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Cloete, Rohan David

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THE 'REPORT OF THE WORK COMMITTEE : EDUCATION PRINCIPLES AND POLICY' : A CRITIQUE OF ITS ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE AIMS OF EDUCATION.

Rohan David Cloete

A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Johannesburg 1986.

ABSTRACT

This Research Report attempts a critical examination of the assumptions concerning the nature of education that underlie the report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy', a sub-committee instituted by the Human Sciences Research Council Main Committee for the investigation into education.

In Chapter One the argument is developed that the report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' both fails to attain the scientific status attributed to it by its authors and obscures certain normative assumptions about the nature and aims of education which underpin the report. It is argued that underlying the report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' is the assumption that the central aim of education is the meeting of the economic needs of society.

Chapter Two develops the argument that to restrict the aims of education to meeting the economic needs of society results in a restricted notion of education. A broader notion of the nature and aims of education is developed by arguing for the inclusion of both intrinsic and moral aims among the central aims of education.

It is concluded that insofar as the report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' reflects a restricted notion of the nature and aims of education it fails in its attempts to provide adequate guiding principles for a feasible education policy in the RSA.

DECLARATION

I declare that this Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

.....
(Name of candidate)
..27th.. day of ..March....., 19..86..

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INTRODUCTION

In June 1980 the South African Cabinet requested the Human Sciences Research Council to undertake an investigation into 'all facets of education in the RSA.'[1] Part of this mandate was to recommend 'guiding principles for a feasible education policy in the RSA in order to

- allow for the realization of the inhabitants' potential,
- promote economic growth in the RSA, and
- improve the quality of life of all the inhabitants of the country.'[2]

It was felt necessary to formulate principles for the provision of education, not only because it was the first element in the Cabinet request, but also because the activities of each of the sub-committees, convened to investigate various aspects of education, would be affected by them. The 'Work Committee: education principles and policy' was created to formulate these principles.

Although a number of critical papers have been written in response to the 'Main Committee' and various 'Work Committee' reports, (see Selected Bibliography) insufficient attention has yet been paid to examining

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[1] Report of the Work Committee: Education principles and policy, Principles for the provision of education in the RSA. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1981, p.1.

[2] Ibid. p.1.

the assumptions about the nature and aims of education that underlie the work of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy'. This Research Report will attempt a critical consideration of the assumption of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' (hereafter referred to as the 'Work Committee') that the central aim of education is meeting the economic needs of society. It will be suggested that to regard an economic aim as the central aim of education leads to a restricted notion of education. Broader aims and a broader notion of education will be proposed. The conclusion will be reached that, in view of the strong case that can be made for broader central aims and a broader notion of education than those implied by the 'Work Committee' report, it is difficult to regard the 'Work Committee' report as realising the terms of the Cabinet request.

In order to develop this argument the Research Report will be divided into two chapters. Chapter One develops the claim that the 'Work Committee' assumed the meeting of economic needs to be the central aim of education and argues that this restricted view of the aims of education results in a restricted notion of education. The first section of Chapter One explains why the report of the 'Work Committee' obscures rather than illuminates its underlying rationale. An overview of the procedure adopted by the 'Work Committee' in drawing up the report will be given and it will be suggested that the search for consensus, as undertaken by the 'Work Comittee', led to assumptions about the aims of education being suppressed. One such assumption is that the aim of education is the meeting of needs.

The second section of Chapter One will question whether consensus, as it was achieved by the 'Work Committee', can be equated with scientific objectivity. The assumption by the 'Work Committee' that the aim of education is the meeting of needs will be examined. The claim that a 'needs-based' view of the aims of education makes scientific objectivity impossible, will be noted. It will be suggested that the obscuring of underlying normative assumptions about the aims of education, rather than scientific objectivity results from the search for consensus as undertaken by the 'Work Committee'.

Section three traces the procedure by which the 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA' were arrived at through a detailed consideration of the development of three of the final principles. A strong emphasis on economic considerations will be shown to underlie the report of the 'Work Committee'. It will be argued that this emphasis is such as to suggest that the 'Work Committee' regarded the meeting of economic needs as a central aim of education.

In section four it will be argued that a stronger claim regarding the aims of education can be implied from the 'Work Committee' report, viz. that meeting the economic needs of society is the central aim of education. This restricted view regarding the aims of education arises from the belief that education can take place through training. It will be shown that the 'Work Committee' endorsed the view that education can take place through training and it will then be argued that while similarities exist between education and training, to

equate the two is to hold a restricted notion of the nature of education. It will be claimed that the report of the 'Work Committee' reflects such a view of the nature of education.

Chapter Two of this Research Report moves beyond the restricted notion of education that is implied by the 'Work Committee' report to suggest both broader aims and a broader notion of education. The conclusion, as noted above, will be reached that in view of the strong case that can be made for further central aims and a broader notion of education than those implied by the Work Committee report, it is difficult to regard the 'Work Committee' report as realising the terms of the Cabinet request.

Section one of Chapter Two will briefly examine certain aspects of an economic aim in education that were ignored by the 'Work Committee'. An attempt will be made to clarify what is meant by the term an 'economic aim' in education. A brief overview will be given of certain arguments in favour of an economic aim in education. It will be suggested that what is common to all such arguments is the assumption that education should, in some measure, contribute to the quality of life of the individual undergoing the process. This assumption regarding the purpose of the education process will be accepted and will be used to support the argument, developed in this Research Report, for including not only an economic aim, but also two further aims among the central aims of education.

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At the conclusion of section one it will be claimed that there is more to the quality of life of an individual than simply material well-being and that broader central aims of education are necessary if certain other dimensions to the quality of life of an individual are to be realised through education. Section two develops an argument for the inclusion of intrinsic aims among the central aims of education. The argument of R.S. Peters that the aims of education are intrinsic, will be examined. It will be suggested that 'conceptual frameworks' which, Peters argues, are developed by an education process the aims of which are intrinsic offer a further dimension to the quality of life of the individual. However, it will be noted that the inclusion of both intrinsic and economic aims among the central aims of education may give rise to conflict. Where the central aim of education is perceived as being the meeting of the economic needs of society, a tendency toward unquestioning acceptance of economic goals is developed by an individual undergoing such an education process. On the other hand an education process, the aims of which are intrinsic, develops in the individual the inclination to question given norms and values. A moral aim in education will be suggested as a means of reconciling conflicting implications that may arise from including both economic and intrinsic aims among the central aims of education.

The reconciling of the above-noted conflict is not the only reason for including a moral aim among the central aims of education. In section three an argument for the inclusion of a moral aim among the aims of education is developed. Peters's view of morality based on 'fundamental principles' will be examined and

accepted as a useful starting point for developing an argument for including a moral aim among the central aims of education. Four fundamental principles, based on Peters's work, will be suggested and it will be argued that these principles not only suggest a means of reconciling the conflict, noted above, but draw attention to the 'social dimension' of the quality of life of the individual. It will be claimed that as the social dimension of a person's life has direct bearing on the overall quality of his life, an education process, the purpose of which is improving the quality of an individual's life, cannot ignore so important a dimension.

The conclusion will be reached that insofar as there are grounds for including further aims, additional to the economic aim assumed by the 'Work Committee' to be the central aim of education, the report of the 'Work Committee' can be regarded as being based on a notion of education which is restricted and inadequate. Consequently it is difficult to regard the report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' as realising the terms of the Cabinet request to recommend 'guiding principles for a feasible education policy'.

CHAPTER ONE

I

The suggestion, made in the introduction to this Research Report, that the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' regarded the meeting of the economic needs of society to be the central aim of education, requires substantiation. A reading of the eleven principles that were finally accepted by the 'Main Committee' (see Appendix I) does not indicate the economic emphasis in the rationale underlying them, as the procedure adopted by the 'Work Committee' for seeking consensus led to normative assumptions about the nature and aims of education being obscured.

The report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' is a consensus document in the sense that it represents the common ground between interest groups that were involved in its formulation. Consensus was, however, not sought through initially reaching agreement on the nature or aims of education. Instead, an extraordinary process was entered into in which the principles were rephrased increasingly blandly until, by the final draft, they were innocuous enough to win general acceptance. It would appear that the members of the 'Work Committee' saw nothing strange in embarking upon the project of providing 'a basis on which a system of education ... can be built'[3] without

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[3] Report of the Work Committee: Education principles and policy, Principles for the provision of education in the RSA. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1981, p.ix.

CHAPTER ONE

I

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[3] Report of the Work Committee: Education principles and policy, Principles for the provision of education in the RSA. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1981, p.ix.

first reaching agreement on either the nature or aims of education. An examination of the procedure adopted by the 'Work Committee' is suggestive, not only of the extreme lengths to which the 'Work Committee' went to obtain the form of consensus noted above, but also explains how certain assumptions that underlie the report came to be suppressed.

The initial step taken by the 'Work Committee' was to convene a seminar in order to exchange preliminary ideas on principles that should 'underpin education in the RSA.'[4] Those attending the seminar were divided into four groups, each of which was responsible for drafting a set of principles that should 'underpin' education. From the principles that were suggested, four fields (see p.19) on which consensus had been reached were accepted by the 'Work Committee' for consideration in drawing up the draft principles.[5]

The next stage in the process of arriving at principles for the provision of education, was that a draft set of seventeen principles together with an explanatory 'elucidation' for each principle, was drawn up by the Chairman of the 'Work Committee' and submitted for discussion at its second meeting. Using the Chairman's draft principles as the basis for discussion, 'the principles were refined in the sense that they were defined more concisely and the concepts were extended.'[6] Consensus having been reached on nineteen

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4 Ibid. p.2.

5 Ibid. p.10.

6 Ibid. p.22.

principles and amended elucidations, these were submitted to the 'Main Committee' for comment.

The 'Main Committee' debated this first draft by the 'Work Committee' and offered written comments on the nineteen principles submitted. As a result of 'divergence in preceding comments [of the 'Main Committee'] which hampered the search for a synthesis'[7] the 'Work Committee', in its quest for consensus, decided to formulate the principles even more tersely, i.e. to reduce them to 'merely the idea inherent in the principle.'[8] After discussion, the 'Work Committee' then produced a second draft of fourteen principles which, together with an 'explanation of words and elucidations', was submitted to the 'Main Committee'.

The 'Main Committee' made alterations to both the wording and the number of principles, reducing the total to eleven. These eleven principles were then submitted to the 'Work Committee: Education system planning' for comment. As a result of suggestions made by this committee, the 'Work Committee' amended five principles and added a further one, in order accommodate the suggestions made by the 'Work Committee: Education system planning'. Consensus having been reached between the ideas of the two work committees, it was now decided to submit the twelve principles, together with elucidatory sections, 'to a widely representative spectrum of bodies ... [as] part of the scientific "modus operandi" of the

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[7] Ibid. p.55.

[8] Ibid. p.55.

Investigation.'[9] Among the 250 groups and individuals to whom the twelve principles were submitted for comment were universities, training colleges, churches, welfare councils and business institutions.

At their fourth meeting the 'Work Committee' reviewed the comments received from the above groups. An attempt was made to accommodate suggestions by altering the wording in ten of the principles. The principles, now in their fourth draft, were submitted to the 'Main Committee'.

The 'Main Committee' combined a number of principles, made alterations to a further [illegible]e principles and having reached consensus, put [illegible]ward the eleven principles that resulted from the process as the final 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA'.

A determination to reach consensus clearly characterised the efforts of the 'Work Committee'. Consensus was regarded by the 'Work Committee' as a foundation upon which a claim for scientific status for the report could be founded. Scientific method was seen to require that 'vested interests' and 'ideologies' be eradicated from the report.[10] It would appear that the 'Work Committee' believed that, in the sear[illegible] for consensus, 'values' and 'norms' would be excised and only facts would remain.[11]

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9 Ibid. p.87.

10 Ibid. p.55.

11 Ibid. p.10.

The above noted search for consensus reflects the belief that facts and values can be separated. This belief mirrors a rigid positivist view that the fact-value distinction, attributed to the natural sciences, can be applied in the social sciences. The belief that a fact-value distinction is possible in the social sciences is explicitly stated by the 'Work Committee'.

> The Work Committee: Educational principles and policy would, as befit (sic) a scientific research committee, only be interested in facts and would therefore not involve itself in existing approaches or views, be they systematic, political or anything else.[12]

This report will not attempt a critique of positivism, but it should be noted that statements regarding the nature and aims of education involve a normative content and cannot be formulated in a vocabulary which omits normative concepts. Issues central to the nature and aims of education such as 'Who ought to be educated?' and 'What ought the content of education to be?' can not be settled without reference to norms and values.

The obsession with consensus appears to have created its own dynamic. Driven by their determination to reach consensus and through this 'scientific objectivity', the 'Work Committee' was forced to ignore normative questions such as those concerning the aims

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12 Ibid. p.10.

and nature of education, as such concepts were seen as 'hampering the search for synthesis.' However, far from being excluded from the report, values and normative concepts were simply assumed. The 'Work Committee', believing that normative concepts had been eradicated, failed to recognise its own underlying assumptions about the nature and aims of education. These assumptions, because they were not recognised by the 'Work Committee', were not substantiated.

An example of the type of assumption made by the 'Work Committee' was that the aim of education was assumed to be the meeting of needs. This assumption, however, was not acknowledged by the 'Work Committee', secure in the belief that consensus would eradicate value judgements.

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The belief expressed by the 'Work Committee' that consensus could be equated with scientific objectivity requires examination. That consensus could be equated with scientific method does not appear to have been questioned by the 'Work Committee'. Certainly no attempt is made to justify the priority given to the search for consensus in drawing up the principles. The report of the 'Work Committee' simply notes that 'the committee would accept the guidelines of the South African Plan for Research in the Human Sciences in respect of matters of procedure.'[13]

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13 Ibid. p.11.

The 'Work Committee's' claim to scientific objectivity is open to question. Firstly, regarding the linking of scientific method to the search for consensus, Michael Apple has observed that

> To link scientific rationality with consensus, however, is to do a disservice to science and shows a profound misunderstanding of the history of scientific disciplines ... the very normative structure of scientific communities tends towards scepticism and not necessarily toward intellectual consensus. The call for consensus, thus, is not a call for science.[14]

Secondly, it can be argued that the 'Work Committee' failed to meet a criterion of the positivist model which it appears to have accepted as its frame of reference for scientific objectivity. As noted above, the 'Work Committee' accepted the possibility of a fact-value distinction in the social sciences and believed that this distinction could be realised through the obtaining of consensus. However, normative concepts were not excluded from the report but were simply assumed and such concepts continue to underlie much of the report. One such assumption, which underlies the report and which undermines the 'Work Committee's' belief that values had been distinguished from facts in the report, is the assumption that the broad aim of education is the meeting of certain 'needs'.

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14 Kallaway, P. ed. Apartheid and Education. Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1984, p.378.

A noteworthy number of principles is justified in the elucidations in terms of needs, viz. the needs of the individual, developmental needs, economic needs and social needs. Of the seventeen draft principles proposed by the chairman of the 'Work Committee', no fewer than eight are justified to a greater or lesser degree in terms of some form of need. This tendency is even more pronounced in the first of the drafts proposed by the 'Work Committee', where of the nineteen principles suggested, only four are not justified in terms of needs.

Dearden has suggested that no needs-based argument in support of the aims of education can be 'value free'. He points out that there are certain criteria that have to be satisfied if the word 'need' is to be advisedly used.

> For a need to exist, something more is required than that a state of affairs conceived of be absent. A child may lack musical or artistic ability without thereby being placed in need of those talents. ... The absence of a state of affairs does not create a need unless this absence ought not to exist.[15]

Thus, according to Dearden, 'needs statements' are not value free but of necessity contain a normative element and presuppose agreement about norms and values. As

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15 Dearden, R.F. "Needs in Education." In Dearden, R.F., Hirst, P.H., and Peters, R.S. ed. Education and the Development of Reason. London :RKP, 1972, p.52.

long as debate is confined to how or whether a norm or value is obtained, questions can be settled objectively or empirically. However, when what is being questioned is the norm or value, empirical justification cannot be sought. Norms can

> neither be 'discovered' nor empirically refuted, since they indicate how things ought to be in various ways. ... Needs-statements considered at this level are rebutted, not by adducing certain facts, but by rejecting the norm being presupposed.[16]

To speak of needs in empirical terms is simply to presume implied norms and values. The tendency to presume norms and values implicit in a needs-based view of the aims of education, is widespread in the 'Work Committee' report, an example being in the elucidation to principle two in the draft prepared by the Chairman. Unity, it is argued, should supersede diversity as an administrative principle as the best way to meet the educational needs of the industrialised state.[17] That unity rather than diversity in educational administration is best suited to the requirements of an industrialised state can, one assumes, be empirically verified. However, the question of the desirability of the industralised state i.e. the norm, was ignored.

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16 Ibid. p.54.

17 Report of the Work Committee: Education principles and policy. op.cit. p.15.

A question that could be asked is why, if the 'Work Committee' was so determined to 'stick to the facts', a normative concept such as 'needs' was ever introduced in the report.

> The concept of 'need' is an attractive one in education because it seems to offer an escape from arguments about value by means of a straightforward appeal to the facts empirically determined by the expert ... It is false to suppose that judgments of value can thus be escaped. ... The deceptively value-free concept of 'need' does more than foster the illusion of being purely empirical, however, for its use often leaves obscure just what the values are that are being assumed.[18]

An example of the belief that needs-based statements in education are exempt from critical attention 'because they appeal to the facts empirically determined by experts,' is afforded in the elucidation to principle seven in the first draft by the 'Work Committee'.

> The principle of individualisation and differentiation is not only self-explanatory, but also as far as motivation is concerned, above suspicion.[19]

It has been suggested that the criteria for scientific status, accepted by the 'Work Committee', were those of a rigid positivism which was seen to require the

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18 Dearden, R.F. op. cit. p.62.

19 Report of the Work Committee: Education principles and policy, op.cit. p.37.

maintaining of a fact-value distinction throughout the report. The adoption of a rigid positivist framework by the 'Work Committee' resulted in the belief that norms and values had been eradicated from the report and accounts for the failure of the 'Work Committee' to justify the norms and values which underlie the 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA'. The introduction of needs-based arguments in support of the principles arrived at by the 'Work Committee' goes some way towards explaining why the fact-value distinction central to positivism could not be maintained and accounts for the inability of the 'Work Committee' to realise this criterion posed by its chosen frame of reference.

III

Although in their final form only one of the eleven principles has explicit economic significance, an analysis of the draft forms through which the principles and their elucidations passed before being accepted in their final form, shows a strong emphasis on economic considerations. This emphasis is so great as to suggest that the 'Work Committee', in drawing up the 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA', assumed the meeting of economic needs to be a central aim of education.

In order to substantiate this claim, the process through which three of the final principles were developed will be examined. Of the three principles to be examined, principle one in its final form, reads:

> Equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education, for every inhabitant, irrespective or race, colour, creed or sex, shall be the purposeful endeavour of the state.

Principle two reads:

> Education shall afford positive recognition of what is common as well as what is diverse in the religions and cultural way of life and the languages of the inhabitants.

The first part of principle four reads:

> The provision of education shall be directed in an educationally responsible manner to meet the needs of the individual ... .

Regarding the last-mentioned principle, the development of only the first half of the principle will be examined. It was only in the final draft that this section of the principle, concerning the needs of the individual, came to be linked to the second section of the principle which concerns the meeting of economic needs. The section that concerns the needs of the individual was thus developed as a separate principle throughout the process of arriving at the final principles and will be examined as such. As the second half of the principle has a clear economic relevance, little would be added to the argument by examining its development.

These three principles have been selected for discussion for two reasons: Firstly, in their final draft form they appear to have no economic relevance. Secondly, they can be regarded as central principles. The issue of equal opportunities in education is a matter of public debate in the RSA at present. The recognition of cultural diversity has underpinned the 'separation' that has characterised education in the RSA up to the present time, while 'the needs of the individual' is regarded in many quarters as a central educational issue.

As noted above, the initial step taken by the 'Work Committee' in drawing up the 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA' was to convene a seminar. Those attending were divided into four groups, each of which was responsible for drafting a set of principles that should underpin education. Of the principles drafted, four 'fields' were identified as common to all groups, viz. the potential of the child, equal opportunities in education, recognition of diversity and the needs of the country. The seminar also supplied the rationale behind each of the fields selected. A strong economic emphasis is evident in the rationale offered for three of the fields. Regarding the field 'the potential of the child', the interests of the pupil are conflated with what are perceived to be the needs of the country. For example, the report notes that formative education must be

> supplemented by diversification of educational opportunities for the development of individual abilities and aptitudes, taking into account the needs of the country.[20]

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[20] Ibid. p.6.

Similarly it is noted that

> A spectrum of educational facilities should be made available, taking into consideration the development of children's potential and the variety of needs of the community.[21]

An economic justification for 'equal opportunities in education' is offered.

> Access to the labour market originates from the education system. There should be equal opportunities for every child to enter the labour market after completing his education.[22]

That the emphasis on economic needs found in the seminar deliberations was carried through to the next stage in the process of arriving at principles for the provision of education, can be seen from an examination of the three principles under investigation. As noted above, the next step in the process of arriving at the final draft of the principles, was that seventeen principles, together with an elucidation giving the rationale behind each principle, were drawn up by the Chairman. These formed the basis for deliberations by the 'Work Committee' in preparing its first draft.

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21 Ibid. p.7.

22 Ibid.p.7.

The first principle, which related to equality of educational opportunities, was justified in the elucidation in terms of economic needs.

> On the one hand, the socio-economic development of the country demands the highest possible level of training; on the other hand, the country also reflects all the characteristics of a developing country and the concomitant problems of the quality of education. The result can only be a differentiated policy for education without detracting from the principle of equal opportunities.[23]

The second principle which relates to the need to recognise cultural diversity, was also given an economic perspective. In the elucidation the distinction between 'diverse' and 'common' was drawn out. What is noteworthy is that both diversity and commonality were viewed from an economic perspective. Thus the justification for unity in educational organisation was that 'Western orientated unity is a condition for the functioning of the industrial production process' while diversity was seen as a 'counter-balance for the massification of the industrial society.'[24]

In this draft the elucidation gives no rationale for the meeting of individual needs as a principle. However, the 'field', the 'potential of the child', which was drawn up at the seminar and which forms the basis of this principle, was supported on economic grounds, it being noted in the report that

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[23] Ibid. p.13.

[24] Ibid. p.15.

> Such general, formative education must be supplemented by a diversification of educational opportunities for the development of individual abilities and aptitudes, taking into account the needs of the country.[25]

At this early stage in the process of drawing up the principles, the principle of meeting the needs of the individual had not been linked to that of meeting economic needs. The linking of these two separate principles only occurred in the final draft.

A principle concerning the need for a system of national examinations was included among the seventeen principles which made up the Chairman's draft. This principle is worthy of note as it came to be included in the principle dealing with equality in educational opportunities in the final draft. A justification given for a system of national examinations was that 'In this way the economic, social and cultural potential of the country may be optimally safeguarded.'[26]

Using the Chairman's draft principles as the basis for discussion, 'the principles were refined in the sense that they were defined more concisely and the concepts were extended.'[27] These principles were then

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[25] Ibid. p.6.

[26] Ibid. p.18.

[27] Ibid. p.22.

submitted to the 'Main Committee' as a first draft by the 'Work Committee'. The economic bias found in both the seminar and Chairman's drafts is once again noticeable in the principles under investigation.

In the elucidation to the principle regarding equality of educational opportunities, economic factors were again cited in support of the principle.

> In the interpretation of this principle it should be born in mind that the RSA demands the highest possible level of education (high level manpower) in terms of its socio-economic situation.[28]

An economic emphasis is again noticeable in the elucidation to the principle concerning cultural diversity, it being noted that 'a complicated westernized industrial and sensitive production mechanism demands of its education more 'unity' than 'diversity'.'[29]

Once again the principle regarding the needs of the individual was not justified in the elucidation to the principle. In the light of remarks made above regarding assumptions concerning the aims of education in the report, it is interesting to note the observation, made in the elucidation to this principle, that 'as far as motivation [of the principle] is

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[28] Ibid. p.26.

[29] Ibid. p.28.

concerned, [it is] above suspicion.'[30]

Economic justification is again found for the principle concerning the need for a system of national examinations.

> Current practices in certification will have to be scrutinised in terms of the provision of guarantees valid for all population groups in respect of a national education system based on equal opportunity and in conjunction with the activities and expectations of, for example, the National Manpower Commission.'[31]

The 'Main Committee' offered written comments on the first draft proposed by the 'Work Committee'. It has already been noted that as a result of 'divergence in preceding comments [of the 'Main Committee'] which hampered the search for a synthesis'[32], it was decided to formulate the principles even more tersely. The elucidations were also changed. No longer was the rationale behind the principles given. Instead the 'concepts included in the principle', i.e. the principle itself, 'would be explained and clarified in the elucidation.'[33] The reason given for this change was that normative concepts would have to be removed. What in fact occurred is a good example of the tendency, already noted, to assume norms and values while pursuing the 'facts'.

30 Ibid. p.37.

31 Ibid. p.40.

32 Ibid. p.55.

33 Ibid. p.56.

Because the underlying rationale behind the principles was no longer stated, the problem of demonstrating that the 'Work Committee' regarded the meeting of the economic needs of society to be a central aim of education, might appear more difficult. However, because the principles remained in essence the same, we may assume that the underlying motivation behind them is unchanged.

What could be regarded as a second phase in the formulation of the principles, was now entered into. This phase is characterised by opinion being sought from a wider circle than simply the 'Main Committee' and 'Work Committee'. Consensus being more difficult to obtain as the circle to whom the principles were submitted for comment expanded, a second feature of this phase is that the principles and their elucidations became even more terse.

In the light of suggestions made, the 'Work Committee' made minor alterations to the principles, the essence of which remained unchanged. As noted above, the elucidations were now confined largely to explaining terms and concepts within each principle. In the elucidation to the principle concerning equal opportunities in education, the only suggestion of a rationale is that the principle of equality in education was suggested in the Cabinet request.[34] The elucidation to the principle concerning cultural

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34 Ibid. p.96.

diversity is confined to 'the facts', it being noted that commonality and diversity are world-wide phenomena, but that the trend is towards 'unity in diversity'. That the reader is being asked to draw a normative conclusion, i.e. that the trend in the RSA should be unity in diversity, from a given set of facts (a statement of existing conditions) is ignored.

The elucidation to the principle concerning the needs of the individual offers no rationale. However, the wording of the principle itself was altered and direct reference was made to the need of the individual for vocational training. The conflating of the needs of the individual with those of society runs throughout the report and culminates in both needs being included under one principle.

In the elucidation to the principle concerning a national system of examinations, reference was again made to the requirements of the 'National Manpower Commission'. This would suggest that economic considerations remained a central rationale for this principle.

This second draft of principles by the 'Work Committee' was now submitted to the 'Main Committee' who, after further pruning of the wording, submitted them to the 'Work Committee: Education system planning', for comment. Of the principles under discussion only the principle concerning the needs of the individual was altered, a change in wording that in no way altered the spirit of the principle.

The 'Main Committee' now submitted the draft proposals together with the elucidations, to a 'wide, representative spectrum of bodies' for comment. The minor changes made in order to reach consensus with certain of the opinions expressed, again did not alter the spirit of the principles.

The last stage in the process whereby the final draft of the principles was obtained, was the decision of the 'Main Committee' to re-number and re-order the principles as well as to combine certain principles. As a result of this decision, the principle concerning equal opportunities in education was combined with the principle concerning a system of national examinations, while the principles relating to the needs of society and the needs of the individual were combined. The principle concerned with cultural diversity remained unchanged.

A feature of the laborious process described above, and which has a direct bearing on the argument postulated in this section of this Research Report, is the extent to which economic considerations were used to justify the principles. So great was the emphasis given to economic considerations that it is no exaggeration to claim that the meeting of the economic needs of society was presumed by the 'Work Committee' to be a central aim of education.

IV

The analysis undertaken above, substantiates the claim that the concern shown by the 'Work Committee' towards economic considerations in drawing up the 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA', was such as to suggest that the 'Work Committee' regarded the meeting of economic needs to be a central aim of education. There is, however, another aspect of the report that suggests that a stronger aim is implied, viz. that meeting the economic needs of society is <u>the</u> central aim of education. This restricted view-point regarding the aims of education arises from the assumption, expressed by the 'Work Committee', that education can take place through training. It will be argued that, because of the restricted nature of training, education can only be seen to take place through training if the central aim of education is restricted to the meeting of the economic needs of society. The restricting of the aims of education to the meeting of economic needs, it will be argued, results in a restricted notion of education.

That the 'Work Committee' assumed that education can take place through training can be demonstrated by an examination of the early drafts of certain of the elucidations offered by the 'Work Committee'. Principle seven of the Chairman's draft of principles states:

> Education ... is directed by a match between generally formative and occupation directed

education ... .[35]

A new interpretation of 'match' is suggested in the elucidation to the principle.

> The need for matching occupation directed education and general, formative education, ... is universally recognised. The idea of developing general, formative education from career directed education is new, however.[36]

In the elucidation to the first draft of principle eight by the 'Work Committee' it is stated that

> It might therefore be wise to devise generally formative education for which provision must be made, from the need for occupation directed education rather than the other way round.[37]

The Chairman of the 'Main Committee' shared with the members of the 'Work Committee' the assumption that education can take place through training. In the keynote address to the S.A.T.A. Conference in June 1982, Professor de Lange stated:

> There is a residue of elitist tradition from nineteenth century Europe and England which

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35 Ibid. p.17.

36 Ibid. p.18.

37 Ibid. p.38.

> held that the whole man is formed best through a so called liberal education, meaning an academic education. What is achieved through this? A sense of responsibility, a sense of balance, initiative, the ability to persevere, etc. I can assure you that all these qualities can be imbued through career education ... .[38]

There are a number of contrasting notions of education suggested by terms like 'general', 'formative', 'liberal' and 'academic' in the four extracts quoted above. It is not clear precisely what the 'Work Committee' or Professor de Lange intended by these terms, as they have not made an explanation part of their task. However, it would appear that these terms are used synonymously to suggest a notion of education which, whatever else it seeks to achieve, is not necessarily linked to economic goals. What can be accepted is that two distinct notions of education are being suggested; one which regards occupational training as a central aim of education and the other which does not. In addition, it is claimed that the advantages associated with the latter notion of education can be realised through the former.

The claim that the benefits associated with education can be realised through training, i.e. that education can take place through training, is open to question. The result of accepting the view that education can take place through training is a restricted notion of the education process. This is because of the restricted nature of training. Training can be

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38 de Lange, J.P. "Change and Renewal in Education." Education Journal, November 1982. p.36.

regarded as a process that 'entails the transmission of both knowledge and skills which will enable the learner to engage in a certain occupation or group of occupations more successfully'.[39] Education on the other hand is less restricted. While a broader view of the nature of education will be developed in Chapter Two of this Research Report, at this point it will simply be claimed that the process of education is more complex than that suggested by training and that the aims of education are broader than simply the imparting of work-related knowledge, skills and attitudes. Clearly there are overlaps between education and training.

> Knowledge of the world is relevant both to the way one lives one's life and to the way one does one's job. ... In our work we use knowledge of a highly specific part of the world to make decisions of a highly specific kind. In one respect, therefore, vocational training rests on and grows out of one's general education.[40]

Wringe's observation that the knowledge acquired through one's general education has relevance for one's broader existence, including work, would seem so obvious as not to bear mention. Yet this point underlies the shortcoming of the claim that education can take place through training. Because the knowledge and skills acquired through training are restricted in nature, the individual whose 'general education' has

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[39] Wringe, C.A. "Education, Schooling and the World of Work." British Journal of Educational Studies, June 1981. vol. 29, no.2. p.131.

[40] Ibid. p.132.

been limited to training is likely to leave school ill-equiped to face the wide range of demands posed by adult life.

The reason for the restricted nature of the knowledge and skills acquired through training is the instrumental nature of the process. The knowledge and skills transmitted through training are those relevant to the workplace. Training is a means to an end; the skills and knowledge acquired by the individual are those directly relevant to performing a function at the workplace.

The attitudes engendered through training are similarly restricted to those likely to facilitate the performance of the agent's economic function. Training develops in the agent a narrow perspective centred on an occupational role. Obedience rather than a questioning of goals is characteristic of training. Where questioning occurs, it is confined to the means by which given goals can most effectively be realised. The aims of training are therefore restricted to the meeting of priorities determined by the workplace.

Education cannot be realised through training unless the aims of the education process are radically restricted. Thus the implication that can be drawn from the claim that education can take place through training is that the central aim of education is determined by the needs of the workplace. The form in which this aim is most often expressed is that the central aim of education is meeting the economic needs of society.

A question that arises is why the 'Work Committee' failed to perceive that their report implies that the central aim of education is the meeting of the economic needs of society. However, it has been noted that from the outset the 'Work Committee' decided against attempting an analysis of normative concepts such as the aims and nature of education. The search for consensus, as undertaken by the 'Work Committee', added to the unlikelihood of normative concepts being analysed. Because the nature of education was at no point examined, a concept like 'education through training' could be introduced without its implications for both the nature and aims of education being realised.

The report of the 'Work Committee : Education principle and policy' implies that meeting the economic needs of society is the central aim of education. It is suggested that to accept this view of the aims of education, is to accept a restricted notion of education.

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CHAPTER II

I

For reasons suggested in Chapter One, the members of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' chose to ignore questions relating to the nature and aims of education in drawing up the 'Principles for the provision of education in the RSA'. As a result of this omission, the report of the 'Work Committee' has serious shortcomings. The assumption made by the members of the 'Work Committee' that education can take place through training, lays them open to the criticism that they presumed the meeting of the economic needs of society to be the central aim of education. A second criticism is that this and other assumptions regarding the nature and aims of education are neither acknowledged nor substantiated in the report.

Insofar as the report of the 'Work Committee: Education principles and policy' draws attention to the importance of an economic aim in education, indicating as it does an economic perspective to many issues that underlie the provision of education, the report can be seen to contribute to the debate regarding the nature and aims of education. However, it is suggested that due to the shortcomings noted above, the report of the 'Work Committee' offers a limited perspective of both the nature and aims of education. In order to highlight the inadequacy of restricting the central aim of education to the meeting of the economic needs of society, Chapter Two of this Research Report develops an argument for including two aims, additional to an economic aim, as central aims of education. It is

suggested that the argument, presented in support of additional central aims in education not only highlights the inadequacy of restricting the central aim of education to the meeting of the economic needs of society, but also results in a broader notion of education than that implied by the 'Work Committee' report.

As a starting point for developing a broader notion of the nature and aims of education, certain arguments in support of an economic aim in education will be examined, not only in order to clarify what is meant by the term 'an economic aim' in education, but also to introduce the notion of the 'quality of life' of the individual as a foundation upon which broader aims and a broader notion of the education process can be developed.

The 'Work Committee' is not alone in advancing an economic aim of education; the belief that there should be an economic aim of education is widely held. What is not always clarified is what exactly is proposed by the term 'economic aim'. If this economic aim were perceived as being that people should be educated to 'understand economics' then the demand could be seen as being for a curriculum structured around economic subjects. However, this interpretation of an economic aim could be encompassed within an education process the aims of which are intrinsic in the sense that 'knowledge and skills ... should be seen as valuable for their own sake, quite apart from any other value

they may have ... .'[41]

If the child came to develop an understanding of the interaction of forces, both human and material, that shape economic development, as well as developing a concern for the standards and content of his education, the criticism could be levelled that the concept of an economic aim in education was being too broadly interpreted. Generally, those advocating an economic aim in education are advocating some degree of occupational training. This certainly was the interpretation of the term that was applied by the 'Work Committee'. In this Research Report this interpretation of the term will be adopted and the term 'economic aim' will be taken to mean some degree of occupational training.

An economic aim of education enjoys widespread public support. The reason for the popularity of this view is the assumption that education should contribute towards the material well-being of the individual involved in the process. Unemployment among school leavers and graduates from universities in Europe and the United States in the early 1980s, led to the call that education should, in some measure, be geared to occupational opportunities in society. In business circles the complaint is voiced that school leavers are inadequately prepared for entering the world of work. A large number of both university students and school pupils regard an important aim of their education as being preparation for an occupational role in society.

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41 White, J. The Aims of Education Restated. London: KRP, 1982, p.9.

Many parents regard one of the aims of education as being the preparation of their children for future employment.

The call for an economic aim in education is also heard from academic circles. The 'Report of the Main Committee of the HSRC Investigation into Education' claimed that an education process which is 'academic' fails to meet the needs of many involved in the process. (As noted in Chapter One, the term 'academic' is loosely employed to denote an education process not necessarily geared to meeting economic goals.)

> The South African system for the provision of education has always primarily been geared to preparing pupils for study at university. The accent is therefore on preparatory academic education up to Std 10 level, even for many who do not continue with academic study. The result is that a large part of the White population enters the world of work without adequate vocational qualifications, skills or appropriate value systems. In the case of the other population groups ... a large percentage of pupils leave school before they have obtained suitable qualifications, skills or developed value systems that will be of service to them.[42]

Mary Warnock extends a liberal notion of education to allow for the view that the education process should, in some measure, prepare people to meet the economic needs of society, arguing that 'children should learn

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42 Report of the Main Committee of the HSRC Investigation into Education, Provision of Education in the RSA. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1981, p.31.

at school what will help them to work for the rest of their lives.'[43] She argues for an economic aim in education on two grounds. Firstly, she suggests that the financial investment in education in the modern state is so great that no society can afford the privilege of an educational system that does not prepare, at least in some measure, people to meet the economic needs of society.

> It is not outrageous for a government, which directly or indirectly finances most education, ... to attempt to ensure that there is rational justification, for instance, for opening a new medical school or law school, or for spending money on educating people as foresters or pharmacists.[44]

Secondly, she justifies an economic aim for education by introducing the concept of 'a good life'. Warnock suggests that the purpose of education is 'a good life'[45] and that work is a necessary element of a good life.

> ... work is, and must always be an important ingredient in the good life; ... a life without work would always be less good than a life which contained it; ... even where a job is bad in all kinds of ways, it is better to have it than not, ... so to this extent any work is better than none, if it is paid ... .[46]

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43 Warnock, M. Schools of Thought. London: Faber and Faber, 1977, p.143.

44 Ibid. p.146.

45 Ibid. p.129.

46 Ibid. p.144.

Accepting Warnock's claim that the purpose of education is a good life, her argument that work is a necessary element of a good life requires examination. She supports her argument that work is a necessary element of a good life by two claims: firstly that 'a life without work would always be less good than a life that contained it' and secondly, that 'any work is better than none, if it is paid.' Both these claims are open to question. Her first claim can be questioned on the grounds that a fair number of people have found a meaningful existence in a life of religious contemplation or devotion. She makes her second claim more difficult to defend by relating the notion of work to financial remuneration. Not many people would regard a life devoted to unpaid charity or religious work as 'less good' than the job of a paid assassin. Warnock does not attempt to support her strong claim that 'any work is better than none if it is paid.' However, this claim appears to be based on the assumption that the alternative to paid work is idleness, which few would accept as a necessary element of a good life.

While Warnock's justification of work as a necessary element of a good life is difficult to substantiate, it does direct us to a reality of human existence, viz. that work, occupying as much of our time as it does, is an ingredient of any life that is good. If the purpose of the education process is accepted as being related to the notion of a good life, it is difficult to see how this process can ignore so important a component of one's life as that which is related to work.

A Marxist view-point on the nature of the education process accords a central position to economic considerations. In briefly discussing both Marx's views and the implications of his general theory on education, this section of this Research Report will rely on the work of S. Castles and W. Wustenburg.

Karl Marx saw vocational training as an important element in the education process. This was due to his view of the aim of education as being

> the totally-developed individual, a person with a full practical and theoretical grasp of the technology of production, and of the economic, social and political relationships which correspond to this.[47]

Marx saw man as being in a primary relationship with nature, and the labour process as affording the framework for man's inter-relationship with his environment. Work thus determines the very nature of man. Marx argued that an analysis of the way in which society produces and distributes food and other necessary goods, would give an understanding of the social and political structures of any particular mode of production, which in turn would give an insight into the condition of man within the mode in question. Man, however, is not simply a victim of economic forces, as economic conditions in their turn are shaped by man's social consciousness and material conditions.

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47 Castles, S. and Wustenburg, W. The Education of the Future. London: Pluto Press, 1979. p.169.

In capitalist society man is alienated from his work, both because the product of his labour does not belong to him and because the capitalists' pursuit of profit leads to longer working hours, poor working conditions and the increasing division of labour. Work becomes meaningless drudgery to the worker. Denied the meaningful work in terms of which man defines himself, he becomes de-humanized.

Marx argued that industrialisation, although it appeared responsible for the workers' enslavement, also offered the opportunity of liberation. Technology could reduce the working day, while advanced technology could come to undermine the division of labour through 'transforming not only the technical basis of production but also the functions of the worker and the social combinations of the labour process'.[48]

Marx saw education as having an important role to play in the liberation of the worker and through him, mankind. Education would bring children to

> understand the scientific foundations of the production process and the mechanisms which determine economic and social life. ... In addition everybody should have a broadly based vocational training which qualifies them for various types of work, so that they can no longer become the victims of unpredictable changes in production methods.[49]

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48 Ibid. p.35.

49 Ibid. p.169.

The arguments regarding an economic aim in education as presented by Warnock and the Marxist argument, while similar in certain respects, have interesting differences in emphasis. Both accept an economic aim for education in the sense that some form of occupational training is envisaged and neither wishes occupational training to be of such a nature as to restrict the child to a particular form of work.

However, Marx's emphasis on an economic aim is justified in terms of production forces in the economy. Marx calls for a broad based vocational training 'so that they [the workers] can no longer become victims of unpredictable changes in production methods.'[50] In advocating an economic aim in education, Warnock states that few would regard it as entailing that 'right from the start of a child's life at school, he should be destined for a <u>certain sort</u> of work.'[51] Her justification for this, however, is not in terms of economic considerations but in terms of the rights of the individual. 'We must not cut down on anybody's education as if we were a caste society.'[52]

Of central importance is that both viewpoints see education as being related to the 'quality of life' of the individual. Mary Warnock, as noted, justifies some form of occupational training on the grounds that as

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50 Ibid. p.169.

51 Warnock, M. op.cit. p.147.

52 Ibid. p.147.

work is a necessary element of a good life it would seem a disservice to educate people in such a way that they would not be in a position to make work a contributory factor in a good life.

> Common sense ... inclines [people] to think of education as a preparation for life; and of life as better if the people living it have roles to fill, useful things to do.[53]

Marx, in addition to vocational training, advocated a more broad based education in order that the agent would come to 'understand the scientific foundations of the production process and the mechanisms which determine economic and social life.'[54] This understanding of 'production processes' and 'mechanisms' would, in some measure, enable the worker to overcome the oppressive production mode that dehumanises him, making it possible for man to realise his true being and thus enhance his quality of life.

Common to the broad range of support for an economic aim in education noted above, is the belief that work is a feature of an individual's broader existence and secondly, that the education process cannot be divorced from the individual's broader existence. On the strength of these two claims, it is suggested that education should, in some measure, prepare the individual for the world of work.

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53 Ibid. p.128.

54 Castles, S. and Wustenburg, W. op. cit. p.169.

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[53] Ibid. p.128.

[54] Castles, S. and Wustenburg, W. op. cit. p.169.

A similar conclusion can be reached if the claim that the purpose of education is to enhance the quality of life of those undergoing the process is accepted. There is a material aspect to the individual's quality of life and as efficiency in the workplace can contribute to this material aspect, education should prepare an individual to derive the material benefits possible from work.

On the strength of the above arguments a place for an economic aim among the central aims of education can be accepted. However, it has already been noted that to make the economic aim the central aim of education would be to restrict the notion of education. There is a further argument against making an economic aim the central aim of education. It has been accepted that education should in some measure contribute toward the quality of life of those undergoing the process. To make an economic aim the central aim of education would be to over-emphasise the material element of the quality of life of the individual. Clearly, if the purpose of education is to improve the quality of life of the individual, more than material well-being is involved. Further central aims of education are necessary if the education process is to enhance the individual's quality of life.

II

A view of the aims of education that relates the education process to the non-material aspects of the individual's life, is that which argues that the aims of education are intrinsic and thus 'that education proper is a more or less self-contained enterprise.'[55] The argument for intrinsic aims will now be examined. It will be suggested that while there are grounds for accepting intrinsic aims among the central aims of education, certain implications of the view that the aims of education are intrinsic have to be reconciled with implications arising from including economic aims among the central aims of education.

The work of R.S. Peters is worthy of examination as it affords the best known example of the case for intrinsic aims in education. Peters's argument for intrinsic aims in education, which is based on the importance to the individual of 'curriculum activities', will be examined. It will be suggested that not only are there problems with his argument in favour of intrinsic aims in education but also that his exclusion of extrinsic aims as extraneous to the notion of education, is unrealistic. However, the inclusion of intrinsic aims as central to education does contribute to a broader perspective of the education process than when the central aim of education is seen as being restricted to meeting the economic needs of society.

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55 White, J. op.cit. p.2.

It should be noted that in advocating intrinsic aims of education, Peters does not suggest that no extrinsic goals are realised through the education process. Peters's work also recognises a moral component as a 'mode of thought' constitutive of education.

In 'Education as Initiation' Peters begins his argument for intrinsic aims of education by examining the nature of education. He argues that the term 'education' does not refer to a particular process or activity but to criteria that a process must meet in order to be educational. Thus Peters does not seek for an essence of education; certain characteristics which are essential to education irrespective of content. In addition, Peters does not look to content to define education.

Peters then sets out to examine the criteria which he suggests characterise the education process. The first of these criteria suggested by Peters is that, for a process to be education, something of value must be intentionally transmitted. That what is transmitted must be of value, precludes the transmission of something undesirable from being educational. Peters accepts that unintentional learning takes place from everyday experience (What the 'Work Committee' refers to as informal education). However, he argues that 'the central uses of the term [education] are confined to situations where we deliberately put ourselves or others in the way of something that is thought to be

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conducive to valuable states of mind'.[56]

The transmission of something of value leads to a 'desirable state of mind'. This desirable state of mind is not an extrinsic aim of education but is part of what is meant by the term education, just as the reform of individuals is not an aim of the process that we refer to as reform but rather what is meant by the term. The desirable state of mind which education produces involves the development of intellect.

This is not to say, however, that everything that is acquired in the education process *is* desirable in itself. Peters points out that carpentry, for example, could be part of the education process, although a course in carpentry might be beneficial at a later stage in gaining employment. However, to regard carpentry as part of the education process, this activity must contribute to the agent's attaining a state of mind that is desirable in itself.[57] Education is not a means to an end even though extrinsic goals may be incidentally realised. The aims of the education process are intrinsic.

A second criterion of the education process is that the educated person comes to 'care about ... and to possess the relevant knowledge or skill in a way that involves

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56 Peters, R.S. "Education as Initiation." In Archambault, R.D. ed. Philosophical Analysis and Education. London: RKP, 1965, p.91.

57 Ibid. p.91.

at least a minimum of understanding ... .'[58] The reason that the educated person comes to 'care about' the process of education, is not because of extrinsic benefits that may accrue to the agent from the education process, but because the process of education contributes to a state of mind which, as noted, is part of the process. Thus to ask what the purpose of education is, is as meaningless as asking the purpose of health.

The development of 'conceptual schemes' is seen by Peters as a third criterion of the education process.

> A person who has pursued ... [education] systematically develops conceptual schemes and forms of appraisal which transform everything else that he does.[59]

The educated person is one who not only possesses a body of knowledge but the conceptual scheme to organise it beyond the 'level of disjointed facts'. The educated person is someone who understands principles and reasons underlying what is known. As a result of the development of conceptual schemes, the educated person's overall outlook is transformed.

The development of conceptual schemes which is one of the criteria of education is, Peters argues, absent in

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58 Ibid. p.97.

59 Peters, R.S. Ethics and Education. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966, p.160.

Author Cloete R D
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