



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file / Votre référence

Our file / Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

A Critique of R.S. Peters' Justification of "Education"

by

Jerry Dennis Clarkson

B.Sc., Simon Fraser University, 1970

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (EDUCATION)
IN THE FACULTY
OF
EDUCATION

© Jerry Dennis Clarkson 1991

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

JUNE 1991

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Vous le / Votre référence

Us le / Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-78319-2

Canada

APPROVAL

Name: Jerry Dennis Clarkson

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: A Critique of R. S. Peters'
Justification of "Education"

Examining Committee:

Chair: Robin Barrow

Roland Case
Senior Supervisor

Kieran Egan
Professor

Stuart Richmond
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University
External Examiner

Date Approved July 4, 1991

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

A CRITIQUE OF R. S. PETERS' JUSTIFICATION OF "EDUCATION"

Author:

(signature)

Jerry Dennis Clarkson

(name)

June 26, 1991

(date)

Abstract

This thesis critically examines the arguments R.S. Peters presents to justify his conception of education, particularly those appearing in "The Justification of Education" (1973). Peters defines an educated person as one who has acquired (a) a considerable body of knowledge, (b) a breadth of understanding, and (c) a non-instrumental attitude towards the major activities that are pursued. Peters argues that these features are worthwhile because they are (a) useful in promoting satisfactions and mitigating evils, (b) associated with an interesting way of life, and (c) fundamental to justification itself. I show that Peters does not adequately justify either the features he attributes to educated persons or why one should regard these features as worthwhile.

In Chapter One I outline the nature of the problem. I show that although Peters (1983) has reconsidered aspects of his earlier work on the justification of education it is unclear which works ought to be revised. I also identify additional deficiencies which Peters does not acknowledge. In Chapter Two I show that Peters fails

to provide compelling reasons why others should adopt his conception of the educated person. In Chapter Three I argue that Peters' instrumental arguments intended to justify education are incomplete and his transition to non-instrumental arguments is poorly argued. In Chapters Four and Five I discuss Peters' hedonistic and non-hedonistic non-instrumental arguments, respectively. I show that Peters' hedonistic argument rests on unsubstantiated presumptions about the dispositions of educated persons and the inherent value of complex activities; his non-hedonistic argument explicates the nature of having a concern for truth but does not show that this concern is worthwhile.

The overall thrust of this thesis is to argue there are serious deficiencies in Peters' justifications of education in addition to those he has acknowledged.

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	iii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Peters' Distinction Between General and Specific Conceptions of Education	9
Introduction	9
General and Specific Senses of Education	10
Criticisms of Peters' Historical Account	15
An Alternative to Peters' Account	21
Notes on Chapter Two	32
Chapter Three: Peters' Instrumental Arguments	34
Introduction	34
Justifications of Knowledge and Understanding	35
Justifications of Breadth of Understanding	40
The Non-instrumental Attitude	47
Incompleteness of the Instrumental Justifications	48
The Transition to Non-instrumental Arguments	50

Chapter Four: Peters' Hedonistic, Non-instrumental Arguments.	54
Introduction.	54
Complex Activities.	55
Planning and the Pursuit of Knowledge.	60
The Incompleteness of Peters' Hedonistic, Non-instrumental Arguments.	68
Notes on Chapter Four.	71
Chapter Five: Peters' Non-hedonistic, Non-instrumental Arguments	72
Introduction	72
The Concern for Truth.	73
The Relevance of Concern for Truth to Justification.	76
The Value of Justification	80
Breadth of Understanding	83
An Instrumental Type of Argument	89
The Non-instrumental Attitude.	93
Conclusion	98
Bibliography.	102

Chapter One

Introduction

In 1983, R.S. Peters acknowledged the validity of certain criticisms of his previous work concerning the justification of education. He conceded that

a too specific concept of 'education' was used which concentrated on its connection [with knowledge] and understanding. (1983, p. 37)

He also admitted that he

tried but failed to give a convincing transcendental justification of 'worthwhile activities', [sic] such as science or agriculture as distinct from Bingo or playing fruit machines, which I [Peters] thought relevant to the curriculum. (1983, p. 37)

These comments have caused some uncertainty about the status of Peters' work prior to 1983. Although he directs his comments primarily at critics of Ethics and Education (Peters, 1966), he has used similar conceptual analyses and transcendental arguments in subsequent publications. Peters refers to two later publications (1974; 1977a) as examples of "better work" which has been overlooked (1983, p. 37). Since the 1977a publication contains many previously published articles, it is unclear which of Peters' arguments, other than those

identified in Ethics and Education, are to be set aside and which ought to be reconsidered.

Also, 1983 was not the first time that Peters had expressed reservations about his use of conceptual analysis and transcendental arguments. For example, in 1970 he wrote

I have always assumed this connexion between 'education' and the development of an educated man But perhaps I did not appreciate how widespread the older use of 'education' is in which there is no such tight connexion between various processes of bringing up and rearing and the development of an educated man. (1970, pp. 12-13)

For the question remains whether it is desirable to lay stress on knowledge and understanding in this way, to be concerned about all round development and intrinsic motivation. To deal with issues of this sort we have to go into ethics and social philosophy as well as into an empirical analysis of the contemporary situation, conceptual analysis can of itself contribute little to answering such questions, but it can pose them in a more precise form. (1970, p. 19)

Here, as in 1983, Peters admits that his conception of education is narrower than conceptions used by others, that conceptual analysis has limitations, and there is a need to consider a wider range of factors when justifying educational recommendations. Yet, in a subsequent publication Peters' (1973) does not significantly change his conception of education and he continues to rely

extensively on conceptual analysis and transcendental arguments.

Although the 1983 paper might serve as a basis for revising Peters' previous work, all the deficiencies in his arguments would not be overcome on the basis of these revisions. I contend that the flaws in Peters' justification of education are deeper than his qualifications would suggest. His arguments in The Justification of Education (1973) (hereafter referred to as JE) are illuminating examples of these additional weaknesses.

In Chapter Two, I begin my critique of Peters' arguments by examining his reasons for distinguishing between general and specific conceptions of education. I show that the reasons Peters offers for making this distinction are based on an implausible historical account of the changes in the use of the concept of education. I discuss an alternative account of these changes which better explains the variety of conceptions of education that can be found in the literature. If this account is accepted, either Peters has falsely claimed that the general conception of education does not have significant evaluative suggestions or his specific

conception is only one of several that might be adopted. In either case, Peters is obliged to explain why we should adopt his conception of education over the alternatives.

In Chapter Three I examine Peters' instrumental arguments for the justification of education. These arguments are intended to show that acquisition of knowledge, breadth of understanding and, what Peters calls, the non-instrumental attitude are useful in promoting worthwhile ends. Peters admits that these arguments are incomplete because they do not identify particular ends one ought to achieve. He attempts to solve this problem by shifting to an argument based on the intrinsic worth of the pursuit of knowledge.

I show that Peters' instrumental arguments are also incomplete because they rest on unsubstantiated empirical claims about the utility of becoming educated and because Peters fails to establish the relevance of instrumental arguments to his conception of education. In addition, I show that one of Peters' arguments includes an unacknowledged reference to intrinsic worth and his transition from instrumental to non-instrumental arguments is achieved through an unwarranted shift of

focus which conveniently ensures that the intrinsic worth of the pursuit of knowledge is a central feature of the justification of education.

In Chapters Four and Five I consider Peters' use of two types of non-instrumental arguments--hedonistic and non-hedonistic arguments. Peters' hedonistic argument is intended to show that the pursuit of knowledge is an intrinsically worthwhile activity because it provides unending opportunities for the exercise of skill and discrimination. Peters admits that this argument is "not entirely convincing" because it is "one-sided" (JE, p. 250).

In Chapter Four I show that Peters' hedonistic argument is unacceptable because it rests on empirical claims about the dispositions of educated persons and the desirability of complex activities, it provides an inadequate phenomenology of why people choose to engage in activities, and it fails to distinguish certain kinds of knowledge and understanding which have educational value from those which do not. Also, Peters does not establish the relevance of hedonistic arguments to his conception of education.

In Chapter Five I show that Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental argument explicates the implications of having a concern for truth but it does not show that these implications are worthwhile. I also show that Peters ignores a number of contingent and conceptual factors that impair the validity of his non-hedonistic, non-instrumental argument.

Peters has admitted to using a conception of education which is linked too closely with knowledge and understanding (1983, p. 41). He has also conceded that his conceptual analysis tends to be "too self-contained an exercise" (1983, p. 43). In this thesis I show that even if these weaknesses were corrected, there are additional flaws which make Peters' justification of education unacceptable.

Barrow and Milburn (1990) describe the conceptual analysis of education as

the attempt to articulate precisely what one ideally takes it [the concept of education] to involve, and to tease out the various implications of one's view. (pp. 22-23)

The task involves a consideration of a range of conceptions of education from one's own and other cultures and ends with a coherent personal conception. Barrow and Milburn write that

The criteria for assessing whether a concept is well analysed, on this view, are clarity, internal coherence and consistency, making implications explicit, and coherence between those implications and other beliefs. (1990, p. 23)

In this thesis I show that Peters' analysis and justification of education do not satisfy all these criteria. I show that Peters fails to adequately consider the range of alternatives to his conception of education, his conceptual and valuative claims are inconsistent, and he fails to consider all the implications which follow from his analysis.

More specifically, the weaknesses in Peters analysis and justification of education are: (a) Peters' presents an inadequate historical account of the evolution of the concept of 'education' and fails to show why we ought to adopt the particular conception of education he has proposed, (b) he does not demonstrate the relevance of instrumental and hedonistic values to his conception of education, and (c) his non-hedonistic, non-instrumental argument explicates but does not justify the features Peters attributes to educated persons.

R.S. Peters has, no doubt, provoked much discussion about the nature of education and the reasons for becoming educated. In the end, however, it must be

concluded that his conception of education is only one of many that might be adopted and his justification for becoming educated in this way is inadequate.

Chapter Two

Peters' Distinction Between General and Specific Conceptions of Education

Introduction

Peters wrote JE intending to answer two questions: "What . . . are the values which are specific to being educated and what sort of justification can be given for them?" (JE, p. 239). In answering the first question, Peters identifies two senses of education, a general sense, concerned with general upbringing and a specific sense, concerned with the development of educated persons. Peters dismisses the general sense of education as not having significant valuative suggestions. The specific sense of education is the focus of his arguments in JE.

Unfortunately for Peters there is a prior question which he does not address: "Are there values specific to being educated?", that is, "Is there a particular set of values such that if a person has acquired these values then one must conclude that this person is an educated person?" If the answer to this question is "No" then

Peters' justification of education would be incomplete at best unless he shows that we ought to adopt his conception of education over plausible alternatives.

In this chapter I show that Peters' distinction between the general and specific conceptions of education rests on an implausible historical account of the development of the concept of education by considering the concepts of education offered by a number of prominent writers over the last century. An alternative account of the changes to this concept suggests that the values specific to being educated depend on the conception of education one uses and that Peters' specific conception, with its attendant values, is only one of a number of conceptions of education one might choose to adopt.¹ I show that the values specific to being educated depend on which conception of education one is using.

General and Specific Senses of Education

Peters identifies two senses of education: a general conception which covers "almost any process of learning, rearing, or bringing up" (JE, p. 239) and a more specific sense which refers to processes leading to the

development of educated persons (JE, p. 240). Peters believes that these two senses of education have different origins and distinct histories of development.

With the rise of industrialism, greater value was attached to fostering literacy and numeracy, and acquiring knowledge and skills. Special institutions came to focus on transmitting knowledge and skills and, consequently, 'education' came to be closely associated with the kinds of instruction that took place in them.² According to Peters, this was the origin of the general conception of education (1970, p. 13, hereafter referred to as EEM). "Nowadays, when we speak of education in this general way, we usually mean going to school, to an institution devoted to learning" (JE, p. 239).

Peters claims that the general sense of education is associated with almost any quality of mind that is learned. Here, the connections between knowledge, value, and education are not conceptual (EEM, p. 13)--a variety of relationships is possible (Hirst & Peters, 1970, pp. 21-25, hereafter referred to as LE). Although, in JE, Peters only acknowledges a general sense of education, Hirst and Peters conclude there is a range of such senses of education:

At one end of a continuum is the older and undifferentiated concept which refers just to any process of bringing up or rearing in which the connection either with what is desirable or with knowledge is purely contingent. There may be uses which link it just with the development of desirable states without any emphasis on knowledge; there may be uses which pick out the development of knowledge without implying its desirability. (LE, p. 25)

Peters derives his specific conception of education "from the analysis of what it means to be 'educated'" (EEM, p. 14). The educated person, he argues, gained prominence as an ideal in the nineteenth century with the rise in importance of specialized knowledge:

as a reaction against utilitarian specialization it upheld the value both of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and of all round understanding and development. (EEM, p. 14)

Peters describes the educated person as one who is

capable of delighting in a variety of pursuits and projects for their own sake and whose pursuit of them and general conduct of his life is transformed by some degree of all round understanding and sensitivity. (EEM, p. 14)

An educated person has acquired

a considerable body of knowledge together with understanding . . . [he] . . . not only has breadth of understanding but is also capable of connecting up these different ways of interpreting his experience so that he achieves some kind of cognitive perspective. (JE, p. 240)

An educated person is "capable, to a certain extent, of doing things for their own sake" (JE, p. 241). That is,

educated persons can adopt a non-instrumental attitude towards the activities they might choose to take up.

Peters also claims that educated persons have a "range of dispositions towards knowledge and understanding" and a preference for complex activities which they find absorbing and fascinating (JE, p. 248). Such persons are concerned about truth (JE, p. 251), disposed to ask "Why?" and their world is "transformed by the development and systematization of conceptual schemes" (JE, p. 256). An educated person has an "abiding concern for knowledge and understanding" and a belief that the unexamined life is not worth living (JE, p. 262).

We see, then, that Peters divides the conceptions of education into two sets, his specific conception of education and all the others, which he refers to as the general conception of education. He argues that the two senses of education have different origins and histories, the specific sense developing from what it means to be an educated person, the general sense arising from an association of 'education' with institutions devoted to learning. Peters dismisses the general conception of education because it "can be accorded any kind of

instrumental value and so is not of any significance for its valuative suggestions" (JE, pp. 239-240). He adopts his specific conception because he believes it, alone, offers these valuative suggestions.

There are two aspects to my criticism of Peters' distinctions between the general and specific conceptions of education. First, I raise objections to the historical account itself. Second, I discuss an alternative account of the different senses of 'education' which accounts for the variety of conceptions of education we actually find in use. Together, these discussions show that either Peters' claim that the general sense of education is without significant valuative suggestions is false or that there is more than one specific sense of education. In either case, Peters' specific conception of 'education' would not be the only one to offer significant valuative suggestions. Therefore, he is obliged to show that it is his conception of education which we ought to adopt. I suggest that his reasons for doing so are unsatisfactory.

Criticisms of Peters' Historical Account

Peters argues that there are two senses of education: one general, the other specific. According to Peters, these senses of 'education' had different origins and evolved in different ways. This account, however, is untenable because it does not explain the variety of conceptions which we actually find.

Bain (1877), for example, discusses three conceptions of education which do not fit neatly into Peters' account. According to Bain, the Prussian National System sought

the harmonious and equitable evolution of the human powers . . . by a method based on the nature of the mind, every power of the soul to be unfolded, every crude principle of life stirred up and nourished, all one-sided culture avoided, and the impulses on which the strength and worth of men rest, carefully attended to. (1877, pp. 1-2)

This particular conception of education appears to be a composite of Peters' two senses of education. It implies all round intellectual development, suggesting Peters' specific sense of education, but there is also a place for "bodily or muscular training" and "training with a view to happiness or enjoyment," which suggests the general sense.³ In this example, the ideal of the educated person is not someone who has taken up the

disinterested pursuit of knowledge but someone who develops all his or her human faculties and powers to the fullest.

Alternatively, James Mill believed that education should "render the individual, as much as possible, an instrument of happiness, first to himself, and next to other beings" (Bain, 1877, p. 2).⁴ This is a specific sense of education, but one which differs from that offered by Peters. For Mill the educated person is an "instrument of happiness;" for Peters this person has a concern for truth and a preference for intellectual pursuits. In both cases, the educated person functions as an ideal.

Bain suggests a third concept of education drawn from Chambers's Encyclopedia:

In the widest sense of the word [educated] a man is educated, either for good or for evil, by everything that he experiences from the cradle to the grave. . . . But in the more limited and usual sense, the term education is confined to the efforts made, of set purposes, to train men in a particular way--the effort of the grown-up part of the community to inform the intellect and mould the character of the young . . . and more especially [education in this limited sense refers] to the labours of professional educators or school-masters. (1877, p. 4)

Apparently, this is an example of a general sense of education without significant valuative suggestions since it includes "everything that [a person] experiences from the cradle to the grave." However, it also includes a specific conception that is unlike Peters' specific conception because it refers to vocational training, informing the intellect and moulding the character.

We see, then, that in the previous century there were conceptions of education which shared features found in both senses described by Peters. Similar examples can be found in more recent literature. Durkheim, for example, defines education as

the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined. (1956, p. 71)

This is a specific sense of education because there is a particular end--a capacity to participate in a society or social milieu--to be achieved. Yet, it resembles Peters' general conception because it is concerned with preparing the child to take a place in the community and it is intended to take place in schools.

Bobblitt writes that

the purpose of education is to bring each human being to live, as nearly as practicable, in everything that he does in the way that is best for him. The method of education is for each individual to carry on all his activities all the time, as far as possible, in the way that is best for one of his nature, age, and situation. In the education of any person, the good life is both the objective and the process. (1941, p. 5)

Bobbitt divides the areas of education into a "General Portion" which includes knowledge and skills that each person ought to acquire and a "Specialized Portion" concerned with "activities of one's calling" (1941, pp. 6-8).

Again, there is a resemblance to both of Peters' conceptions of education. The General Portion is associated with knowledge everyone ought to acquire. The Specialized Portion is concerned with acquiring specific knowledge and skills. Although Bobbitt is discussing what Peters would call schooling, "the good life" functions as an objective and a process. This can be seen in Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments where he attempts to show that educated persons have a concern for truth that leads them to value a way of life governed by the demands of reason. Peters believes that education is an instantiation of this way of life.

Oakeshott (1971) presents a general conception of education in which the central concern is the transmission of a cultural heritage. He describes education as

a transaction between human beings and postulants to a human condition in which new-comers are initiated into an inheritance of human achievements of understanding and belief Education . . . is learning to look, to listen, to feel, to imagine, to believe, to understand, to choose and to wish. It is a postulant to a human condition learning to recognize himself as a human being in the only way in which this is possible; namely, by seeing himself in the mirror of an inheritance of human understandings and activities. (pp. 46-47)

Oakeshott claims that this inheritance can

be transmitted only where it inspires the gratitude, the pride, and even the veneration of those who already enjoy it, where it endows them with an identity they esteem, and where it is understood as a repeated summons rather than a possession, an engagement rather than an heirloom. (p. 47)

This is a general conception of education because it includes virtually any knowledge and understanding which are part of our cultural heritage, and the educational activities by which this heritage is to be transmitted are to occur in schools. Yet, unlike Peters' general conception of education this conception has significant evaluative suggestions, that education ought to ensure the transmission of the cultural heritage of one's society.

It may require further argument to identify which particular excellences ought to be transmitted, but Oakeshott has at least set an initial direction to the argument.

Bailey presents a specific conception of education which differs from that of Peters. He writes

Liberal education, then, achieves through the development of reason the liberation [of the individual] from the present and the particular; it focuses upon the fundamental and the generalizable; and it has concern for the intrinsically worthwhile rather than for the solely utilitarian. (1984, p. 26)

Bailey's emphasis on the development of reason suggests Peters' specific conception of education, but Bailey sees education concerned with transmitting knowledge which has intrinsic worth because it is fundamental. This knowledge "underlies more possibilities of application and is therefore more generalizable and more liberating" than "particular items of knowledge" (1984, p. 22). Peters, on the other hand, focuses on the intrinsic worth of the rational virtues, the pursuit of knowledge, and the examination of one's life. Whereas Bailey leaves the choice of the good life up to the individual, Peters associates it with the pursuit of truth.

We see, then, there are various conceptions of education. Some conceptions emphasize general upbringing and developing persons who are capable of taking a place in a particular society. Others emphasize the development of educated persons; but the nature of this ideal differs from that described by Peters. In each case, the proponents of the conception of education identify significant valuative suggestions. The reason that Peters can claim that the general conception of education can be accorded any type of instrumental value is because he combines all the different conceptions of education which are based primarily on instrumental values into one class. Disparate instrumental values then become gathered under one heading.

An Alternative to Peters' Account

Peters' analysis and historical account of the concept of education do not explain the variety of conceptions we can find in discussions of educational matters. Neither do they show why we ought to adopt his particular specific conception of education. The reasons for these failures are found in Peters' reliance on conceptual analysis to give direction to his justification of education.

Peters describes conceptual analysis as an attempt to establish the "logically necessary conditions" for the application of the word being analysed (Hirst and Peters, 1970, p. 5). The point of conceptual analysis is

to get a better grasp of the similarities and differences that it is possible to pick out. And these are important in the context of other questions which we cannot answer without such preliminary analysis. (Hirst and Peters, 1970, p. 8)

According to Peters, conceptual analysis allows us to see how concepts are connected to each other and to forms of social life. It also identifies the assumptions behind the uses of concepts. This view of conceptual analysis seems too narrow.

Evers (1979), for example, suggests a broader sense of conceptual analysis. He sees it as a theoretical enterprise where the unit of meaning is not individual concepts but "the total theory in which criterial conditions figure" (p. 10). The logically necessary conditions, then, would be determined by such factors as consistency with and relevance to some conceptual framework.

Under this interpretation, each sense of education discussed in the previous section of this chapter consists in a different theoretical framework of

conceptual relationships. For Peters' conception of education, these relationships are between such concepts as knowledge, understanding, value, and concern for truth. For other authors, such as Durkheim (1956) and Bobbitt (1941) for example, the conceptual relationships might include connections between education and practical knowledge or social skills. Balley (1984), on the other hand, would include moral virtues and Oakeshott (1971) would include one's cultural heritage as elements in the educational conceptual framework.

For each of these authors, some type of knowledge or the features of some kind of person would be educational, an aspect of education, or an educational goal if they were relevant to or consistent with the respective conceptual framework the author identifies as education. The problem of accounting for logically necessary conditions, then, is to show how such frameworks are established, including an explication of the broader context in which a particular conception operates.

Reddiford (1972) identifies two types of conceptual relationships. External relationships are marked by associations between concepts and the objects to which these concepts refer. In the case of 'education' these

objects could be types of persons, such as those who are knowledgeable in the academic disciplines, skilled at some job, or are erudite. In each case, to say that an educated person has some type of knowledge or disposition is true but in each case it is a contingent truth (1972, p. 198). Each particular conception of education could be other than it is.

The second type of conceptual relationship is the internal relationships between concepts within a conceptual system. These internal conceptual relationships define the conceptual system and allow us to say something meaningful about the world because they are what we know and understand and they reflect how we think about the world. Different sets of internal relationships mark out different conceptual systems and different conceptual systems give rise to different sorts of questions and answers concerning the world. According to Reddiford, conceptual analysis concerns the analysis of these internal relationships and identifies necessary conceptual truths (1972, p. 199).

We see, then, that conceptual truths are both contingent and necessary. They are contingent in the sense that statements expressing conceptual connections

could be other than they are; 'education', for example, could refer to elements of general upbringing or to development of persons who have a concern for truth. That is, it is a contingent truth that certain objects are relevant to education. However, conceptual truths are also necessary because they follow from a set of conceptual connections within a conceptual system. From the perspective of a particular conception of education the conceptual truths are necessary truths. That is, within the framework defining 'education' the concepts must be consistent with each other.

Reddiford concludes that

we can choose the conceptual frameworks we employ in describing and justifying educational processes. . . . None are forced upon us by what goes on in schools or by what others say in description or justification of what goes on. Having chosen we are then committed to a range of conceptual connections expressed by conceptual truths. (1972, p. 203)

In other words, the logically necessary conditions for the use of 'education' arise from the satisfaction of contingent conditions. The kinds knowledge, persons, or institutions which are associated with 'education' is a contingent matter. Once these contingent relationships have been established, it is a matter of logical necessity that 'education' is used in certain ways rather

than others. The logical necessity arises from the commitment to the conception of education which has been adopted.

The relationships among concepts within a conceptual system must remain relatively stable if we are to communicate with others, make choices, or comprehend our experiences. For example, one could not converse with others if there was no agreement on the meaning of 'education' or if the meaning changed continually throughout a conversation. If at one point in a discussion 'education' was intended to mean preparing children for roles in society but at the next it was intended to mean the development of persons devoted to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and still later, 'education' meant something else again, communication using this word would be very difficult. Nevertheless, conceptual frameworks do change over time as the nature and purposes of societies change. Such changes could account for the different conceptions of education in the previous examples.

For example, assume for the moment that 'education' means the preparation of individuals for roles in society and that this preparation is thought to be worthwhile. If

the persons graduating from educational institutions were found to be incompetent or to have acquired knowledge which had little practical value then prospective employers might begin to use 'education' to refer to the development of persons who were incompetent; there would be a change in the meaning of 'education.' Similarly, if these institutions came to emphasize the academic disciplines and the pursuit of knowledge, then the meaning of 'education' would change, but in a different way.

The conceptions of education by Bain, Durkheim and others presented earlier reflect different conceptual frameworks for 'education' which have developed as the natures of different societies and social groups have changed. Each particular concept of education reflects a different set of meanings that are a product of a particular history of changes. These changes consisted in adding and deleting connections between concepts within the conceptual framework identified by 'education.' The result has been a family of conceptions bearing some resemblances to one another but no one of which is necessarily a paradigm case of education.

These alternative conceptions pose a dilemma for Peters. If they are general conceptions then Peters' claim that general conceptions of education are "without significant valuative suggestions" is false. These alternative conceptions of education do have significant valuative suggestions, at least for those who have adopted them. On the other hand, if any of these conceptions are classified as specific senses of education, then Peters' first step in the justification of education is to show why his specific conception ought to be adopted over the alternatives that are available.

Although conceptual analysis can explicate the conceptual relationships which fall within the boundaries of a particular sense of 'education', some additional argument is required to show which particular conceptual system--which sense of 'education'--one ought to adopt. In part this choice depends on the level of understanding reached by the members of the society in which education is taking place. But, one must also consider the nature of the conceptions of education themselves. Some conceptions of education may be inappropriate for particular societies because they do not allow the members of these societies to say anything meaningful

about what one ought to learn or how to bring up one's children.

The reasons Peters offers for rejecting what he calls the general conception of education and adopting his specific conception are unacceptable. Peters defines the general sense of education as one which can be accorded any type of instrumental value and rejects it for this reason. He defines the specific sense of education as one which is associated with specific values, and accepts it for that reason. In other words, Peters rejects the general sense of education because it is a general conception; he adopts the specific sense because it is specific. However, he does not provide any reasons preferring specificity over generality.

Neither can one reject the general conception of education, or any of the particular exemplars presented previously, because it represents an incorrect use of 'education'. Whether or not a particular use of 'education' is correct depends on whether or not the use is consistent with the chosen conceptual framework. For example, if one associates 'education' with practices to do with "bringing up children then it ['education'] cannot refer to those practices which are incompatible

with bringing up children" (Reddlford, 1972, p. 196). Similarly, if someone associates 'education' only with the pursuit of truth then this person cannot use 'education' to refer to activities which are not intended to have this end.

To say that a concept is used correctly is not the same as saying that an answer to a question is correct. Right and wrong are not, strictly speaking, proper terms to use in referring to uses of concepts. It would be better to refer to alternative uses as being different, or to say that they are consistent or inconsistent with a particular conceptual framework.

We see, then, that Peters' distinction between general and specific conceptions of education is based on an inadequate conceptual analysis and an improbable historical account of the developments to the concept of education. Peters fails to consider the contingent relationships between the nature of a particular society and the conception of education that is held by its members and his historical account fails to explain the many different conceptions of education one can find in use. A more plausible account of these changes is that the meanings of 'education' changed over time in ways

which reflected the changes in the societies where education was taking place. Different changes lead to different conceptions of education.

We also see that Peters' rejection of the general sense of education is ill-founded. He does not discuss the merits of his conception of education relative to the merits of other conceptions. He does not show that the conceptual frameworks defining the general conceptions of education are inferior to that defining his specific sense. He only claims that the general sense of education is "without significant valuative suggestions." I have shown this claim to be false.

Although Peters' account of the concepts of education is inadequate, it is premature to dismiss his analysis entirely. While I have raised some concerns about the way he describes the nature of education and his reasons for choosing one specific sense of education over others, these concerns may be addressed in Peters' justifications of the specific values he associates with being an "educated person." I begin examining these arguments in Chapter Three.

Notes on Chapter Two

- 1 In addition to JE, information about Peters' conception of the educated person is drawn from two other sources: "Education and the Educated Man" (Peters, 1970) and The Logic of Education (Hirst & Peters, 1970). Although Ethics and Education (Peters, 1966) also provides a perspective relevant to the present discussion, Peters (1983, p. 37) criticized this version of his conception and justification of education. "Aims of Education" (Peters, 1967) also provides a relevant perspective but it is virtually contemporary with Ethics and Education. The views expressed in these later two works have since been revised. These revisions are reflected in the articles I have selected for discussion.
- 2 In this thesis I shall use single quotation marks to indicate my reference to a word (e.g., 'knowledge' has nine letters) as opposed to a concept (e.g., knowledge implies true belief).
- 3 It is plausible to conclude that one aspect of this training was concerned with gainful employment or acquiring knowledge which had instrumental value.

Notice also that training is not clearly distinguished from education.

4 Barrow (1976, p. 84) offers a similar view: "Education should seek to develop individuals in such a way that they are in a position to gain happiness for themselves, while contributing to the happiness of others, in a social setting that is designed to maintain and promote the happiness of all so far as possible."

Chapter Three

Peters' Instrumental Arguments

Introduction

According to Peters, educated persons possess three attributes: a considerable body of knowledge, a breadth of understanding, and a disposition to adopt a non-instrumental attitude towards the activities they choose to take up (JE, pp. 240-241). But, as I showed in the previous chapter, there are other conceptions of education and one might ask "Why should one choose Peters' conception over these alternatives?" Although Peters does not provide a direct answer to this question, perhaps, he may indirectly provide satisfactory reasons in his justifications of the values he attributes to educated persons.

In this chapter I discuss Peters' instrumental justifications for becoming an educated person. Peters notes that these arguments do not provide a complete justification for becoming an educated person because they do not identify the ends which ought to be achieved. I contend that there are two additional problems with Peters' instrumental arguments: (a) they rest on

unsubstantiated empirical claims about the consequences of becoming educated and (b) Peters does not justify giving priority to the goods implied by his arguments over goods implied by other conceptions of education. These weaknesses are also found in Peters' transition from instrumental to hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments. The discussion presented in this chapter leads into an examination of Peters hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments in Chapter Four.

Justifications of Knowledge and Understanding

For Peters, educated persons have acquired a considerable body of knowledge. One might then ask "Why is acquiring this body of knowledge worthwhile?". Peters writes that

It can be argued cogently that the development of knowledge, skill, and understanding is in both the community's and the individual's interest because of other types of satisfaction which it promotes, and because of distinctive evils which it mitigates. (JE, p. 243)

For example, skills or "knowing how" can

provide an individual with a living and hence with food, shelter, and a range of consumer satisfactions. (JE, p. 243)

Peters also notes that knowledge and understanding are useful in communicating and in maintaining social relationships. He writes

Knowledge, in general, is essential to the survival of a civilized community in which processes of communication are very important. For 'knowledge' implies at least (I) that what is said or thought is true and (II) that the individual has grounds for what he says or thinks. (JE, p. 243)

Peters claims that most forms of communication would be impossible unless people generally said "what they thought was true." Peters notes that "the evidence condition is also socially very important because of the value of reliability and predictability in social life" (JE, p. 243).

A person who acquires understanding can explain events in terms of general principles, theories, and patterns. Understanding improves the reliability of prediction and widens the context of predictability, which, in turn, gives educated persons greater control over their environment. Peters notes that the understanding behind skills is particularly important to industrialized societies undergoing rapid change because it facilitates workers' adaptation to new circumstances (JE, p. 244). Social understanding is also useful because

it enables a person to work with others and to adjust to social changes.

Peters, however, ignores another side to this argument. Although it is true that knowledge and understanding can be used to promote worthwhile ends they can also be used to promote evils. For example, the development of nuclear weapons, pollution, and extinctions of organisms are undesirable consequences of acquiring knowledge and understanding. Peters, then, cannot justify acquiring knowledge and understanding merely by pointing out possible worthwhile consequences because acquiring knowledge and understanding can have both good and bad consequences.

Peters cannot show that acquiring knowledge and understanding are necessarily worthwhile by specifying more precisely the type of knowledge one ought to acquire because it is not the particular knowledge and understanding that are good or evil, but the uses which are found for them. Learning to write, for example, can enable persons to write novels which make profound comments on the human condition or it can enable them to write racist diatribes.

One approach which does hold out promise in justifying education is to identify a worthwhile way of life which would then suggest worthwhile activities and achievements to be promoted through education. These in turn would suggest knowledge and understanding which are useful and which ought to be acquired. In a subsequent paper, "Democratic Values and Educational Aims," (Hereafter referred to as DV) Peters (1979) seems aware of this approach. He writes that if we are to move from generalities to identifying particular items of knowledge which have educational value

we have first . . . to make explicit the values of the society in which education is taking place, and then state specific aspects of these values that we think need emphasis. Alternatively we could disapprove of certain of these values and state as aims of education what we think needs emphasis as correctives to what is commonly accepted.
(DV, p. 468)

Peters believes that one must justify only particular items of knowledge and understanding with references to specific societies. Unlike Peters, I contend that the justification of knowledge and understanding in general requires these references too. One can show that some body of knowledge and understanding is worthwhile only by showing that the

elements which make up this body ought to be found worthwhile by the members of a particular society.

We see, then, that Peters finds knowledge and understanding to have instrumental value because they can promote satisfactions and mitigate evils (JE, p. 243). He also claims that knowledge and understanding are valuable in communicating, exercising control over the environment, and predicting consequences of actions. I suggest that Peters' justification for acquiring knowledge and understanding is inadequate because it ignores the possibility that knowledge and understanding can be used to promote evils as well as goods.

This weakness in Peters' argument can be addressed by describing a worthwhile way of life which education ought to promote. The nature of this society or way of life would suggest particular areas of knowledge and understanding one ought to acquire and the reasons for acquiring them. Unfortunately, Peters does not offer us a picture of a worthwhile way of life in which certain instrumental values have priority over other values which might have educational significance.

Justifications of Breadth of Understanding

According to Peters, the understanding acquired by educated persons is not narrowly specialized. The educated person

not only has breadth of understanding but is also capable of connecting up these different ways of interpreting his experience so that he achieves some kind of cognitive perspective. (JE, p. 240)

This cognitive perspective is exhibited in two ways. First, educated persons are free to adjust their responses to the things they encounter; they are not limited to merely reacting to them. Second, the educated person "is ready to pursue links between the different sorts of understanding he has developed" (JE, p. 240).

Peters raises three points in his justification of the instrumental value of breadth of understanding. First, he cites, but does not discuss, P.A. White (1973) as the source of an argument which can be made for "breadth of understanding being an important aspect of political education in a democracy" (JE, p. 244).

White states that there are three main educational objectives in a democracy: acquiring the underlying values of the democratic system, understanding the democratic institutions, and acquiring the forms of

knowledge (1973, pp. 233-234). White regards each of these elements as essential to the existence of a democratic society and the individual's participation in it.

The "forms of knowledge" that White mentions are those described by Hirst (1965). I take this aspect of her conception of "education" to be consistent with that of Peters because he and Hirst co-authored a discussion in which the forms of knowledge, here called "modes of knowledge and experience," are given a central place in the educational curriculum (LE, pp. 62-65).

However, the other aspects of White's conception of education pose problems for Peters if he is to use her arguments in an instrumental justification for acquiring a breadth of understanding. White's arguments contribute to this justification only if democratic political systems are worthwhile. If democratic governments are prone to inefficiency, corruption and pandering to public opinion they could fail to address the problems of the democratic society. As a consequence, there could be a deterioration in the way of life for the citizens of democratic societies. Democracies, then, are not necessarily worthwhile political systems.

White defuses this type of criticism by defining the democratic state as "characterized primarily by its attempt to govern according to the moral principles of justice, freedom, and consideration of interests" (1973, p. 228). Her vision is of a pluralistic society that is governed by pressure groups (pp. 228-229).

However, this definition does not identify a central use of the term 'democracy.' White's definition, for example, makes no references to elections or to elected representatives. Also, aristocracies and oligarchies could be governed by the moral principles and considerations of interest that White associates with democracies. She is aware of this type of criticism and replies "In that case I would say that, whatever term is applied to it, I am interested here in the state-trying-to-govern-according-to-moral-principles" (1973, p. 228).

We see, then, that White's instrumental argument is not concerned with participating in a democracy but with participating in a society which has adopted a set of moral principles. Reference to this type of society poses two problems for Peters. First, her appeal introduces intrinsic worth into her argument by giving the moral

principles a position of ultimate value in determining what the political organization of a society ought to be like. If Peters relies on White for an instrumental justification for acquiring a breadth of understanding he introduces this intrinsic worth into his argument too, but he does not acknowledge it.

Second, it is not clear that participation in any type of society is an intended outcome of Peters' conception of education. Although he mentions democratic societies in his instrumental justification of breadth of understanding, Peters has not shown that democratic societies are relevant to his conception of education. That is, he has not shown that education ought be a vehicle to promote this or any other type of social system.

The second instrumental argument that Peters presents to justify acquiring a breadth of understanding is that persons who acquire it may "make more efficient employees than those with a narrow training" (JE, p. 244). However, Peters expresses doubts about this claim. First, he questions its truth and then suggests that if educated employees are indeed more efficient at their work

it may not be due to the breadth of their understanding and sensitivity but to the fact that, in studying various subjects, they become practised in the generalizable techniques of filing papers and ideas, mastering and marshalling other people's arguments, of presenting alternatives clearly and weighing them up, of writing clearly and speaking articulately, and so on. Their academic training in the administration of ideas may prepare them for being administrators. (JE, p. 244)

This alternative explanation suggests that one could develop efficiency in one's employees by training them in ways to organize and file information, to manipulate people and ideas, and to write and speak clearly. It is not necessary that they become educated, in Peters' sense.

There are two problems with this argument. First, Peters' discussion on this point includes two unsubstantiated empirical claims; first, that educated persons, in Peters' sense, are more efficient at their jobs than persons who are not and, second, that if educated persons are more efficient it may be due to their training in the administration of ideas. The truth of these claims is not self-evident. Peters seems to be aware that there is an empirical aspect to his claim that educated persons are more efficient than uneducated persons because he points to training in the

administration of ideas as a plausible alternative explanation of efficiency. However, this second claim is also empirical and like the first, it is unsubstantiated. Consequently, it is not established that greater employee efficiency is a legitimate instrumental reason for becoming an educated person.

The second problem with Peters' argument is that it is not clear that the development of efficient employees is relevant to Peters' conception of education. As previously noted, Peters' conception of education seems to emphasize theoretical over practical pursuits. If Peters' instrumental arguments are to be successful, he must show that instrumental values are among those values specific to being educated.

The last argument Peters offers for the instrumental value of breadth of understanding, like the first, includes an appeal to intrinsic worth. This time, however the appeal is acknowledged and is the basis of Peters' conclusion that this is not an instrumental argument at all. Peters states,

It may be argued that educated people are of benefit to the professions and to industry because the breadth of their sensitivities helps to make their institutions more humane and civilized. (JE, p. 245)

However, this is, again, an empirical claim whose truth is far from established. It is possible that promoting more civilized and humane institutions has little to do with employees being educated persons, in Peters' sense, but more to do with moral training.

It can be seen, then, that Peters has not established the instrumental value of breadth of understanding. He cites White, but her argument includes an appeal to the intrinsic worth of a particular type of political state so it is not, strictly speaking, an instrumental argument. Also, if Peters uses White's argument he must show that participation in democratic societies is relevant to his conception of education.

More importantly, however, Peters instrumental arguments for acquiring breadth of understanding rest on a number of unsubstantiated empirical claims. It is not clear that education alone promotes and sustains democratic societies. Neither is it clear that becoming an educated person will make one a more efficient employee or make social institutions "more humane and civilized."

The Non-Instrumental Attitude

The third feature Peters attributes to educated persons is the ability to adopt a non-instrumental attitude towards the activities they choose to take up.

The key to it [the non-instrumental attitude] is that regard, respect, or love should be shown for the intrinsic features of activities. (JE, p. 245)

Peters notes that most things can be done for some reason extrinsic to the activity; such as profit, reward, approval, or the avoidance of punishment. A person exhibiting the non-instrumental attitude does things for reasons intrinsic to the activity. For such a person the means and standards of the activity matter (JE, p. 245).

Peters claims that those who acquire a non-instrumental attitude render better service to consumers than those motivated by extrinsic rewards. It could be, for example,

that bricklayers or doctors in fact render better service to the public if they approach their tasks with this attitude rather than with their minds on their pay packet or someone else's satisfaction. (JE, p. 246)

But, Peters notes, this is to look at the non-instrumental attitude from the outside, without regard for the intrinsic features of activities. Should this external perspective predominate it could lead to a

type of corruption. The participants in a practice would be

regarded basically as vehicles for the promotion of public benefit, whose queer attitudes may sometimes promote this, though no thought of it ever enters their heads. This is the manipulators attitude to other human beings, the 'hidden hand' in operation from the outside. (p. 246)

In addition, like his justification of breadth of understanding, Peters' justification of acquiring the non-instrumental attitude rests on an empirical claim, in this case, that "educated" persons render better service. It is not established that this is so. Educated persons may find employment in service industries to be unattractive; and when they find themselves employed in this way they may tend to perform poorly because they are bored, easily distracted or they see this kind of work as objectionable. We see, then, that Peters does not present an unequivocal instrumental justification for acquiring the non-instrumental attitude.

Incompleteness of the Instrumental Justifications

Peters admits that his instrumental arguments are incomplete because they leave unanswered the question "What, in the end, constitutes a social benefit?" (JE, p. 246). I have also shown that Peters' instrumental

arguments are incomplete because he does not consider the undesirable consequences which may result from acquiring knowledge and understanding and because each of his arguments rests on unsubstantiated empirical claims.

In addition, I have raised questions about the relevance of instrumental value to his conception of education. Peters has identified promoting goods, mitigating evils, democratic societies, efficient performance as an employee, and rendering better service as commendable ends which give his conception of education its instrumental value. However, this list of ends might also include leisure activities and the acquisition of particular skills useful in promoting specific satisfactions, mitigating particular evils and rendering certain types of service better. Peters has not shown why it is that the particular ends he has identified, and not others, are the desirable ends which ought to be promoted through education. I am not denying that the features Peters attributes to educated persons are useful. I am, however, questioning the relevance of the particular instrumental values Peters has identified to justifying becoming educated in his sense of 'educated person'.

It seems to me that Peters' instrumental arguments are based on contingent relationships between opportunities for use and the features Peters ascribes to educated persons rather than on conceptual or logical relationships.

Peters claims that

Education, properly understood, is the attempt to actualize the ideal implicit in Socrates' saying that the unexamined life is not worth living. (JE, p. 262)

The educated person is one who is concerned about truth (JE, p. 251), disposed to ask why (JE, p. 256), and accepts that the unexamined life is not worth living (JE, p. 262). These dispositions could be worthwhile because they are goods in themselves, not merely because they have instrumental value. If they do have an instrumental value it is contingent on the nature of the society in which educated persons live, it does not distinguish becoming educated from being trained and it is secondary to their intrinsic worth.

The Transition to Non-Instrumental Arguments

Peters attempts to mitigate the incompleteness of his instrumental justifications by introducing arguments

based on intrinsic worth. To the question "What, in the end, constitutes social benefit?" Peters replies

The answer of those whose thoughts veer towards consumption is that social benefit is constituted by various forms of pleasure and satisfaction. (JE, p. 247)

Peters notes that pleasures and satisfactions are "inseparable from the things that are done." This suggests to him that activities pursued for the sake of pleasure or satisfaction are pursued for non-instrumental reasons. "The reasons for doing them arise from the intrinsic features of the things done" (JE, p. 247).

It can then be asked why some pleasures rather than others are to be pursued. For many the pursuit of knowledge ranks as a pleasure. So this is no more in need of justification than any other form of pleasure--and no less. (JE, p. 247)

In asking this series of questions and answering them in the way he does, Peters has shifted from: (a) arguing that the features he attributes to educated persons are useful in promoting social benefits, to (b) defining social benefits as pleasures and satisfactions, and to (c) claiming that the pursuit of knowledge is one pleasurable activity an educated person might choose to take up.

Each of these steps leaves a question unanswered. First, education need not be justified in terms of social

benefits. One could, for example, point to a life dedicated to performing good deeds or fighting just causes, which could also be a basis for justifying education. In these examples, it is not the social benefit that results from performing the good deed or winning the just fight that is worthwhile, but the duty, the obligation, or the virtues associated with these activities that give them their worth. These activities define an intrinsically worthwhile way of life.

Second, 'social benefits' need not be defined in terms of pleasures and satisfactions. 'Benefits' could, for example, be defined in terms of primary goods. Rawls (1971) defines these as "things that every rational man is presumed to want." These include social goods, "rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth," and natural goods, "health and vigor, intelligence and imagination" (p. 62). Primary goods are not pleasures and satisfactions but the prerequisites for taking pleasure and being satisfied.

Third, the pursuit of knowledge is only one pleasurable activity an educated person might choose to take up. If pleasures and satisfactions are to be the basis of a justification of education then the question

"Which pleasures and satisfactions ought to be promoted through education?" becomes relevant to the present argument. If this question is asked, then purely hedonistic pleasures must be considered as well as those derived from intellectual pursuits. At the very least, Peters must show that the pursuit of knowledge is the pleasurable activity an educated person ought to choose.

We can see, then, that Peters has failed to establish that his choice of conceptions of education is justified, his instrumental arguments rest on unsubstantiated empirical claims and his transition to non-instrumental arguments is achieved through a poorly argued change of focus. However, it is possible that Peters can justify becoming educated with his non-instrumental arguments. It could be that his vision of education does identify ultimate values and these will mitigate all the weaknesses encountered so far. I will begin to discuss Peters' non-instrumental arguments in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Peters' Hedonistic, Non-Instrumental Arguments

Introduction

As I noted in the previous chapter, Peters acknowledges that his instrumental arguments are incomplete and attempts to remedy this deficiency by appealing to non-instrumental reasons for becoming educated. After claiming that, for some, "the pursuit of knowledge ranks as a pleasure," he writes

The question, therefore, is whether knowledge and understanding have strong claims to be included as one of the goods which are constitutive of a worth-while level of life and on what considerations their claims are based. (JE, p. 247)

Two possibilities present themselves to Peters. Knowledge and understanding could be "one of the goods" because they are associated with pleasure and satisfaction or they are "goods" because they are associated with achieving a state which has ultimate value (JE, pp. 247-248). The first of these possibilities are dealt with in Peters' hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments.

In this chapter I examine Peters' hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments and identify four weaknesses

In them. First, these arguments rest on empirical claims whose truth depends on a number of contingent factors which Peters has not considered. Second, his justification leads to an inadequate explanation of why people choose to engage in activities. Third, Peters does not show how the various sources of pleasure and satisfaction he identifies are relevant to the justification of his conception of education. Fourth, Peters' hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments are not only one-sided, they are also incomplete because they do not distinguish knowledge which has educational value from knowledge which does not. The discussion in this chapter leads into a consideration of Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments in Chapter Five.

Complex Activities

Peters claims that complex activities are more absorbing, and by implication more desirable, than simple ones because they offer greater opportunities to exercise skill, sensitivity, and understanding. Peters believes that a case can be made for the acquisition of knowledge and understanding "in so far as it transforms activities by making them more complex and by altering the way in

which they [activities] are conceived" (JE, p. 248). In addition, Peters claims, acquiring this knowledge and understanding of complex activities can itself be a source of pleasure and satisfaction. As persons learn the rules and conventions that make an activity complex they experience the joys of mastery.

There are, however, a number of factors, besides complexity, which influence the pleasure and satisfaction one can obtain from engaging in complex activities. Rawls, for example, refers to the principle specifying the relationship between the complexity and interest as "The Aristotelian Principle" (1971, pp. 424-433). He states:

Other things being equal, human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater the complexity. The intuitive idea here is that human beings take more pleasure in doing something as they become more proficient at it, and of two activities they do equally well, they prefer the one calling on a larger repertoire of more intricate and subtle discriminations. (1971, p. 426)

Rawls notes that complex activities can prove more enjoyable than simple ones because they satisfy a desire for novelty and variety, they tend to allow for invention, ingenuity, surprise and anticipation, and they

are fascinating and provide opportunities for the appreciation of beauty (1971, p. 427). These reasons for finding complex activities desirable are more numerous than but consistent with those offered by Peters. However, unlike Peters, Rawls notes that the preference for complex activities marks a tendency, not an invariable consequence of learning (Pekarsky, 1980, p. 283).

Whether or not persons will find complex activities enjoyable depends on a number of psychological, physiological and sociological factors. Since human abilities are limited, there is a point in the development of a capacity where the increment of increased pleasure or satisfaction will be outweighed by the effort or practice required. If the pleasure of new accomplishments increases more slowly than the effort required to reach new levels of proficiency, a person might stop trying to develop his capacities in this direction. In other words, increments in complexity may result in increments in pleasure, interest or enjoyment, but only within limits (Rawls, 1971, p. 428).

Pekarsky (1980) makes a similar point.

If the unhappiness associated with learning is substantial and the increment of enjoyment

associated with the next level of activity is not very significant, we are unlikely to make the effort to get there. (p. 288)

Pekarsky also notes that Rawls' Aristotelian

Principle

will tend to be operative when we are free from anxiety about satisfying basic needs for food, shelter, self-esteem, and the like. (1980, p. 287)

In other words, the primary goods noted in the previous chapter (Rawls, 1971, p. 62) must be acquired to some degree before complex activities become attractive for their own sake.

Peters' hedonistic argument presumes that these basic needs have been satisfied to some minimal degree; that a certain minimal standard of living has been achieved by the members of the society in which education is taking place. In other words, there is a socio-economic bias to Peters' hedonistic justification of education in that the claims he makes about the mitigation of boredom through engaging in complex activities will apply more frequently to members of middle and upper socioeconomic classes and it is members of these classes who will tend to find Peters' arguments attractive.

Even if their basic needs have been met, however, individuals are likely to differ in their preferences for and their capacities to cope with complex activities. Persons with low intelligence, for example, may find complex activities uninteresting, frustrating, or beyond comprehension. Some persons may find complex games to be interesting but comparably complex theoretical pursuits may be thought boring.

The influence of individual preferences and capacities in determining the attractiveness of complex activities suggests that activities are found attractive if they meet felt needs or interests. In which case, complexity may not be the most important factor influencing a person's choice of activities. For example, persons might choose to engage in scientific research because they are interested in some particular type of investigation. The fact that the investigation is complex may be regarded as a nuisance because this complexity is a source of obstacles that must be overcome before the valued end can be achieved.¹

We can see, then, that an increase in the complexity of an activity is not always associated with an increase in pleasure or interest. For some individuals a complex

activity might prove to be an interesting challenge, for others, it might be aversive, and for everyone there is a point at which complexity makes mastering an activity too difficult to be enjoyable.

In addition, complexity alone does not determine whether or not an activity is absorbing. Some minimal standard of living is necessary before complexity is likely to influence the desirability of an activity. Felt needs and interests are also factors in mitigating boredom; and the ends or purposes of an activity have implications for whether an activity ought to play such a role.

Planning and the Pursuit of Knowledge

There are many kinds of complex activities educated persons might choose to pursue. Championing environmental causes, for example, or cabinet making both provide many opportunities to exercise skill and discrimination and to experience the joys of mastery or the satisfactions of imposing order. Also, a person who wishes to engage in these activities must acquire a considerable body of knowledge and understanding. Peters, however, draws our attention to only two activities an educated person might

choose, planning and the pursuit of knowledge (JE, pp. 249-250).

If a person is to engage in more than one activity, Peters notes, knowledge can be valuable in coordinating participation in them. This, however, is an instrumental argument which, at this point, Peters sets aside. In his hedonistic, non-instrumental argument, Peters claims that it is planning, itself, which is a source of satisfaction.

The case for the use of reason in this sphere of planning is not simply that by imposing coherence on activities conflict, and hence distraction, are avoided; it is also that the search for order and its implementation in life is itself an endless source of satisfaction. (JE, p. 249)

Another activity which involves imposing order is the pursuit of knowledge. Peters claims that the pursuit of knowledge can also be a permanent source of pleasure and satisfaction.² He writes

A strong case can be made for it [knowledge] . . . as providing a range of activities which are concerned with its development as an end in itself and which provide an endless source of interest and satisfaction in addition to that concerned with the love of order. (JE, p. 249)

Unlike activities such as those concerned with eating and sex, Peters believes the pursuit of knowledge

does not depend on bodily conditions.³ He also contends that

Questions of scarcity of the object cannot arise either; for no one is prevented from pursuing truth if many others get absorbed in the same quest. There is no question either . . . of the object perishing or passing away. (JE, p. 250)

In addition, the pursuit of knowledge affords unending opportunities for the exercise of skill and discrimination (JE, p. 250).

An educated person, therefore, who keeps learning in a variety of forms of knowledge, will have a variety of absorbing pursuits to occupy him. The breadth of his interests will minimize the likelihood of boredom. (JE, p. 250)

To the extent that planning and the pursuit of knowledge are complex activities, the criticisms raised in the previous section apply here too. Planning could be so complex that it is aversive. The pursuit of knowledge could place so many demands on the capacity of an individual that this person would prefer to do something else. And, unless basic needs were met, a person might see only the instrumental value of planning and the pursuit of knowledge.

Also, Peters' use of planning and the pursuit of knowledge to justify education fails to explain why education ought to promote these as sources of pleasure

and satisfaction rather than other enjoyable pursuits. One reason Peters offers is that "theoretical activities" provide "unending opportunities for skill and discrimination" (JE, p. 250). Concerning the pursuit of truth, he writes

For truth is not an object that can be attained; it is an aegis under which there must always be progressive development. To discover something, to falsify the views of one's predecessors, necessarily opens up fresh things to be discovered, fresh hypotheses to be falsified. (JE, p. 250)

However, these unending opportunities are not unique to theoretical pursuits. The same claim can be made for engaging in games or becoming a skilled craftsman, which do not have a clear relationship to becoming an educated person in Peters' sense of that term. Each of these is an "aegis" under which there must always be "progressive development." Once the game is finished, another is to be played with greater skill; when the sculpture has been completed or the symphony performed, another work of art awaits creation.

Peters dismisses a range of alternative pursuits, thereby making the choice of pursuing knowledge more attractive, by claiming they are too limited.

Most activities consist in bringing about the same state of affairs in a variety of ways under differing conditions. One dinner differs

from another just as one game of bridge differs from another. But there is a static quality about them in that they both have either a natural or conventional objective which can be attained in a limited number of ways. (JE, p. 250)

However, it is not clear that dinner and particular games do have this static quality. Participating in these activities with different guests, partners or opponents under a variety of conditions at different locations may give these activities a dynamic quality.

Also, Peters is comparing unequal sets here. He lauds the pursuit of knowledge and planning but criticizes "dinner" and "bridge." If, instead, he compared planning and the pursuit of knowledge with "social events" or "leisure activities" a different picture emerges. Just as there are many ways to pursue truth, there are many kinds of social events and leisure activities. Just as one dinner party after another can prove boring so can the continued pursuit of knowledge on a particular topic or in a particular area.

Finally, Peters' appeal to the pleasures of the pursuit of truth (and planning) presents an inadequate picture of why people choose to engage in this activity. Specifically, pleasure and satisfaction are not reasons for everyone choosing to pursue knowledge. Elliott

(1977), for example, notes that in pursuing truth in the disciplines, persons may exercise judgement and discrimination but not associate these with pleasure.

A long and difficult enquiry has the character of a venture which comprehensively engages the self of the enquirer. . . . Disagreeable experiences probably occupy more of the total time of the enquiry than agreeable experiences, and, on reflection, it is often hard to believe that their intensity was less. (1977, p. 10)

Elliott concludes

In many cases it looks as if what is valued is not the joys despite the pains, but the whole complex of pains and joys together, that is to say the venture as such, so long as it is prosecuted with sufficient vigour and attains a certain measure of success. (1977, p. 11)

According to Elliott, then, it is not pleasure and satisfaction which provide the hedonistic reasons for engaging in theoretical pursuits but living powerfully.

He concludes:

In general, the vital demand is to live at the top of one's bent, not only to live keenly and powerfully in the life of the intellect, but also in the life of the senses, the life of physical activity, and the life of practical concern. (1977, pp. 12-13)

Elliott notes that an important factor in determining whether the pursuit of demanding enquiry has high value for those who choose to participate in it is the value attributed to the type of knowledge pursued. The literary critic and the historian attribute value to the knowledge

and understanding they pursue because they regard this knowledge to be worthwhile, not because of some general love of knowledge or commitment to the demands of reason.

Elliott concludes that Peters' hedonistic account is inadequate.

An entirely satisfactory justification of education would take close account of all the factors which make participation in the pursuit of truth for its own sake worthwhile, its vital value and the importance attributed to the objects of which knowledge is sought, as well as its hedonic aspect and the rational values implicit in the concern for truth. (1977, p. 14)

According to Elliott, Peters hedonistic justification of the pursuit of knowledge trivializes this activity by reducing it to a pastime because it relies only on the mitigation of boredom. Elliott suggests

that what Peters really believes is that it is good for a human being to live keenly in the attribute of thought, and that no activity is so far removed from boredom as demanding intellectual activity, especially the demanding pursuit of truth. (1977, p. 14)

Peters notes, in reply to Elliott's criticisms, that

In the main I accept his critique. The emphasis on the mitigation of boredom, though not unimportant is a wry way of defending activities that have more positive features as well. Elliott wishes to add the dimension of power to those of absorption and satisfaction. To be fair to myself I did not ignore it. (1977, p. 28)

Peters notes that a sense of power is implied by his notion of the sense of satisfaction from mastering resistant material but not the "generalized vital demand to live at the top of one's bent" (1977, p. 28).

However, Peters rejects the relevance of this extreme view to the justification of education.

My point is that this aspect of 'power' can be adverbial to anything that one does; it is not specifically connected with learning. As, too, it is largely a gift from the gods, or more accurately of one's brain biochemistry, I am uneasy about its specific relevance to education. (1977, p. 30)

Peters also notes that the ideal of living powerfully lacks the virtue of submission to standards which define the skill or discipline being pursued. He regards this submission to be essential to becoming educated.

Elliott's criticisms tempered with Peters' reply, however, do not ameliorate the weaknesses of Peters' hedonistic arguments. Both authors fail to demonstrate that these pursuits ought to be the basis of education. The missing element here is a demonstration that, in addition to the potential of being pleasurable, planning and the pursuit of knowledge are constitutive of a worthwhile way of life rather than merely a means to it.

The Incompleteness of Peters' Hedonistic, Non-instrumental Arguments

Granted that complex activities, including planning and the pursuit of knowledge, are pleasurable, they are not the only pleasurable activities an educated person might choose to pursue. Even Peters acknowledges that activities characterized by evanescence and those which are simple and brutish can be pleasurable too. Also, intensity of pleasure and familiarity influence one's choice of activities, and, adopting a life dedicated to the exercise of skill and discrimination in the pursuit of truth could prove "exhausting." Peters admits that his argument gives too little weight to "the conservative side of human nature, the enjoyment of routines, and the security to be found in the well-worn and the familiar" (JE, p. 250).

However, if the simple and brutish and the familiar and well-worn are just as pleasurable as the complex and theoretical, then pleasure, satisfaction, and enjoyment do not distinguish knowledge and understanding which have educational value from knowledge and understanding which do not.

Indeed, even if we accept Peters' hedonistic arguments as he presents them, almost any knowledge, skill, or activity can have educational value: knowledge of any activity which is pleasurable, any knowledge of a rule or convention or an activity, any knowledge which enters into planning and coordinating, and any knowledge which can be pursued as an end in itself. Hedonistic criteria would allow one to include the academic disciplines, industrial arts, home economics, sports and even leisure activities under the aegis of education. In short, Peters' hedonistic criteria, like his instrumental criteria, do not distinguish the specific conception of education from the general conception which he has rejected.

Hedonistic criteria alone, then, do not distinguish knowledge and understanding which have educational value from knowledge and understanding which do not. This problem arises because Peters is not clear about how hedonistic criteria are relevant to his conception of education. The necessary additional criteria can be provided by identifying worthwhile ends which ought to be pursued. These ends, however, would be associated with some worthwhile way of life. It is, then, this way of life which must be identified and justified. Peters

addresses this aspect of the justification of education in his discussion of "the values of reason." I will discuss Peters arguments on this point in the following chapter.

Notes on Chapter Four

- 1 Also, one cannot base a justification of education on felt needs and interests alone. If the ends of activities are undesirable then the activities themselves are of dubious value. The dubious value of undesirable ends cannot be removed by claiming that the activity is complex or that people find it absorbing. Only those activities which have worthwhile ends can themselves be said to be worthwhile. Peters, then, must include some attention to the ends of activities in his hedonistic argument. He must first show that certain ends are worthwhile, then that activities directed towards some of these ends are worthwhile because, in addition to having a worthwhile end, they are complex.
- 2 Peters acknowledges, however, that the arguments for these conclusions are not altogether convincing (JE, p. 249).
- 3 This does not seem to be entirely right. One can become equally exhausted or discouraged from physical or mental pursuits.

Chapter Five

Peters' Non-hedonistic, Non-instrumental Arguments

Introduction

We have seen that Peters' instrumental and hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments are inadequate because they cannot identify the ends one ought to pursue and they do not include the full range of educationally worthwhile ends. Peters attempts to remedy these weaknesses with a third type of argument-- non-hedonistic, non-instrumental--that associates becoming educated with an intrinsically worthwhile way of life.

Barrow's comments on 'worthwhile' are relevant here.

Whatever else we may say about 'worthwhile,' it is clear that a proposition asserting that something is worthwhile is a value judgement. Whatever else we may say about philosophy, it is clear that over the centuries it has established that the truth of ultimate value judgements cannot realistically be said to be incontrovertibly demonstrable. (1976, p. 22)

In this chapter I show that Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments do not overcome Barrow's cautionary note. There are two main reasons for their failure. First, Peters' arguments explicate his

conception of the educated person but they do not show that we ought to value this conception over others which have been proposed. Second, some of these arguments rest on unsubstantiated claims about the relationships between the features Peters attributes to educated persons, rational discourse and the human condition.

Although Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments explicate the meaning Peters attaches to 'educated person,' his arguments do not show why we ought to value becoming educated. Peters' claims about the value of education amount to little more than unargued assertions.

The Concern for Truth

Peters begins JE by identifying values he believes are specific to being educated: a considerable body of knowledge, breadth of understanding, and a non-instrumental attitude toward the activities one chooses to pursue (JE, p. 240). He begins his non-hedonistic, non-instrumental argument by introducing an additional value, namely, concern for truth.

Persons who have a concern for truth find it undesirable to believe what is false and they believe

that reasons ought to be given for one's claims and conduct (JE, p. 252). In a subsequent publication Peters writes

what I [Peters] am advocating is a mixture of a determination to avoid fantasy, prejudice, illusion, and error in matters of immediate concern and a readiness to examine our beliefs and attitudes in matters of possible concern. (Peters, 1977b, p. 36)

Peters attaches three conditions to concern for truth. First, there is no final state which must be achieved; there is always something more to learn. Second, Peters notes that his conception of the concern for truth is not positivistic. By this he seems to mean that truth is not restricted to empirical and analytic statements. According to Peters,

the term is being used widely to cover such fields as morals and understanding other people in which some kind of objectivity is possible, in which reasons can be given which count for or against a judgement. (JE, p. 251)

Finally, concern for truth is associated with a number of rational virtues including

truth-telling and sincerity, freedom of thought, clarity, non-arbitrariness, impartiality, a sense of relevance, consistency, respect for evidence, and for people as the source of it. (JE, p. 252)

Peters states that concern for truth has

a worth which is independent of its benefit. Indeed the state of mind of one who is determined to find out what is true and who is

not obviously deluded or mistaken about how things are can be regarded as an ultimate value which provides one of the criteria of benefit. (JE, p. 251)

Although Peters asserts connections between concern for truth, benefit and value, the nature of these connections is not clear from his discussion. In addition, his claim that concern for truth is a criterion of benefit is either false or unsupported, depending on which interpretation of the meaning of concern for truth it is given.

If Peters is claiming that the concern for truth is either a necessary or sufficient criterion of benefit, his claim is false. An electrician, for example, could believe that electricity flows from the positive to the negative terminal of a battery and successfully complete an electric circuit thereby obtaining the benefits of completing his task. A person who has no need or inclination to complete electric circuits may know the direction of current flow but this need not be a criterion of benefit for this person unless he becomes an electrician. Truth, then, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient criterion of benefit. If truth is not a criterion of benefit, then neither is concern for truth.

On the other hand, if we interpret Peters' claim as meaning that the concern for truth marks a worthwhile way of life where benefit is associated with knowing, then his claim is not supported. Peters' discussion of the concern for truth explicates the nature of this concern but it does not show why concern for truth is an "ultimate value" or demonstrate that it is particularly important in determining a worthwhile way of life.

Neither does Peters' discussion show that concern for truth ought to have priority over other values in determining the nature of education or the reasons for becoming educated. There are other states, such as tranquility or sensual pleasure, and other achievements, such as material success, which can also be ultimate values in the sense that they are associated with highly valued ends. Although one can concede that concern for truth is an important value, Peters has not shown that this concern is the ultimate value or that it ought to be the basis of education.

The Relevance of Concern for Truth to Justification

Peters claims that concern for truth is relevant to the justification of knowledge and understanding "because

the activity of justification itself would be unintelligible without it [concern for truth]" (JE, p. 252). According to Peters, a person who intends to justify doing one thing rather than another must distinguish the alternatives. To distinguish these alternatives, a person must have some understanding of them. This understanding presumes that obvious misconceptions must be removed; that it is desirable to believe what is true and undesirable to believe what is false. That is, a person who intends to justify doing one thing rather than another must have a concern for truth.

If reasons must be given for one's choices, the chosen alternative must have some feature, relevant to its desirability, which others lack. The exploration of these features is a search for further clarity and understanding. Peters notes that

these procedures [removing misconceptions, searching for reasons, and eliminating errors], which are constitutive of the search for truth, are not those for which some individual might have a private preference; they are those which he must observe in rational discussion. This would be unintelligible as a public practice without value being ascribed at least to the elimination of muddle and error. (JE, pp. 252-253)

We see, then, Peters argues that justification presumes a concern for truth and involves a search for

truth. He concludes that concern for truth must be valued by those who engage in rational discussion otherwise such discourse would not make sense as a public practice.

His argument, however is incomplete for two reasons. First, although one must concede that someone who cares about justification or rational discourse must have some concern for truth, this concern need not be so strong that it compel one to search for truth. One might be content, for example, to remove obvious misconceptions but not be bothered to look for more subtle misunderstandings.

Second, Peters has still not shown that concern for truth is the value which ought to be central to becoming an educated person. As we have seen in previous chapters, other authors have placed different values in this ultimate position. Some, such as Durkheim or Bobblitt, have given priority to playing a role in one's community. Others, such as Oakeshott, have valued the transmission of one's cultural heritage. Concern for truth is a factor in the justification of each of these alternative conceptions of education but it is a factor because justification presumes some concern for truth, not

because concern for truth is a central educational value for these authors.

Peters notes that

to ask for reasons for believing or doing anything is to ask for what is only to be found in knowledge and understanding. (JE, p. 253)

In other words, justification is a pursuit of knowledge and understanding. There is, then, a logical connection between concern for truth, justification, and the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. If we accept Peters' arguments, we must also agree that each of these must be found worthwhile by those who care about rational discourse. The value that these people attribute to the concern for truth confers like value on justification and the pursuit of knowledge and understanding because these are expressions of the concern for truth.

Peters anticipates three potential objections to these connections:

Firstly, the value of justification itself might be queried. Secondly, it might be suggested that this does not establish the value of breadth of knowledge. Thirdly, it might be argued that this only establishes the instrumental value of attempts to discover what is true. (JE, p. 253)

In his discussions of these objections he presents his non-hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments for acquiring a body of knowledge and breadth of understanding.

The Value of Justification

The first potential objection Peters discusses is the claim that "the value of justification itself might be queried" (JE, p. 253). He responds

The difficulty about querying the value of justification is that any such query, if it is not frivolous, presupposes its value. For to discuss its value is immediately to embark upon reasons for or against it, which is itself a further example of justification. (JE, p. 253)

Peters concludes that

No reason, therefore, can be given for justification without presupposing the values which are immanent in it as an activity. (JE, p. 253)

One rejoinder to Peters' conclusion, is that it is arbitrary. Peters denies that this is so.

To pick out the values presupposed by the search for reasons is to make explicit what gives point to the charge of arbitrariness. (JE, p. 253)

Peters also notes that one cannot deny the value of justification by relying on feelings or authority. He claims that a person who did this would not only be guilty of arbitrariness, he would be using

procedures which are inappropriate to demands that are admitted, and must be admitted by anyone who takes part in human life. (JE, p. 253)

Peters argues that this demand for justification can be seen in our use of language and in our conduct. Humans are creatures who form expectations. With the development of language

special words are used for the assessment of the content of these expectations and for how they are to be regarded in respect of their epistemological status. Words like 'true' and 'false' are used, for instance to appraise the contents, and the term 'belief' for the attitude of mind that is appropriate to what is true. (JE, p. 254)

Also, humans

are not just programmed by an instinctive equipment. They conceive of ends, deliberate about them and about the means to them. They follow rules and revise and assess them Words like 'right', 'good', and 'ought' reflect this constant scrutiny and monitoring of human actions. (JE, p. 254)

We see, then, Peters argues that one cannot seriously question the value of justification because this presupposes the value of that which is at issue. Neither can one deny the value of justification. This would be arbitrary and, according to Peters, there are no alternatives which are appropriate to the demands of human life.

There are two weaknesses in this argument. First, as Elliott (1977) notes, there are two senses of justification. In ordinary contexts, justification requires only that one demonstrate sufficient grounds for the "truth, rightness, or appropriateness" of one's claims and conduct (p. 16). Justification in a stronger sense would demand that all doubt be removed.

Elliott argues that the strong sense of justification is not fundamental to human life. He writes

The most that reason could demand of the individual is that he should not believe anything unless he has grounds or other warrant for doing so, since belief is the attitude of mind appropriate to truth. This is only the weak demand for justification. (Elliott, 1977, p. 18)

Peters (1977b) replies that it is neither the strong nor the weak sense of justification which he has in mind. Rather, the concern for truth and the demand for justification suggest a "determination to avoid fantasy, prejudice, illusion, and error" and "a readiness to examine our beliefs and attitudes in matters of possible concern" (Peters, 1977b, p. 36). For Peters, then, the concern for truth exerts more than a minimal demand for justification but less than the strong demand that Elliott finds unreasonable.

However, this greater demand for justification is still more than what is implied by the demands of reason. Peters seems to have in mind a quality of life characterized by more than the weak sense of justification. This quality of life is not fundamental to human nature, it is an extension or a refinement of it. The weakness in Peters' argument is that he has not provided non-hedonistic, non-instrumental reasons for finding this quality of life and the greater demand for justification to be worthwhile.

A similar weakness is found even if one concedes that the greater demand for justification is fundamental to human ways of life. As we have seen, there are other worthwhile features of human existence, language, maintaining social relationships and knowledge of one's cultural heritage for example. Peters has not shown that justification is more worthwhile than these other features of human nature or that it ought to displace them from a central place in education.

Breadth of Understanding

The second potential objection Peters raises to ascribing value to the concern for truth is to the

connection between value and breadth of understanding. Peters notes that someone might claim that he has only demonstrated

the value of some sort of knowledge; it [Peters' argument] does not establish the value of the breadth of understanding characteristic of the educated man. (JE, p. 256)

Peters replies that the case for acquiring a breadth of understanding can be found in the connection between justification and forms of knowledge. He notes

If choice has to be made between alternatives these have both to be sampled in some way and discriminated in some way. It is not always possible to do the former but the latter must be done for this to rank as a choice. (JE, p. 256)

The description of alternatives and the discussion of their value depends, in part, on how they are conceived. Peters notes that some activities, such as chess and mathematics, must be perceived in specific ways--ways that define these activities. Peters concludes

It would be unreasonable, therefore, to deprive anyone of access in an arbitrary way to forms of understanding which might throw light on alternatives open to him. This is the basic argument for breadth in education. (JE, p. 256)

Then Peters adds

In the educational situation we have positively to put others in the way of such forms of understanding which may aid their assessment of options open to them. (JE, pp. 256-257)

Peters derives an additional argument for the value of breadth of understanding from the nature and value of rational autonomy. Peters notes that the

value accorded to autonomy, which demands criticism of what is handed on and some first-hand assessment of it, would be unintelligible without the values immanent in justification. Indeed it is largely an implementation of them. (JE, p. 257)

Autonomy requires that the individual critically examine the rules and activities of society. Persons must search for the reasons for adopting these rules rather than accepting them for reasons that are second-hand.

If the individual is to be helped to discriminate between possibilities open to him in an authentic, as distinct from a second-hand way, he has to be initiated into the different forms of reasoning which employ different criteria for the relevance of reasons. (JE, p. 257)

Peters sees a corollary to this argument:

that some forms of knowledge are of more value from the point of view of a 'liberal education' than others, namely those which have a more far-reaching influence on conceptual schemes and forms of understanding. (JE, p. 257)

These forms of knowledge include disciplines such as science, philosophy, and history. They are more important because they

consist largely in the explanation, assessment, and illumination of the different facets of life. They can thus insensibly change a man's view of the world. . . . A person who has pursued them systematically can develop

conceptual schemes and forms of appraisal which transform everything else that he does. (JE, p. 258)

Other authors have provided a number of reasons for finding the achievement of rational autonomy worthwhile. According to Dearden (1975, pp. 14-18) some persons would elevate the social freedoms which are an outward expression of autonomy to the level of rights. (However, this still leaves the question "Why are these rights worthwhile?") Others, Dearden notes, have claimed that autonomy helps to ensure security, prevent exploitation, and, in times of rapid sociological change, rational autonomy facilitates adaptation.

In addition, autonomy is reflected in making independent judgements. These judgements can be a source of

intrinsic satisfaction and pride, and the right to it may be claimed from a sense of dignity. A man is thus engaged in shaping his own life, and to do so in all matters importantly concerning himself can acquire the power and infinite perfectibility of an ideal. The unexamined life may come to seem not worth living. (Dearden, 1975, p. 16)

Rational autonomy "may also be felt to have a certain necessity in its claims upon us" (Dearden, 1975, p. 16). According to Dearden,

a person might, intelligibly at least, be said to owe it to himself to develop his talents, to

make the best of himself, to keep his integrity, to be true to himself, or to defend his honour. (1975, p. 17)

We see, then, there is a range of reasons for valuing rational autonomy. Some are instrumental, others are hedonistic, while still others appeal to non-hedonistic, non-instrumental values. All bear some resemblance to one or another of Peters' arguments in JE. However, these reasons are not entirely successful in showing that autonomy is the educational value.

The criticisms raised against instrumental and hedonistic justifications in previous chapters can be repeated here against the instrumental and hedonistic arguments for the value of autonomy. Where rational autonomy is a means to some end or associated with pleasure and satisfaction appeals to autonomy alone do not identify the ends which ought to be achieved or the pleasures and satisfactions which ought to be pursued. More specifically, the assumption in autonomy that individuals should choose their own ends needs to be justified in light of concerns, say, for economic security and physical safety in society.

One might concede, however, that certain of these ends and concomitants are obviously worthwhile. Dearden,

for example, notes that those who engage in autonomous acts may experience feelings of satisfaction, pride, and a sense of dignity and duty. However, the relationships between these experiences and autonomy are contingent. For some persons there may be no satisfaction in independent conduct, cooperation and uniformity in thought and deed may be preferable to autonomous acts.

Therefore it is incumbent on those making these types of claims to provide the requisite empirical evidence that promoting autonomy is more likely lead to these worthwhile ends than promoting some other educational ideal. In addition, if there are persons who find the achievement of autonomy to be worthwhile and if autonomy is to serve as the dominant educational ideal, one must still show why virtually everyone ought to find autonomy worthwhile.

Again, we see that the central problem with Peters argument is that he does not address the issue of priority and his argument rests, in part, on unsupported empirical claims. Peters does not show that choosing one's way in life is more important than other features of the human condition or that autonomy ought to be the preferred educational ideal. Justice, happiness and

social harmony, for example, might also serve as educational ideals but Peters does not show that choice and autonomy are the educational ideals one ought to prefer.

An Instrumental Type of Argument

The third objection Peters raises to attributing value to the concern for truth is that he has established an instrumental relationship only between breadth of understanding and justification. Peters notes that if this is the case, one could add physical fitness to the list of educationally important developments.

Peters rejects this objection as missing the point of his argument (JE, p. 258). Physical fitness, he notes, is an empirically necessary condition to the pursuit of knowledge. Understanding, however, is connected to justification by logical relationships

such as those of 'relevance', 'providing evidence', 'illuminating', and 'explaining'. (JE, p. 258)

Also, the pursuit of knowledge

is in an educational type of relationship to justification in that it suggests avenues of learning which are relevant to choice, and this is not properly conceived of as an instrumental relationship. (JE, p. 258)

Peters notes that

In engaging in the activity of justification the individual is envisaged as exploring the possibilities open to him by developing the ways of discriminating between them that are available to him--i.e. through the different forms of understanding such as science, history, literature which the human race has laboriously developed. The process of learning is logically, not causally related, [sic] to the questioning situation. (JE, p. 258)

Peters does not deny that there is a means-ends relationship between justification and developing knowledge and understanding (i.e., between asking questions and obtaining answers). At this point, however, he is setting this relationship aside. He argues, instead, that justification is a type of learning which involves the pursuit of knowledge. In attempting to justify his choices, a person pursues knowledge and acquires understanding of the different possibilities which are available by drawing on the conceptual schemes of the different forms of human understanding, such as science, history, and literature.

According to Peters, through justification a person will be articulating, with increasing understanding and imagination, aspects of the situation in which he is placed, and in pursuing various differentiated forms of inquiry he will be instantiating, on a wider scale, the very values which are present in his original situation--e.g. respect for facts and evidence, precision, clarity, rejection of

arbitrariness, consistency, and the general determination to get to the bottom of things. (JE, pp. 258-259)

Peters argues that value is not found in the accumulation of a body of knowledge but in the demands of reason associated with the concern for truth:

The point is that value is located in the procedures necessary to explicate what is meant by justification. In other words the value is not in the acquisition of knowledge per se but in the demands of reason inherent both in answering questions of this sort and in asking them. Evidence should be produced, questions should be clearly put, alternatives should be set out in a clear and informed way, inconsistencies and contradictions in argument should be avoided, relevant considerations should be explored, and arbitrariness avoided. These monitoring and warranting types of relationships, which are characteristic of the use of reason, are not instrumental types of relationship. They are articulations of the ideal implicit in thought and action. (JE, p. 259)

Peters rejects the rejoinder that the concern for truth is only instrumentally valuable because knowledge of what is desired is necessary for people to satisfy their wants. Peters notes that wanting always occurs "under some description that involves belief; hence wants can be more or less examined" (JE, p. 260). One question that arises under these conditions is whether "people ought to do what they want to do" (JE, p. 260). A rational answer to this type of question involves

justification, concern for truth, and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Peters concludes

the very notion of 'instrumentality' presupposes the demand of reason. For, as Kant put it, taking a means to an end presupposes the axiom of reason that to will the end is to will the means. Thus the demands of reason are presupposed in the form of thought [wanting] which might lead us to think of its value as being instrumental. (JE, p. 260)

We see, then, that in discussing the instrumental objection Peters explicates the relationships between concern for truth, justification and knowledge and understanding. He shows that even instrumentality presupposes a concern for truth. His argument emphasizes that the relationships are logical, not contingent, and that the value of education is not found in amassing a body of knowledge but in acquiring a concern for truth.

Once again, however, we also see that the explication of relationships between the features Peters attributes to educated persons is not accompanied by reasons for valuing them. One can concede that instrumentality presupposes a concern for truth, justification, and knowledge and understanding. However, Peters has not shown that the value located in the demands of reason ought to be the value which is the basis of education. Other conceptions of education, such

as those proposed by Durkheim (1956) or Bobbitt (1941), attribute value to amassing a body of knowledge and understanding. Peters, however, offers no non-hedonistic, non-instrumental reason for rejecting these other conceptions.

The Non-instrumental Attitude

Peters claims that the non-instrumental attitude is "presupposed by the determination to search for justification" (JE, p. 262). He writes that

Anyone who asks the question about his life 'Why do this rather than that?' has already reached the stage at which he sees that instrumental justifications must reach a stopping place in activities that must be regarded as providing end-points for such justifications. (JE, p. 262)

This question, however, presumes Peters' vision of education. He writes:

Processes of education are processes by means of which people come to know and to understand. These are implementations, through time, by means of learning, of the values and procedures implicit in justification. Education, properly understood, is the attempt to actualize the ideal implicit in Socrates' saying that the unexamined life is not worth living. (JE, p. 262)

Also, the educated person has an "abiding concern for knowledge and understanding" (JE, p. 262). According to Peters, valuing knowledge and understanding is one

ingredient in the non-instrumental attitude. A person who values knowledge and understanding

is not satisfied with a life of unexamined wants. He wonders whether some of the things that he wants are really worth wanting or whether he really wants them. He wonders about the relevance of his wants. (JE, p. 263)

We see, then, that Peters believes education to be closely associated with the rational examination of one's life and this examination presupposes a concern for truth, which in turn presupposes a non-instrumental attitude on the part of the educated person. In other words, Peters argument is, again, an explication. It shows that a person educated according to Peters' vision of education must have a non-instrumental attitude. It does not show that we ought to promote this attitude over others.

It could be for example that a way of life governed by material success would suggest the development of an instrumental attitude. Within this way of life one could still be encouraged to examine one's life but this examination would be with a view to promoting personal benefit, improving one's lot. A view of education based on this way of life would seem to many to be commendable but Peters' discussion does not show why the

non-instrumental examination of one's life is to be preferred over a materialistic perspective.

I have identified a number of difficulties with Peters' arguments. The most significant weakness is that Peters explicates the nature of his conception of the educated person but he does not show why the features he attributes to educated persons ought to be preferred over other features proposed by other authors. For example, Peters asserts that the concern for truth is an ultimate value but provides inadequate reasons to support his claim. Neither does he show why autonomy is to be preferred over dependence and harmony or why the examined life is to be preferred over one of docile acceptance.

In addition, some claims that Peters makes require additional explanation and support. For example, he states that the concern for truth is a criterion of benefit. Yet, truth is neither a necessary nor a sufficient criterion of benefit so neither is the concern for truth. If Peters' claim is taken to mean that concern for truth is associated with a worthwhile way of life, he has not shown why this is so. We see, then, that Peters' claims concerning the relationships between concern for truth and benefit are unclear at best, and perhaps false.

Peters claims that the non-instrumental attitude must have been acquired by anyone who asks "Why do this rather than that?" because the search for instrumental reasons must stop in features which are internal to one's life. However, these features could be hedonistic. One could see the ends of instrumental arguments defined in terms of pleasures and satisfactions. Peters, however, does not seem to have this type of end in mind. He tries to argue that one must arrive at a consideration of the good life, which consists in examining one's own life. This examination is an expression of the non-instrumental attitude.

Peters' argument for this end is unconvincing. Asking questions such as "Why do this rather than that?" or "What is the point of it all?" presume that one has acquired the non-instrumental attitude, they are not reasons for acquiring it. In effect, Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental justification of the non-instrumental attitude is an explication of what it is to have this attitude.

Finally, Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental justification of education rests on his claim that the pursuit of truth is in an educational type of

relationship to justification. It is this relationship which establishes the non-instrumental value of the various features Peters attributes to educated persons. This claim requires one to accept Peters definition of education, that the demand of reason requires more than the weak sense of justification, and a conception of rational discourse which is governed by the concern for truth and implies moral uprightness. Each of these requirements, however, is contentious and unexamined in Peters' justification. Consequently Peters non-hedonistic, non-instrumental argument is, at best, incomplete.

Conclusion

I have argued that there are serious flaws in each aspect of Peters' justification of education. First, I have shown that there are many different conceptions of education, each having significant valuative suggestions for those who hold them. Peters fails to provide sufficient reasons for rejecting these alternatives or for adopting his conception of education over them.

Second, Peters' instrumental and hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments rest on a number of empirical claims. Peters notes, for example, that educated persons are more efficient employees and render better service. He claims that complex activities are generally more enjoyable than simple ones. However, these claims are offered without empirical support.

Third, Peters' transition from instrumental to hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments is poorly argued because it leaves a number of questions about the relationships between benefits, pleasures, and education unanswered. Peters associates the ends of instrumental arguments with benefits, benefits are defined in terms of pleasure, and pleasure is defined in terms of the pursuit

of knowledge. This line of argument serves Peters' purposes but does not identify the ends, the benefits, or the pleasures one ought to promote through education.

Finally, Peters' non-hedonistic, non-instrumental arguments are primarily explications of the features Peters attributes to educated persons. Where he attributes value to these features, he merely asserts that they are valued or that we ought to ensure persons acquire them. He does not show why we ought to value these features or why we ought to develop the particular type of educated person he has described.

In spite of these weaknesses, however, Peters' discussion in JE provides us with important insights into possible future directions in the justification of education. First, he has provided us with a detailed explication of one conception of an educated person. Although Peters has not shown that we ought to promote this vision of education, he has indicated the range of arguments relevant to addressing this issue. Peters has identified three types of arguments instrumental, hedonistic, non-instrumental and non-hedonistic, non-instrumental, relevant to the justification of

education. Two implications follow from this range of arguments.

First, it suggests that the justification of education is more complex than some authors acknowledge. Durkheim and Bobbitt, for example, seem to emphasise instrumental arguments in their discussions of education. Second, it suggests a set of criteria for judging the merits of arguments intended to justify becoming educated. If these criteria prove useful, one could criticize conceptions of education such as those proposed by Durkheim and Bobbitt as not reflecting the full range of educational values rather than simply dismissing them as "wrong" conceptions of education.

However, before this range of arguments can be used as criteria one must show that they are indeed all relevant to the justification of education. In my criticisms of Peters' work, for example, I have noted that it is not clear how instrumental and hedonistic arguments are relevant to his conception of education. We have, then, come full circle. We have returned to the first question Peters addressed in JE, "What are the values specific to being educated?" Clearly, this question requires a fuller treatment than it received in

JE. A more comprehensive treatment of this question would undoubtedly address many of my criticisms of Peters work by showing how the various types of argument enter into the justification of education.

Bibliography

- Bailey, C. (1984). Beyond the Present and the Particular: A Theory of Liberal Education. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bain, A. (1877). Education as a Science. Mind, 2, 1-21.
- Barrow, R. (1976). Common Sense and the Curriculum. Hamden, CN: Linnet Books.
- Barrow, R. & Milburn G. (1990). A Critical Dictionary of Educational Concepts (2nd ed.). London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Bobblitt, F. (1941). The Curriculum of Modern Education. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Dagenhardt, M.A.B. (1982). Education and the Value of Knowledge. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Dearden, R.F. (1968). The Philosophy of Primary Education. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dunlop, F.N. (1970). Education and Human Nature. Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 4, 21-44.

- Durkheim, E. (1956). Education and Sociology. (S.D. Fox, Trans.). New York: The Free Press.
- Earwaker, J. (1973). R.S. Peters and the Concept of Education. Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 7, 239-259.
- Elliott, R.K. (1977). Education and Justification. Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 11, 7-28.
- Evers, Colin W. (1979). Analytic Philosophy of Education: From a Logical Point of View. Educational Philosophy and Theory, 12, 1-15.
- Hare, R.M. (1961). The Language of Morals. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hare, R.M. (1963). Freedom and Reason. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hare, R.M. (1989). Essays in Ethical Theory. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hirst, P.H., & Peters, R.S. (1970). The Logic of Education. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Oakeshott, Michael. (1971). Education: The Engagement and its Frustration. Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 5(1), 46-47.
- Pekarsky, Daniel. (1980). The Aristotelian Principle and Education. Educational Theory, 30(4), 281-291.
- Peters, R.S. (1966). Ethics and Education. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Peters, R.S. (1967). Aims of Education: A Conceptual Inquiry. In Philosophy and Education Proceedings International Seminar March 23-25, 1966, (pp. 1-16). Toronto: The Ontario Institute For Studies in Education.
- Peters, R.S. (1970). Education and the Educated Man. Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 4, 5-20.
- Peters, R.S. (1973). The Justification of Education. In R.S. Peters (Ed.), The Philosophy of Education (pp. 239-267). London: Oxford University Press.
- Peters, R.S. (1974). Psychology and Ethical Development. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Peters, R.S. (1977a). Education and the Education of Teachers. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Peters, R.S. (1977b). Education and Justification: A Reply to R.K. Elliott. Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 11, 29-38.
- Peters, R.S. (1979). Democratic Values and Educational Aims. Teachers College Record. 80, 5, 463-482.
- Peters, R.S. (1983). Philosophy of Education. In P.H. Hirst. (Ed.), Educational Theory and Its Foundation Disciplines (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Rawls, J. (1971). A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Reddiford, G. (1972). Conceptual Analysis and Education, Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 6(2), 192-215.
- Stich, S.P. (1985). Could Man Be an Irrational Animal? Some Notes on the Epistemology of Rationality. Synthese, 64, 115-135.
- Taylor, C. (1989). Sources of the Self The Making of the Modern Identity. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.

White, P.A. (1973). Education, Democracy, and the Public Interest. In R.S. Peters (Ed.), The Philosophy of Education (pp. 217-238). London: Oxford University Press.