

Introduction

The chapters that follow were all written under the patronage of the Gordon Cook Foundation to which thanks and appreciation are due. Apart from the first two essays, which address very general issues about the nature of values and about the possibility of education in them, the chapters consist of revised versions of Victor Cook Memorial Lectures delivered in the universities of St Andrews, London (Kings College), Cambridge, Aberdeen, Oxford, Glasgow and Leeds.

Victor Cook died in his ninety-third year on 15th March 1990. He was born in the autumn of 1897 to a family associated with a successful engineering company in Aberdeen in the North East of Scotland. From an early age he wished to be a teacher, but the premature death of his father put an end to this ambition as it fell to him to carry on in the family business. He never married and in due course sold his interest in the firm and devoted the remainder of his life to promoting the cause of his intellectual child, *values education*. In 1974 he established an educational charity – *The Gordon Cook Foundation* – bearing the name of a brother who predeceased him. This creation has survived its founder's own death and continues the task of promoting values education.

Victor Cook's personal contribution to the aim of education in the field with which he was most concerned took two main forms: first, producing classroom material for young children in which values, particularly moral ones, might be developed; and second, lobbying politicians, administrators and educationalists in order to have programmes of this sort adopted within schools in Scotland and beyond. Unlike some recent theoretical approaches to the subject, Cook's idea of linking values and education was not that of purportedly uncommitted analysis.

There has been an interest within educational theory and schooling (originating in North America) in the practice of drawing chil-

dren's attention to the evaluative presuppositions of what they say and do. This activity of 'values clarification' is related to the post-enlightenment ideals of autonomy, positive freedom and empowerment. The assumption is that it is good, in some formal sense, to know what values you are committed to; but this does not extend to the claim that certain substantive values are good, or that some are better than others. Victor Cook, by contrast, clearly did think that some ways of going on are better than alternatives. Furthermore he believed that those whom society charges with the education of its children have a duty (not a mere permission) to introduce pupils into these ways of going on. In other words he favoured teaching *in* and *of* values rather than an agnostic study *about* them. Clearly a large number of conceptual and normative questions arise at this point, and it is to the credit of the trustees of the Foundation that Cook founded that they recognise the need for research into these questions and have been willing to support it.

The first two of the following chapters are intended to provide a general theoretical framework to which subsequent issues might be related. They derive from the suggestion made by Dr. William Gath-er-er, former Chairman of the Gordon Cook Foundation, that the authors write on basic philosophical aspects of values and values education in a style suitable for an interested public, be they educationalists, teachers, students or general readers. In 'The Nature of Values' it is argued that the widespread assumption that talk of values in no more than the expression of personal preferences reveals the influence of a philosophical perspective that is neither obligatory nor even compelling. On the contrary, a plausible view of the world and of the place of humankind within it shows values to be implicit in the natures of things. In 'Problems of Values Education' something of this defence of objectivity is assumed, and starting from the distinction between *instrumental* and *intrinsic* value various educational philosophies are expounded and evaluated. Central to this latter discussion is the question of liberalism, and it is made clear that a range of possible positions exists within a broad understanding of the liberal tradition, not all of which are equally viable.

The authors of these opening chapters (Haldane and Carr) share the same broad philosophical outlook so far as concerns the status of values and the possibility of grounding educational policy decisions in the evaluative facts of human nature. They do not suppose, however, that this makes the task of thinking clearly about educational aims an easy one. On the contrary the conclusion that there are rele-

vant facts about values imposes a discipline upon practical deliberations that is lacking if values are conceived of as no more than expressions of subjective preference.

The issues and arguments addressed by the various distinguished authors whose revised lecture texts comprise the remaining chapters will be more or less familiar to different readers. Philosophers, political and cultural theorists, historians of ideas, art critics, educationalists, and practitioners of other academic and cultural disciplines will all find things of interest and significance to them. But it is equally important that the general educated reader should engage with these discussions and they have been written with that purpose very much in mind. The lecturers selected their own topics for study, offered their analyses and made their cases. One could, therefore, read the several chapters independently. However, they also exhibit continuity of general theme and of broad outlook, as well as involving a movement in the direction of increasing specificity, which gives them a unity and an order.

Lord Quinton is concerned with 'radical' challenges to high culture as these direct themselves against the literary canon, the traditional intellectual values of enquiry and expression, and the idea of objective truth, and he considers the implications of this attack for education, before offering a robust defence of culture and its values. Following this, Anthony O'Hear takes up the central question for all philosophical discussions of value, asking whether something is good because we desire or approve of it or whether the assumption of the objectivity of goodness is necessary in order to make sense of our valuing anything. He then connects the idea that value transcends our preferences with a need for education to create a sense of the good and the true in advance of promoting critical and sceptical attitudes. From this conclusion he proceeds to consider the structure of education and the place within this of culture and tradition. In one sense, therefore, the discussion comes full circle but since O'Hear turns the direction of his argument towards specifics of current educational policy and practice one may better say that the movement is a spiralling one.

Lady Warnock and Richard Pring refer back to some of the issues and arguments of the previous lectures and continue the examination of educational thought and practice, now directing attention to the specifics of schooling. Each has things to say about the history of UK government policy in the last thirty years; and each finds failings in the underlying social and educational philosophy, and inadequa-

cies in the organisation of education and teacher training. Both write from a background of practice in schools and universities, and as philosophers interested in educational theory. Thus as well as learning a good deal about the history of educational policy, readers will find themselves drawn into philosophical reflections about the nature of education and the adequacy of the liberal/vocational contrast and about ideas of educational needs and of good teaching.

The issues addressed by Jonathan Sacks and Stewart Sutherland are intellectually challenging and clearly important for the future of cultural thought in general and for educational policy and practice in particular. Dr Sacks is an academic and, as Chief Rabbi, a religious leader. Lord Sutherland is also an academic and an academic leader. Between them they bring to bear a good deal of thought and experience about questions of value and education. Nonetheless, they are frank in giving emphasis in their lectures to the difficulties facing us as members of societies that are generally pluralistic, often atomised, and frequently sceptical.

Jonathan Sacks observes a contrast between political society and civil society. Drawing on the myth of Genesis he makes the point that from earliest times it has been clear that mankind cannot live alone but equally finds it difficult to live together. The tradition of modern political thought has made much of the idea of the social contract but, as Sacks points out, this tends to assume competitive relationships and to reduce sociality to mutual self-interest. In contrast, there is the originally Jewish notion of *covenant* in which individuals are bound together through moral relationships into forms of community. The problem for us today is that community seems ever more necessary, yet without common religious or moral commitments ever more difficult to achieve; at the same time, however, people feel uncertain about the very idea of moral and religious values.

This general theme is picked up in the first of Sutherland's lectures, which is concerned with diagnosing the problems we face in trying to relate to each other the concepts of education, values and religion. He stresses the importance of the fact that educational practice rests upon educational philosophy — however unreflective and fragmentary the latter may be. The task, then, is to offer something better to those charged with the education of our children. While Sacks begins in the past and looks from there forward, Sutherland starts with a description of the twentieth century as one of 'upheaval, disruption and uncertainty in its deepest social and intellectual foundations'. He then seeks the sources of this and traces them

to three features or trends: cultural pluralism, the fragmentation of knowledge, and moral atomisation.

Lord Sutherland notes that educational philosophies have typically rested on accounts of human nature. The question is whether anything of this sort can be fashioned nowadays. He explores in somewhat greater detail lines of ethical thought mentioned by Jonathan Sacks and then proceeds to argue for an account of mankind as essentially reflective and self-interpreting. This introduces the prospect of a form of humanistic spirituality and, in that broad sense, he offers a reworking of the idea that the aim of education is the development of the soul.

The issues addressed by Mary Midgley and Bryan Appleyard are of equally profound importance, concerning nothing less than our understanding of human nature and of how our knowledge of the material world bears upon our historical conception of ourselves as free subjects guided in part by judgments of value. The general significance and contemporary relevance of such issues needs no comment, but they have particular importance when we consider the aims of education and the relative importance of scientific knowledge and humane understanding.

Mary Midgley is a philosopher of renown who has spent a lifetime reflecting upon the relationship between our sense of values and our animal nature. Bryan Appleyard is a prominent journalist and social commentator who combines a lively appreciation of what is current with a considered view of what has been achieved by, and is of lasting worth, in the thought and practice of the past. Between them Midgley and Appleyard offer an interesting combination of ideas about the assumptions and implications of styles of thought that do not just draw from science but assume that science is the only credible approach to understanding human life.

It was noted that the lectures gathered here were first given at various leading British universities. More precisely, each set began in St Andrews and then travelled to other locations. The idea of the series was conceived by the Centre for Philosophy and Public Affairs (expanded in title in 2001 to include explicit reference to *Ethics*) and then implemented by it. The Centre was established by the University of St Andrews in 1984 with the twin purposes of promoting the place of philosophy in the examination of issues of public importance and of supporting research into those branches of philosophy that are concerned directly and indirectly with questions of value and action.

Although the Centre has been involved in a variety of activities it has to this point developed two main vehicles for the pursuit of its aims: first, a visiting fellowship scheme which has brought academics from many parts of the world to St Andrews to engage in research; and second, a public lecture and seminar programme. There is a special reason why a centre dedicated to the aims of ethics, philosophy and public affairs, located within an ancient Scottish university, should be an appropriate setting for public lectures of this sort, for there is within Scotland a tradition of publicly debating issues of great importance for moral and civic life; a tradition which is made possible by, and contributes to, the continuing existence of an educated public.

Speaking in another lecture series, in acknowledgement of the work of the most important post-war British philosopher of education, *viz.* Richard Peters, Alasdair MacIntyre observed the following:

It is in the eighteenth century that the modern concept of an educated public first finds application; and the example of such a public which has most and immediate relevance to our own concerns is that of the public created by the remaking of the Scottish Universities in the first half of that century. (MacIntyre (1987), pp. 17–18)

MacIntyre subsequently went on to extend his treatment of the theme in his Edinburgh Gifford Lectures *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* (MacIntyre, 1990). In the original lecture he poses the question 'What conditions are required for the existence of such a public' and answers that these are of three kinds, of which the first and most important is that there

be a tolerably large body of individuals, educated both into the habit and the opportunity of active rational debate, to whose verdict the intellectual protagonists are making appeal. These individuals must understand the questions being debated as having practical import for generally important aspects of their shared social existence. And in their communication with one another they must recognise themselves as constituting a public.

The aim of addressing such a public is what lay behind the creation of the Centre's public lectures series; and it became clear to me as Director of the Centre that one way in which Victor Cook's educational interests might be recognized and advanced, and in which a suitable tribute to him could be offered would be through a series of public lectures on various themes gathered under the general heading of *Values and Education*.

The idea of holding such lectures in Scotland's oldest university, in which the history of disputing 'questions' of philosophical import goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, added a fitting dimension which I hope would have been pleasing to Victor Cook. But the primary aim was not to construct a well-situated and elegant memorial, so much as to have values in relation to education discussed in a spirit of which Cook would have approved, even if the discussion might sometimes be couched in unfamiliar terms. Those terms would be broadly philosophical ones, but in order to ensure a high quality of discussion, intelligible and appealing to an educated public, it was important to have well-qualified lecturers to whom the issues mattered, and to increase the opportunity for members of that public, as well as academics, to receive and respond to the lectures. The latter aim led to the practice of delivering the lectures in second and third venues, and to the Centre's producing the original texts in booklet form. With the publication of this volume the ideas first set forth in lecture halls may be received by a yet wider audience.

It is fitting that this volume also marks the launch of the series *St Andrews Studies in Philosophy and Public Affairs*, and also fitting that this series should begin at a point when the Centre embarks on its twenty-first year. Whatever developments lie ahead, one may be sure that ethical and philosophical questions will not diminish or fade from interest and it is equally certain that issues of education will remain prominent among the concerns not only of academics but also of the public generally.

It is very much to be hoped that readers will take up, from whatever standpoint, the matters discussed below and make their own contributions to the ongoing debate about values and education. In once again thanking the Foundation for supporting the idea of the lectures and its implementation and for granting permission for the publication of these texts I must emphasise that the views expressed in the are not necessarily those of the Trustees of the Gordon Cook Foundation.¹

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[1] Some of the authors have incorporated material from their lectures in books, in particular Jonathan Sacks (1997) and Mary Midgley (2001). Their wish to do this has been pleasing to the Centre and the Foundation in as much as it tends to confirm the latter's estimate of the aptness of encouraging enquiry in the field of values and education. In bringing together all sixteen lectures the present volume highlights some of the central issues in that field and we hope this may encourage further examination of them.