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THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

By BRYAN W. MONAHAN

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Probably the most important embodiment of external inheritance is language, and perhaps the shortest way to grasp the significance of external inheritance in relation to internal, or genetic, heredity is to consider the difference between normal man, and the untrained, and trained, deaf-mute.

The existence of this external inheritance is the reason for the differentiation of various human groups, far more rapidly than can be accounted for by any genetic changes. It is also the reason why writers such as Julian Huxley and such geneticists are able to pour scorn on "racial" theories. On the genetic basis they are right; on the cultural they are wrong. In man, it is cultural inheritance that is decisive. That this is so is apparent if one considers the development of which negroes are capable in, for example, America. Genetically the negroes are different enough from other groups to be classed as a distinct race; yet the *effective* difference between the American negro and the native negro is far greater than between the American negro and the American white. Again, Americans have differentiated into a type, almost into a race, despite their genetic impurity, and in a much shorter time than would permit of genetic stabilisation.

It is important to realise that external heredity is just as *real* a thing as genetic inheritance; it has a definite mechanism, and this mechanism has its own laws. It is, further, interconnected with the genetic mechanism, and together these mechanisms subserve purpose. Now, *the direction of evolution is shown by the progressive shift of emphasis to the external heredity, with a correlated increase, through the genetic mechanism of lability. The direction is towards an increasing mastery of individual purpose (it is manifested in individuals) over mechanism.*

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL

The concept of the subservience of mechanism to purpose can be considered further from the point of view of purpose acting outwards, in the first place on and through the material nearest to hand. Original growth, organisation, and development is thus the first manifestation of the individual's purpose, a purpose making use of the laws of matter, without, in this aspect, transcending them. The principles underlying this development are the proper subject of biology and other divisions of science, and are outside the scope of these articles. Here we are concerned only with the post-natal development of the individual, where this is conditioned by the interaction of the cultural inheritance.

The human individual, as born, carries still a high potential for continuing physical development; but his mental development has relatively hardly begun, and the special mechanism of the mind — especially the nervous system — is in high degree labile. It appears likely, as Jung has shown, that the mind of the individual contains certain basic material — the "collective unconscious", features of mind found universally. It seems likely that a considerable amount of this basic material might be what Samuel Butler regarded as the unconscious memory of past phylogenetic achievements, appearing, as Jung suggests, in symbolic form . . . But to return to the infant: it is born helpless, but with a continuing potential for physical development to a completed form which varies remarkably little from one man to another (which is not to say that the differences are not significant) — a potential carried through the genes. On the other hand, a large proportion of the functional connections of the nervous system are not inborn, but are developed in interaction with the wider field of the environment. For the human, the significant element of the environment is cultural.

This brings us to the controversy "nature or nurture". Like so many controversies, it is based on a misapprehension of what is in question. Both answers, or the compromise, imply that the individual is the passive object of impersonal and irresistible forces. In fact, he is the embodiment of purpose. As an "embodiment", he is naturally subject to the laws of matter; on the plane of matter, he cannot transcend its laws. A man will always be burnt if he puts his naked hand into a fire. But what is embodied in man's nature — that is, in his genetic constitution — is the set of solutions to the problems of physics for which satisfactory solutions, in the pragmatic sense, have been found in ages past. Structurally, the problem has been to organise matter to constitute a suitable material mechanism — a problem no different, in principle, from that of building a house or bridge, *etc.* Such problems as the latter are in fact only an extension, or continuation, of the genetic problem; a house is a manifestation of individual purpose.

Now just as purpose selects and organises matter to build a body, so it selects and organises elements from the cultural tradition to build mind. Some of the attributes of mind are of universal serviceability — such as the instincts, for example — and thus have become, in all probability, embedded in the genetic structure. (By instinct I mean an inborn capacity for a type of response to a general and recurrent type of

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FROM WEEK TO WEEK

For a long time Peter Simple in his column in the *Daily Telegraph* has directed attention to the existence of treason in Britain, without, apparently, stirring a ripple of interest. But when Mr. Enoch Powell "wondered" about possible treason in the Civil Service, the reaction was immediate and deadly. And yet, how has it come about that once-Great Britain cannot conduct an independent foreign policy; that the world's first and greatest industrial power is inferior to the enemies she defeated in two world wars; that the country where the Englishman's home was his castle is now afflicted with a racial problem?

As good an answer as any is to be found in the words of Dr. Arnold Toynbee: "We are working discreetly, but with all our might, to undermine the sovereignty of our respective nations". That was in 1931, and if the statement had got the sort of publicity accorded Mr. Powell, it might have been considered to be treason. But it was 'discreetly' ignored. Nevertheless, it has been the underlying policy to which British governments either consciously, or more or less unconsciously, but under duress of international financial 'obligations' have conformed; it is the path which has led to the 'negotiations' for British subjection to the Treaty of Rome.

There are some faint signs that the Heath Administration is becoming aware that the problems which confront it are not merely problems of better management. The economy is *unmanageable* in conventional terms, but there is no indication that Mr. Heath yet recognises that fundamental fact; if he does not, it will be his fate, in all probability, to preside over the final disappearance of the British people as a separate entity.

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The Aims of Education

situation — food-seeking, sex, self-preservation, *etc.*). On top of these general responses, nurture provides the possibility of more specifically appropriate responses.

The next stage in the development of the individual is the acquisition of habits, which again are instruments of purpose — special mechanisms of expression of purpose each suited to some particular end. In the sense used here, habits are characterised by being *acquired*, and this is the significance of *libality*.

"The plasticity (lability) of the living matter of our nervous system, in short, is the reason why we do a thing . . . more and more easily . . . Our nervous systems have (in Dr. Carpenter's words) *grown* to the way they have been exercised."

"Habit is thus second nature or rather, as the Duke of Wellington said, 'ten times nature' — at any rate, as regards its importance in adult life . . . Ninety-nine hundredths or, possibly, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of our activity is purely automatic and habitual . . .

"The great thing in all education is to *make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy* . . . The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work:" (Wm. James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*. Italics in original).

I do not know what weight James placed on the fractions he suggested, or Wellington on "ten times nature". But that the fraction is a large one is indubitable. That is demonstrated by, for example, the fact that children, almost without exception, soon learn to speak, as pointed out recently by Dr. Tudor Jones, and for the most part, to speak well; an astounding accomplishment so ordinary as to be unremarked. That is why "intelligence" measurements are of only slight interest apart from providing "employment" for State-school psychologists, for they are, as it were, concerned with inches of difference in the lengths of poles whose dimensions we do not know, except that they run to many feet.

From this point of view, then, we may conceive the individual as an embodiment of purpose, in his beginning concerned to acquire, organise and vitalise matter, and subsequently acquiring, inbuilding and utilising elements provided by the cultural tradition. We may distinguish instinct — inborn and generalised habit, with a genetic basis — habit, characterised by being acquired within the lifetime of the individual; and a growing-point of development, the locus of free-will, the intersection of mind and matter and purpose, the point of continuous becoming. But we shall see later that this "point" is more adequately conceived as a boundary.

For every *why* there must be a *how*; every event must have its mechanism. In principle, therefore, a mechanism can be found, even if only in hypothesis, for any event. But the *how* is not identical with the *why*: a description of the mechanism is not a description of the event. Often, too, more than one mechanism is possible for a particular event. In evolution, one function has been served at different times by a variety of structures because function transcends structure, just as function incarnates purpose. Nothing, therefore, could be more sterile than the materialist point of view,

which regards a description of the mechanism as exhaustive. Except in the mechanic's sense of mending, a knowledge of mechanism is empty knowledge, and hardly more significant than an adequate, though incorrect, hypothesis. One can imagine the physiological psychologists after decades, if not centuries, of research presenting us with a complete account of the neuro-muscular mechanism of speech, complete with tables of electrical potentials in nerve and muscle for every word of the dictionary. It would mean as much as the photo-electric graph of a note by Kreisler on a Stradivarius. Against their achievement is to be set the fact that one may understand Shakespeare at the first hearing. Though purpose manifests itself through matter, matter must conform to the laws of matter. Speech *must* have a complete neuro-muscular mechanism, and, in theory at least, it can be discovered and described. And if we lived in a vacuum, speech as we know it would not exist, but no doubt the *function* of speech would exist, and would be served by an appropriate mechanism. It is, therefore, the *existence* of the event, and its relations to other events which is important. It is the existence of evolution which concerns us.

III. THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

The individual grows, as we have seen, physically by the absorption and organisation of matter, and mentally by the absorption and organisation of elements of the cultural tradition. Into these materials, purpose builds what we recognise as personality.

Now, the individual extends both materially and mentally beyond what we perceive at first sight as his limits. On the material plane, his boundaries are quite indefinite to perception. With every breath he acquires fresh atoms and gives up others. People breathing the same air are exchanging their substance in part one with another. The food a person has eaten passes only gradually into his essential being, and, as slowly, molecule by molecule, leaves. The roots of his hairs are "alive", the remainder "dead", but the root and the shaft are continuous, and all are "part" of him. Thus matter simply flows through him; it is obvious in the case of fluid, yet the fluid for a time enters into his essential being. Thus in all material aspects, he is related to the surface of the earth as is a cloud of dust, and materially is not discontinuous with other creatures. How then are we to conceive his boundary? That boundary is where his purpose ceases to be effective, the locus of becoming, the boundary where atoms and molecules are accepted and rejected.

In the mental sphere, personality extends outwards into Society; this fact is the basis of Sociology. But the nature of this extension is commonly misunderstood. Society, for each individual, is nothing but the extension of his own personality. The situation is analogous to the physical situation as revealed by the Relativity Theory of Physics. The space-time continuum has no practical reality for the individual (possibly because of his special relation to the time dimension); he is a unique observer, with his own unique frame of reference. The space-time continuum is independent of the observer; otherwise, there are as many physical worlds of relations as there are individuals. In the same way, there are as many societies in the concept Society as there are individuals. That is to say, each individual sees society as a set of relations of which he is the centre, and into which his personality extends. His *perception* is of *his own* society, in this sense; he can only *conceive* Society. On the other hand,

he *can* perceive other Societies, of which he is not a member; the Englishman thus perceives the Society of the French, the Americans, *etc.*

The fundamental attitude of the individual to his own society is, therefore, of its subservience to his personal purpose. One has only to watch children to realise that; the development of the child consists largely in discovering modifications of that fundamental attitude. And it might easily be that unsatisfactory experiences in this modification lead to that pathological desire to change Society by force, through identification of Society with a personal perception of society.

What really exists for each individual is a unique set of relations, of organic connections *centred within himself*, between himself and other individuals and groups. The connections are organic, because they are vitalised in a perfectly real sense, from the centre — that is, from the individual — "Social power proceeds from within", to answer Douglas's question (*The Big Idea*, p. 60). Of course, the connections are reciprocal, to varying degrees, individually; but as a set they are unique, and dependent on the existence of the individual. Now Society, in the relativity sense, is the aggregate of these relations, and thus can never be identical with any one set. That it can be, is the Collectivist fallacy.

From the point of view of the individual, then, society is a further mechanism serving his purpose. Particular functional organisations of this society are as regards his personality what habits are as regards his mind: they set him free "for his own proper work".

If a man is asked: "What would you do if you were in a position to put Society right?" — the almost invariable first response is to conceive himself as a dictator, and from this position to imagine Society organised outwards from himself, so that his percept and concept would be identical. Any change is, in fact, conceived from the position of "What I would do if I were in such and such a position". Now the actual results of such a reorganisation of Society are not only a matter of theory; we are all too familiar with them, so that there is no need to analyse them here. What we want to find is the Why that the How expresses. In the first place, the structure of such Society must be unicentric, hierarchical, and must be based on power of one sort or another. The vertical relations between individuals are transitive non-symmetrical (more . . . than). But at the bottom of the pyramid, the transitive relation ceases to hold, a fact which leads to instability — and a fact that no doubt leads the Germans to postulate a slave race, since this permits the transitive relation to be carried right through their own race, the slave race being held by naked power. Where it is not a case of two races, the bottom layer consists of what we may distinguish as serfs (as against slaves). In this case the criterion would presumably be "intelligence" quotients as against "racial purity".

Totalitarian Society is the most complete extension of personality into Society, and as such it involves the permanent organisation of other partial personalities into the extended structure of the Leader's personality, through the transitive relation, which in its psychological aspect is the Will to Power, with its components assertion and submission. Will to Power holds in an organised manner all through the structure except at the bottom layer, where the assertive component must be suppressed. The whole Society is, therefore, an

organic unity organised by the purpose of the Leader. Such a group is as a result an actual living entity.

The individual in whom this personality is centred must be, as a result, a super-normal individual. Hitler's statements give us a glimpse of the subjective aspect of this, and the objective evidence is before us. But the personality is necessarily limited and rigid, in much the same way as on the material plane the Crustaceans are limited. Too great a part of the personality is beyond the control of purpose, and even more beyond the control of conscious purpose. Purpose is limited in the same way, in principle, by the laws of matter and the laws of mind. Purpose makes decisions, which pass into structure, and there remain effective; purpose has passed on, but the decisions are limitations, whether right or wrong, because becoming is the integration of a series of them.

The same considerations hold, only in lesser degree, for subordinate functionaries, and this is, I think, the explanation of their distorted personalities — "in their function, possessed of devils". Here there is the extension of personality far beyond conscious control; but the case is worse, in that the structure has been built not by the individual exercising the function in question, but transitively. The functionary enters into a structure he did not build, so that structure never did pass through his consciousness.

That organisation of individuals into a group does occur is a fact of observation, and that some individuals are inherently leaders is a similar fact. It appears to me indubitable that personality is a force of some kind, extending in some sense beyond the material boundary of the individual, and that this force acts on other individuals in such a way as to orientate them by virtue of their assertive-submissive polarity. That is the primary phenomenon. But it is confused with and overlaid by other phenomena, of which the most important in this connection is the use of external force to carry further the effects of the orientation produced by personality — external force in the sense of being outside the personal polarising phenomenon, and acting on such other psychological attributes as fear, hunger, *etc.* This use of external force to secure and maintain permanent organisation as an extension of the individual's own personality is clearly something to be distinguished from the organisation which is the pure expression of a powerful personality.

There can be no question here of saying what personality is, except that it is what one actually perceives it to be, in exactly the same sense that sight and sound are what one perceives them to be, and that it is the external aspect of Self. There is no reason why personality should resemble anything else with which we are familiar, any more than that sight should resemble sound or electricity. The effect of personality is a matter of individual experience: the word "personality" is the one I attach to that experience in its transcendent aspect. Now personality has its own laws, not the laws of matter, and consequently the concepts of physics are inapplicable, and should be forgotten when we use the words "force" and "power", as we have to do in the absence of others more appropriate.

The power of a personality is evidently related to the degree of organisation and integration of the components, both material and mental, achieved by purpose, and this in the first place is within the boundary of the individual as

previously defined — power comes from within. Conversely, and perhaps more obviously, a disintegrated personality lacks power. Hence, no doubt, Douglas's insistence on integrity. Besides the integration, however, there is the question of orientation. What this means can be appreciated, again, from personal experience: it is a matter of the polarisation of assertion-submission. There is a *natural*, easy orientation, experienced as a feeling of superiority (in the sense "superior to adverse circumstances", not in the unpleasant sense of domineering) which is the subjective aspect of assertion, when one is master of a situation — "nothing develops a man like achievement". I do not think that either integrity or orientation have anything to do with the inherent, inborn, abilities and endowments; they are found in the lowly and in the genius. But they are related to purpose, and they are influenced by environment. They are independent variables, but can be correlated by purpose, and out of their development and correlation arises the power of personality.

One of the properties of personality to be noted is that the transitive relation does not go far by itself; that is, while a given personality can and does act through one individual on another, adjuvants, in the way of external power, or else secondary personalities, are required to carry the relation through an extended series. Even a great General requires good subordinates and discipline to weld an army. This has nothing to do with the numbers that can be affected directly, which is a matter of reciprocity. It was noted previously that the relations which lead to this extension of personality are to varying degrees reciprocal, depending on the polarising effect, which is not necessarily, and not always, passive: polarity is subject to purpose. On the other hand, it is also subject to suggestion — the extreme example is hypnotism. Suggestion, however, is of the greatest importance, because a knowledge of the technique of suggestion is an adjuvant of extreme potency. Propaganda is simply the scientific technique of suggestion, and "organised" — centralised — education is simply propaganda.

Theoretically, reciprocity may mean anything from a symmetrical relation to the complete absorption of one personality by another, though in practice the extreme of absorption is inconceivable, and the extreme of symmetry rare. In fact, in Society each individual centres a unique set of relations, limited, and variable; ideally, subject to his purpose. This is the antithesis of the totalitarian ideal. Thus we return to the statement that Society is the aggregate of individual societies, which are unique sets of relations, and as such, simply mechanisms serving individual purpose. Particular functional organisations of this society are as regards the individual's personality what habits are as regards his mind: they set him free "for his own proper work". And equally the right to contract-out is in this sphere what liability is in evolution. With the development of machine production, never before in history did man have such an opportunity. We are being thwarted at the threshold of what amounts to a new evolutionary development in the setting-free of purpose.

(To be continued)

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