highly-qualified and extremely respected in society. So I agree with the implication of what you're saying very much. But I think, again, it could sort of drag up the whole level of the thing if we saw... I've been trying to suggest education is incredibly important and it's not just a sort of routine thing that everybody goes through. It's incredibly important and I'd like to limit it, probably to ten years, the actual education and then... The Open University's a marvellous thing because there they realise, (a) that people want to be educated throughout their lives; and (b) it is interactive. I don't know how they achieved that, but it's amazingly interactive, the Open University. The U3A is another example; terribly interactive. They get in good speakers and then people do feel they know a bit more at the end of an hour or two. So, again, I mean, I've not thought this through, how you'd do it, but if you raised the whole notion of education, which among you should be one of the most important things in society, not just this great industry costing £90 billion a year, but a vast humanising thing. Then I think teachers would, you know, follow that.

Chair: [Inaudible 66.49]

Participant: There's one thing which I would like to see in education and that is obligations as opposed to rights. I don't think we teach, or attempt to teach, obligations or rights. Do you think that we should have greater emphasis on obligations?

Speaker: Well, I'm very Victorian in that matter. I think the Victorian idea that you are moulding people to a sense of duty is incredibly important. I couldn't agree with you more. It's terribly unfashionable, as you know.

Participant: Yes.

Speaker: Terribly unfashionable. But I think because of the decline of religion; because of the decline of social morality we're left with trying to make human beings self-responsible, you know, because society now mostly demoralises the young; through its effects; through ghastly goings-on on the internet and so on. So how you remoralise the young, I should have said it, is central to this and sounds very Victorian, but I think they were right.

Participant: Well, I would agree with you entirely.

Chair: Any more questions?

Participant: That sounds very much as if you are, like Thatcherite, belief in Victorian values. Would you do embrace that concept [inaudible 68.27]?

Speaker: Well, I'm a very great admirer of the Victorians. Most of them were mad as hatters, but they talked about these things non-stop throughout the 19th century. They talked about all this non-stop.

Chair: That's right.

Speaker: Every intelligent person in society among the ruling classes had to have views on these questions and a lot of what they did... It's terrible, I always remember I've quoted somewhere that a Victorian headmaster's view in favour of fagging and beating the children and so on - that unless you've been ruled you can't be a good ruler. That was their principle and that made the Empire. It was very necessary if you're going to go out and rule all these people all over the world, you've got to learn at the age of 13 to be ruled and then you become a ghastly Colonial administrator. So I'm against Victorian values in that sense, i.e. that somebody tells people morality and whips them into line. I'm utterly against that, but that you should... The Victorians were creative to the millionth degree. Wonderful, wonderful people, recreating society every day of the week. Wonderful people. If only – and that's what Oxford and Cambridge and the great universities should be, places where everybody is thinking, as the Victorians did, "How do we re-create society? How do we improve society?" Not just as slaves and servants of the... I was going to quote the Jabberwocky there, which has a lot about Goves in it [*laughter*]. "Twas brillig and the slithy goves [*laughter*] did gyre and gimble in the wabe", and how did the universities respond? You know how the poem goes on, "All mimsy". That's the universities' response to Gove-ism and Thatcherism, "All mimsy were the borogoves and the mome raths outgrabe." The mome raths are these American universities spreading this stuff all over the world. They're outgrabing. I don't know how I got onto that, but...

Chair: I think it's a wonderful note to end on, to have us laughing. Thank you very much and can I, before we give our thanks, thank you to Barbara De Smith who's in our audience, who suggested we have Philip in the first place, a very good suggestion. Thank you, Philip.

[End of Recording]

LECTURE HANDOUT

Philip Allott

Trinity College Cambridge

‘Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends.’

UK Government White Paper, 1943.

‘Education is one of the subjects which most essentially require to be considered by various minds, and from a variety of points of view.’ J.S. Mill (1867).

‘...whatever is given, / Can always be re-imagined.’ S. Heaney, *Seeing Things* (1991).

‘...*le sophisme de l'éphémère*...’, D. Diderot, *Le rêve de D'Alembert* (1769/1830).

‘We can become what we choose to be.’ Pico della Mirandola, *Dignity of Man* (1486).

A. WHAT EDUCATION IS FOR

1. **The true function of education is to help human beings to become better human beings. Education is socially organised personal development contributing to the well-being of the human individual and the well-being of human society.**

2. Why does it matter *now*? Mega-education. Education industry. *Elementary Education Act* 1870 → £90 billion of public money in 2014. *Plus* opportunity cost – other things people could have done – in a quarter or a third of their lives. Human engineering. Mental eugenics. Re-breeding children to satisfy social norms. The totalitarian face of democracy. Another mental totalitarianism of public power (with religion, science, capitalism). Scion of Leviathan. Benthamite engineering.

3. Why does it matter *always*? The four *tasks* of education –
(a) to develop the better capacities of the human being;
(b) to transmit collected social consciousness;
(c) to enable human beings to participate socially;
(d) to contribute to making the future of society.

4. On 3(a)(capacities) – the aim – self-awareness, self-governing, self-judging, self-perfecting; self-expression (rhetoric, elocution); expanding horizons of consciousness (atom, cell, self, society, humanity, universe); memory, rationality, imagination; integrity (‘character’); spiritual sense; moral sense, aesthetic sense; social sense; judgment; affective intelligence; practical intelligence; enthusiasm; perseverance; generosity of spirit; sociability.

Healthiness. Happiness. Excellence. *eudaimonia*. ἀρετή. *virtus*. *virtù*. *Geistigkeit*, even!

Self-perfecting of the private mind of the individual human being and the public mind of society.

Education as a leading medium of human self-evolving.

5. On 3(b)(social consciousness) – the aim – a society is an *accumulation of consciousness* (G. Vico, L. Lévy-Bruhl, E. Durkheim) – an *inherited conglomerate* (G. Murray) – conserved in physical forms (buildings, books, art, symbols); in institutions and law and customs and collective behaviour; in the minds and behaviour of citizens. Each citizen internalises social consciousness and contributes to the making of social consciousness. The private mind and the public mind form each other.

Education as a leading medium of social consciousness.

6. On 3(c)(social participation) – the aim – the well-being of a society depends on the successful reconciling of our two identities (as *human being* and as *citizen*), on the well-organised integrating of the energies of the citizens, and on the effective preparation of citizens for their different social roles.

Education as a leading medium of social integration through differentiation.

7. On 3(d)(social future) – the aim – society permanently self-creating, re-forming itself from day to day. Society using its social past, in its social present, to form its social future. Making use of individual and collective creativity, within the limits of actual human and social potentialities, to ensure the survival and prospering of society and its citizens.

Managing the social future – politics (arguing), economics (planning), law (controlling), education (enlightening).

Education as a leading medium of purposive social change.

B. WHAT EDUCATION IS NOW

8. Point 1 above contains *values* ('better'; 'well-being'). Values = judgment.

Judging the current state of education.

Judgment I. In Western democracies, education is failing abysmally in all four of its tasks.

9. *Ad* 3(a)(capacities) – the surrender to *crude testing*. Self-justifying end-in-itself. Spurious *raison d'être*. Testing pre-determines what is taught and how. At the expense of unquantifiable latent complex subtle personal addable value. Subtracted Value. *Unbildung*. *Private schools* – Victorian invention to make the new middle class worthy to join the ruling classes. Now public-ised, surrender to state exams = fee-paying state schools.

10. *Ad* 3(b)(social consciousness) – the surrender to the *collectivised mind*. The electronic public mind lacks the private mind's miraculous capacity for self-creating, self-exploring, self-integrating, self-doubting, self-surpassing. The Self enslaved by a collectivised Other. Eclipse of the human individual.

11. *Ad* 3(c)(social participation) – the surrender to *totalitarian uniformity*. Mass-production education negates human potentiality. A good society requires people exceptionally well prepared to exercise exceptional social responsibility (elites). A good society must also use education to overcome the crushing consequences of birth and circumstance for human development. Residual mental poverty. The aim – not social mobility, but *human* mobility. 90% of Westerners are underdeveloped as human beings. 10% are poorly developed. Unused capacity of the human mind and human society.

12. *Ad* 3(d)(social future) – the surrender to *science*. Default hegemony of technology. Human species-future ruled by the triumphalist cleverness of science and engineering, science's brilliant co-worker. Pathetic self-abnegating of humanism ('the humanities'). Humanism makes possible the society that makes science and engineering possible.

13. *Average experience of education as it is*. *Primary*: literacy to read advertisements (H.G. Wells, 1926) and manage computers; some self-discipline; some social skills; social consciousness mostly from outside (mass media). *Secondary*: testing skills; peer-group social skills; no life-long knowledge; social consciousness mostly from outside. *University*: testing skills; some professional skills; some rhetorical skills; minimal life-long knowledge; peer-group social skills; social consciousness mostly from outside; disillusionment with the life of the mind; stifling of individuality, originality, creativity, mental energy, enthusiasm. *Thereafter*: education not publically organised.

14. Universities are engines of higher dis-education, mindless participants in human de-civilising. They should be closed until they can be re-founded on new principles. Mass production of books and articles is not high culture.

15. **Judgment II. Education in its present form, at all three levels, is a waste of time and public money. It is damaging the young. It is threatening the survival of high culture, and hence of civilisation at its best. It is preventing human beings and human society from becoming what they could be.**

16. And, all the while, worldwide social chaos and intellectual atrophy and spiritual alienation condition a future ruled by mind-surpassing mind-made systems (religion, capitalism, science).

(The cavalry of the educational-industrial complex to the rescue! *Moocademia. Mass open online courses.* The university joins the global entertainment industry. A cultural imperialism of semi-literacy meets the universal thirst for human self-development and the desperate need for a new enlightening of the human species-mind. And now: *Open Education Resources* – OER – a Gutenberg galaxy for a post-Gutenberg world.)

C. WHAT EDUCATION MIGHT IDEALLY BE

17. Humanity's two habitats. We use and modify the *natural* world. We create the *human* world.

18. True education is a mental universe of two universalisms. *Natural universalism* (naturalism) aims to know all that can be known about the natural world, and its usefulness to humanity. *Human universalism* (humanism) aims to know all that can be known about the human world and the human mind, with a view to human self-perfecting and human self-evolving.

19. Holistic *naturalism*: from the Universal to the particular to the Universal to the particular to the Universal... Natural science understanding and using the *natural* world.

Holistic *humanism*: all animals do science. The *human* animal *studies itself* as a *thinking animal* = the Humanities. Humanism re-making the *human* world in which science happens.

20. Ideal education = learning everything about something, something about everything. Vertical (deep) and horizontal (wide) knowledge. Improving the functioning of the human *brain*. *Human mobility*.

21. **The true function of a university is to generate and to communicate ideas at the highest level about our two worlds – the natural world and the human world.**

Francis Bacon – mastermind of a new humanism. Isaac Newton – mastermind of a new scientism. *Alumni cantabridgienses*. Shoulders of giants. Seeing further. Special responsibility on those of us in this University.

22. Imagining the Universalist University of the future. **UniU.** Assisted self-education from the cradle to the grave. New *Quinquiviums*.

Five *Faculties of Humanism*: universal anthropology (in the Kantian sense: total study of the human being). **Philosophy** – studying the *human mind*. **History** – studying how the *human world* has been made. **Culture** – human *self-exploring* through literature, art, music – including languages as a cross-temporal and cross-cultural key to human self-exploring. **Politics** – studying the structure and functioning of *human society*, including law. **Human naturalism** – studying humanity as an integral part of the *natural universe*: physics, physiology, biology, history of science...

Five *Faculties of Naturalism*. **Mathematics. Matter. Life. Brain. Machine.**

23. Education as the medium of a self-empowering universalism in the making of a better human future and the further self-evolving of the human species.

WITNESSES

24. 'What mode is there of determining whether a thing is fit to exist, without first considering what purposes it exists for, and whether it be still capable of fulfilling them?' J.S. Mill, 'Coleridge' (1840).

25. 'You are right to say that it is impossible to form an *Émile*, but I cannot believe that you take the book which bears this name for a true treatise on education. It is rather a philosophical work on the principle... *man is naturally good*.' It is 'intended to show how vice and error, alien to his constitution, are introduced to it from outside and imperceptibly distort it.'

J-J. Rousseau, about his *Émile* (1762), in letters to two correspondents.

Plato's *Republic*: '... *le plus beau traité d'éducation qu'on ait jamais fait*.' *Émile*, bk. 1.
human being v. citizen; Socrates v. Protagoras; Athens v. Sparta.

26. 'The fact is, our process of universal education is to-day so uncouth, so psychologically barbaric, that it is the most terrible menace to the existence of our race. We seize hold of our children, and by parrot-compulsion we force into them a set of mental tricks. By unnatural and unhealthy compulsion we force them into a certain amount of cerebral activity. And then, after a few years, with a certain number of windmills in their heads, we turn them loose, like so many inferior Don Quixotes, to make a mess of life. All that they have learnt in their heads has no reference at all to their dynamic souls. The windmills spin and spin in a wind of words...'

D.H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922).

27. 'For there is no doubt that in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards...destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans.'

T.S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948).

28. 'But now necessity [*Bedürfnis*] rules, and makes declining humanity bend under its tyrannical yoke. Now utility [*Nutzen*] is the great ideal which all powers must serve and all talents must honour. Weighed in that mighty scale, the spiritual value of Art has no weight and, robbed of its invigorating strength, it steals away from the bustling market-place of present times. And the spirit of philosophical inquiry itself takes from one area after another the power of imagination, and the boundaries of Art are reduced as the frontiers of knowledge/science [*Wissenschaft*] are extended.

F. Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind* (1794), Second Letter (*tr.*, PJA).

29. '...I may add my very decided opinion that no system of education which is governed entirely, or even mainly, by examinations...can ever be otherwise than a bad discipline. Intellectual education requires that the mind should be habitually employed in the acquisition of knowledge, with a certain considerable degree of clear insight and independent activity. This is universally provoked by the daily teaching of the lecture-room, with the sympathy and interest that the mutual action of various minds produces; it is not necessarily or greatly promoted by the prospect of an examination.'

W. Whewell, written evidence to the Royal Commission on Cambridge University (1852).

30. 'The true end of Man...is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole.'
'Science changes much around us, but not within us.'

W. von Humboldt (1767-1835), *The Limits of State Action* (1792/1854). *Erziehung* (bringing up children: John Locke, *Thoughts on Education*: 1693). *Ausbildung* (training in schools). *Bildung* (Humboldt: self-perfecting of the human being).

'We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all.'

'Perhaps one day this civilisation will produce a culture.'

L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921/1922); *Culture and Value* (1947/1977).

31. 'And I think we must not take every great physicist – or other "ist" – for an apostle, but be ready to suspect him of some crudity concerning relations that lie outside his special studies, if his exposition strands us on results that seem to stultify the most ardent, massive experience of mankind, and hem up the best part of our feelings in stagnation.'

George Eliot, letter to Mrs Ponsonby (aka Richard Dawkins)(1875).

32. ‘[The purpose of the university is] to make capable and cultivated human beings.’

‘The most obvious part of the value of scientific instruction, the mere information it gives, speaks for itself. We are born into a world which we have not made; a world whose phenomena take place according to fixed laws of which we do not bring any knowledge into the world with us. In such a world we are appointed to live, and in it all our work is to be done. Our whole working power depends on knowing the laws of the world – in other words, the properties of the things we have to work with, and to work among, and to work upon...’

‘...To these studies I would add International Law; which I decidedly think should be taught in all universities, and should form part of all liberal education. The need of it is far from being limited to diplomatists and lawyers; it extends to every citizen... He is not a good man who, without a protest, allows wrong to be committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject. It depends on the habit of attending to and looking into public transactions, and on the degree of information and solid judgment respecting them that exists in the community, whether the conduct of the nation as a nation, both within itself and towards others, shall be selfish, corrupt, and tyrannical, or rational and enlightened, just and noble.’

J.S. Mill, *Inaugural Address as President of the University of St Andrews* (1867).

33. ‘The venerable Professor of Worldly Wisdom was one of those who carried most weight in the university, and had the reputation of having done more perhaps than any other living man to suppress any kind of originality. “It is not our business,” he said, “to help students to think for themselves. Surely this is the very last thing which one who wishes them well should encourage them to do. Our duty is to ensure that they shall think as we do, or at any rate, as we hold it expedient to say we do.” In some respects, however, he was thought to hold somewhat radical opinions, for he was President of the Society for the Suppression of Useless Knowledge, and for the Completer Obliteration of the Past.’

‘Is it not plain that the machines are gaining ground upon us, when we reflect on the increasing number of those who are bound down to them as slaves, and of those who devote their whole souls to the advancement of the mechanical kingdom?...Are we not ourselves creating our successors in the supremacy of the earth? daily adding to the beauty and delicacy of their organisation, daily giving them greater skill and supplying more and more of that self-regulating self-acting power which will be better than any intellect?’ S. Butler, *Erewhon* (1872).

34. *Brief history of the self-forming of the human mind. tat tvam asi (thou art that – Upanishads). Social mind (Mesopotamia). γνῶθι σεαυτὸν (ancient Greece). Ideal reality (Plato. Mo Tzu). Metanoia (New Testament). Self-creating human being (Italian Renaissance). Knowledge is power (Baconian revolution – 17th century). *Écrasez l’infâme* (French Enlightenment – 18th century). Nothing is impossible (socio-economic triumphalism – 19th century). Everything is possible (scientific-technological triumphalism – 20th century). Social Idealism (Allott – 21st century) – re-making the human world with *ideas* and *ideals*.*

35. *General conclusion.* An historical pattern. Social change and educational innovation. From the past to the future.

- (a) Rousseau (*Émile*, 1762) – first the human being, then the citizen (following Plato).
- ↓
- (b) French Declaration of the Rights of *Man* and the *Citizen*, 1789 (freedom and equality under the law).
- ↓
- (c) Kant (*Struggle of the Faculties*, 1798) – education of a free people, not mere servants of the state.
- ↓
- (d) *Circa* 1800 – a new *humanism* – Humboldt, Niethammer, Schiller, Fichte, Lessing, Hegel (UK – Wm. Godwin, James Mill – countless others all over Europe).
- ↓
- (e) New kind of university – Wm. Humboldt, Berlin, 1810.
- ↓
- (f) UK – Reform Act 1832 – new voters → new and renewed public schools and grammar schools – educating new members of the ruling classes.
- ↓
- (g) UK – London University, 1826/1836 (J.S. Mill and others) – negating the (then) awfulness of Oxford and Cambridge; reflecting the Scottish universities of the 18th century.
- ↓
- (h) UK – second Reform Act 1867 – new voters → Elementary Education Act 1870 – ‘we must educate our masters’.
- ↓
- (i) *Circa* 1870 – fundamental reform of Oxford and Cambridge – beginning of the admission of women students.
- ↓
- (j) UK – General Election 1945 (virtual revolution). Welfare state. Popular culture.
- ↓
- (k) UK – Education Act 1944 → comprehensive schools.
- ↓
- (l) *Circa* 2000 – Internet civilisation – new new humanist education required – new university required – 1800 again.
- ↓

(m) The challenge posed by the 18th-century Enlightenment and remaining with us to this day –

scientism v. humanism



1800 – profound crisis of the European mind – symbolic failure: Goethe.

1900 – profound crisis of the European mind – symbolic failure: Freud.

2000 – profound crisis of the human mind – symbolic failure: DNA.

<http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/index.php?pageid=1057>

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HEARREADTHINKTM = HRT = UNPOWERPOINT

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