

# TEACHER EDUCATION:

## To Transmit?

## To Transform?

HARRY S. BROUDY\*

IN A society with a rational division of labor among its institutions all working toward a common goal, schools induct the young into the culture, and the pupils, if sufficiently gifted and energetic, subsequently enhance the culture. It is not difficult to delineate the general requirements of the teacher in such a society.

But to delineate the general characteristics of "good" schools and teachers when every institution is doubtful about its "proper" function and when even the propriety of formulating a common goal is questioned is difficult indeed. When there is no view about man or society that all parties to the controversy accept, there is no general criterion against which any institution can be checked. Testimonials in behalf of one's own preferences in the way of men, things, and institutions take the place of rational argument. Most of the current controversies about schools are really rationalizations of social and personal predicaments and philosophical preferences.

A social order that can tolerate diversity is better than one that cannot, for it has the potentialities of satisfying more wants. However, when pluralism threatens the existence of all social order—and therewith the benefits of pluralism itself—then belief in pluralism as an absolute good must be regarded as phantasy.

In my own view, the ideal social order permits the maximum of human variation consistent with the continued existence of mechanisms that provide the necessary—albeit not the sufficient—conditions of human life. Since there is no space for elaborating this view, and baldly stated it is a tired truism, permit me to resort to a well-worn figure of speech. Individual human life is the flower for which nature and social institutions provide the soil, nutriment, and cultivation. Humanly speaking, there is no question as to which is more important—soil or flower, society or the individual. Yet the necessary conditions for individuality are not all human or individual.

Despite all that can be said against modern science-based technology, such technology seems to me still to be our best hope for supplying the means for a rich and humanly significant pluralism—if we can devise ways of exploiting this mechanism for this purpose. This technology provides the greatest expansion of value potentiality the world has known. It can be exploited for freedom, individuality, and personhood, provided we are willing to exert the requisite educational and moral effort. Effort is the key concept, because without it, the technological machine

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will at best spew out pseudo-freedom (freedom to do as everyone else in one's coterie does), pseudo-individuality (the uniqueness of eccentricity), and pseudo-personhood (the arbitrary assertion of selfishness). The genuine freedom, individuality, and personhood must be *wrested* from the impersonal interdependencies of the machine by using its strength, like the judo expert, to power our own efforts.

Never has a tolerably adequate life been less demanding on our talents, our thought, and our character; never has the really good life been more demanding. Because modern technology holds the greatest promise for providing the *necessary* conditions for the widest variety of forms of the good life, it also holds the greatest promise for those who by their effort can create the *sufficient* conditions for it.

### Necessary or Sufficient?

Education may be regarded either as one of the necessary conditions or as one of the sufficient conditions. Those who say that the process of being educated is itself the essence of the human condition seek no blossom fairer than this. Schooling, rather than education in this broad sense, is usually regarded as one of the most important necessary conditions—even for maintaining the process of being educated.

In my view, the role of the school is to induct the young into the bodies of knowledge and modes of inquiry that can be used to exploit the value potentials of a mass technological society. Each of the great intellectual disciplines—the sciences and the humanities—represents a stencil or categorical net. To be educated is to approach reality with these categorial nets of thought, perception, and feeling. This is what being intellectually disciplined means.

We need schools because it takes effort and expert tuition to acquire these ordered modes of experience. Because such modes are the products of man's most painstaking reflection, they are almost never picked up as by-products of other activities. For those who reject the authority of the intellectual

disciplines, this analysis of the function of the school is not persuasive.

For those who do accept this authority, it is possible to delineate the requirements of teachers who will transmit the culture to those who may in time transform it. First, there is the pedagogical understanding of the disciplines to be taught. Paradoxically, one has to know more about a discipline to teach it than to master it. With the enlargement of a domain of knowledge, selection becomes more and more a matter of judgment; this judgmental knowledge, as well as mastery of content, is part of the teacher's cognitive *armamentarium*.

Second comes the cognate knowledge that one needs to *teach with*, but which one does not *teach to* the pupil, for example, logic for arithmetic; history for literature; linguistics for composition; as well as knowledge about the learner's readiness for learning, materials for learning, and, yes, even the tricks of the trade to help make it all effective. A teacher competent on these dimensions would be a genuine professional by such standards as apply to engineers, lawyers, and architects. He would have the right to participate in high level decisions on teaching strategy and tactics.

### A Division of Labor

On these criteria the vast majority of public school teachers are at best pseudo-professionals or, what is even worse, pseudo-technicians as well. For most secondary teachers, preservice "professional" requirements are no more than a slight jog on the way to an A.B. or B.S. degree in some discipline. For elementary teachers, the requirements are more extended, but increasingly they stress the training component rather than the intellectual one. For wives, teaching is one of the best sources of a second family income.

I doubt that in the coming decade our society can or will pay enough to provide a professionally trained teacher for every classroom. We shall be lucky if we are permitted to have 10 to 15 percent of the teaching staff educated to this level and 85 to 90 percent

of the staff trained at the technician level— at the rule-following level. This would be preferable to a staff that is almost completely at the pseudo-professional level.

Unfortunately, even if *mirabile dictu* we could people the classrooms with some mix of professional-technical personnel, there would still be a difficulty because of the strong demand from many quarters that the school do something more, or at least something quite different from inducting the young into the intellectual disciplines. I have in mind the castigation of the school as an agency of oppression against everyone save the square adult members of the middle-class WASPs. If the school's business is to train the young to free themselves from the "hang-ups" of the culture, this calls for teachers whose qualifications are quite different from those who can induct the young into the ways of the intellectual disciplines. The prospect of finding large numbers of teachers who combine both didactical skill and liberational charisma is not good.

So what can we anticipate? Taking into account the fact that schooling is a huge mass enterprise, one can expect that it will have to take on some of the features of mass production, especially a division of labor that will demand less and less talent and educational qualifications from the bulk of the work force. Paraprofessionals, as general teacher aides, can provide one form of this differentiation. A superintendent of one of our large city school systems recently announced that some of his best teachers were aides who had very little formal preparation for teaching. When asked whether one could therefore infer that the less formal preparation, the better the teacher, he was a bit shaken but inclined to agree.

To those disinclined to accept this *reductio ad absurdum* of teacher education, another pattern of differentiation may be more attractive. The teaching force might be made up as follows:

1. A very large number of didactic technicians, possibly using educational technology, to convey information and to teach skills of various kinds—anything that can be defined objectively enough to be preprogrammed and tested

2. A very small group of professionals to devise curricula, materials, and strategies for the technicians

3. "Encounter" personnel who counsel, do sensitivity training, carry on dialogue and whatever else is involved in "relating" to oneself and others.

Encounter teachers can transform the culture more rapidly than didactic ones, because in the person-to-person encounter the pupil is more likely to see the establishment and the parental generation as oppressive. Revolts against the manners and mores weaken and modify them, and in a modern society such revolts can be successful because there is really no way—short of incarcerating a whole generation—of enforcing parental values on an adolescent endowed with a modicum of daring and ingenuity.

I do not know which of the two directions the roles of schools and teachers will take, but we have yet to find a system of mass schooling in which both induction into the intellectual disciplines and the process of social and personal maturation can be brought off equally well by the same sort of teachers, at the same time, in the same school. □

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