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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

BERTRAND RUSSELL ON MORAL EDUCATION

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to consider Bertrand Russell's moral theories and his theory of moral education. More stress is given to the latter than to the former. Attention is given to the relationship that exists between Russell's moral theories and his theories of moral education. But the greatest stress is on the practical application of these theories, since Russell claims they were written to deal with contemporary social problems.

The problem that looms largest to Russell is the possibility of universal annihilation due to nuclear warfare. He considers that such a fate may be avoided if all nations submit to an universal government. The government that Russell envisages is one which would control the military might of the world for the good of mankind. It would also utilize the methods of science to eliminate starvation and suffering. Such a world could only be established given the right ethic and the right system of education.

Chapter I contains introductory material and discusses the relationship that exists between Russell's technical philosophy and his social theories. Chapter II discusses Russell's concept of man, since it is upon this concept that Russell bases his moral theories. Russell believes that man has contradictory desires which cannot be completely satisfied, but he feels that through the use of intelligence and altruism, the conflicts that arise either within man or between men may be ameliorated.

Russell's moral theory is discussed in Chapter III. This is an utilitarian theory which has as its goal the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people who comprise the human race. Russell considers that the achievement of this goal will be resisted by vested interests such as church and state. However, he does not subject his utilitarian theory to a thorough analytical criticism, since he feels this will divert him from his goal of improving the condition of man on this earth.

Russell asserts that the end he desires can be achieved if man has, amongst other things, an educational institution that is based on a scientific pedagogy. It is the purpose of Chapter IV to discuss Russell's educational institution and his scientific pedagogy. The aim of Russell's educational theory is to ameliorate the conflicts that will arise between the desires of the individual and the desires of the group.

Russell, however, is not a dreamer. He realizes that the role of the individual in an orderly, universal society will be a difficult one. But he also believes that individualism and order are necessary for happiness. Russell provides an ideal for universal education. Some important details of his plan are not worked out, and there is some vagueness and inconsistency in his theory. But these minor drawbacks could be worked out by more practical men than Russell. His task has been that of the visionary who has provided man with three prophetic alternatives:

1. The end of human life, perhaps of all life on our planet.
2. A reversion to barbarism after a catastrophic diminution of

- the population of the globe.
3. A unification of the world under a single government, possessing a monopoly of all major weapons of war.

If Russell is right in his forecast, then he has provided man with educational and ethical theories, which, if applied, could achieve his third goal. This goal, according to Russell, would seem to be in the interests of the majority of the human race.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of this study is to consider Bertrand Russell's theories of moral education from the viewpoint of practical application.

Statement of Sub-problems

The study has four other purposes:

1. To understand Russell's concept of man.
2. To show that it is upon this concept of man that Russell bases his moral theories.
3. To define the term morality as used by Russell.
4. To show the relationship between morality and education.

Delimitations of the Study

This study deals with Russell's moral theories and with his theory of moral education. More stress is given to the latter than to the former. Attention is given to the relationship between Russell's moral theories and his theories of moral education. But, of most importance, in this thesis is a consideration of the possibility of the practical application of these theories since Russell claims they were written to deal with contemporary social problems.

Little reference is made to Russell's technical philosophy since he believes that it is not connected with his moral and educational theories. Writing in reply to a critic in The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell,¹ Russell claims that there is no connection between his

¹Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed.), The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell

technical and social philosophy. He writes, "I have always maintained that there is no logical connection, pointing to the example of Hume, with whom I agree so largely on abstract matters and disagree so totally in politics."²

Russell claims however, that there is a close relationship between ethics and politics. He states:

The fundamental problem of ethics and politics is that of finding some way of reconciling the needs of social life with the urgency of individual desires.³

This quotation suggests Russell's view of the close relationship. He integrates his ethical and political theories in his book, Human Society in Ethics and Politics.⁴ Russell states that the first part of the book is an attempt to "set forth an undogmatic ethic."⁵ The second part of the book deals "with those parts [of politics] that, in addition to being closely related to ethics are of urgent practical importance for the present day."⁶ Because of the close relationship between ethics and politics, both disciplines will receive attention in this thesis. However, Russell's political theories will only be considered when they are directly related to his ethical theories.

(Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1944).

²Ibid., p. 727.

³Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1954), p. 13.

⁴Bertrand Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954).

⁵Ibid., p. 7.

⁶Ibid.

The term "education," as it is used in this thesis, refers to the formal education of the school. It does not apply to the educational influences of the home, the church, or the state, except as these institutions act on the school.

Need for the Study

Since there has been no previous study on the relationship between Russell's moral theory and his educational theory, it was felt that such a study would be of value. Russell claims to offer practical guidance in dealing with moral problems. An attempt is made to refute or substantiate this claim.

Review of Related Literature

The Dissertation Abstracts refer to no previous work on the relationship between Russell's moral theory and his educational theory. In journals such as Ethics, Philosophy, and Philosophical Quarterly, there are no references to Russell's moral theories, except for some scathing reviews of Human Society in Ethics and Politics. There are, however, many articles on other aspects of Russell's philosophy treated in various scholarly journals and in the Abstracts. Research in the Dissertation Abstracts and in journals has been limited to the years 1954 - 1963, because Russell's most substantial book on morality, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, was not written until 1954.

Three books have been written which have a bearing on this thesis. Joe Park has written Bertrand Russell on Education;⁷ Alan Wood has

⁷Joe Park, Bertrand Russell on Education (Columbus: Ohio State

written Bertrand Russell The Passionate Sceptic;⁸ and Paul Schilpp has edited the book, The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell.

Park's book makes a brief survey of Russell's general philosophy, and presents in slightly more detail the sources of his theory of education. The books On Education,⁹ Education and the Social Order,¹⁰ and several of Russell's essays on education are discussed in more detail. The sixth chapter of Park's work is a study of the Beacon Hill school, operated by Russell and his second wife, Dora, from 1927 to 1934. The concluding chapter appraises Russell's educational theories.

Park's book concentrates on education, and, although he implies that Russell's ethical theory is reflected in his writings on education,¹¹ Park does not attempt to study closely the relationship between ethics and education. Of 172 pages, only ten are devoted to a discussion of Russell's ethics.¹² This discussion is a good summary of Russell's position, but it does not, in the investigator's opinion, sufficiently stress the importance of ethics in Russell's theory of education.

University Press, 1963).

⁸Alan Wood, The Passionate Sceptic (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957).

⁹Bertrand Russell, On Education (London: Unwin Books, 1960).

¹⁰Bertrand Russell, Education and the Social Order (George Allen and Unwin, 1961).

¹¹Joe Park, op. cit., pp. 26-30.

¹²Ibid., pp. 23-30; and pp. 43-46.

Bertrand Russell on Education is a lucid and sympathetic interpretation of Russell's educational theories. More than this, Park provides an annotated bibliography of Russell's works on education. Another merit of Park's book is that it has a detailed index, a feature that is frequently absent from Russell's own books.

Alan Wood has written a biography of Russell which is a chronological and non-technical treatment of various aspects of Russell's work. The book is full of interesting data, but it is presented to develop a biography rather than as a philosophical exposé. Mr. Wood was engaged in a technical study of Russell's philosophy but he died before it was completed.

The chapters on ethics and education in the book, The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, are relevant to this study, but as both chapters were written prior to 1943, they are out of date. However, the fact that Russell replied to his critics makes the articles worthy of consideration.

Justus Buchler, who wrote on Russell's ethics, was mainly critical of inconsistencies in Russell's work.¹³ He was also critical of Russell's concept of "good."¹⁴ It is significant that in writing Human Society in Ethics and Politics, Russell attempts to explain the inconsistencies¹⁵ cited by Buchler, and he expands his concept of "good."¹⁶

¹³Schilpp, op. cit., pp. 513-35.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 515-6.

¹⁵Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics pp. 7-8.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 51-72.

Buchler's article was scholarly and perceptive, but Boyd H. Bode, who wrote on Russell's educational theories,¹⁷ was almost scurrilous.

He writes:

. . . Mr. Russell is unmistakeably a dangerous person. He is subversive; he is a spirit that denies . . . his sallies aim to do the greatest possible damage in the shortest possible time.¹⁸

Bode's personal view of Russell seems to have interfered with his judgment of Russell's academic work. Bode's interpretation of Russell's concept of the individual would hardly have been possible if Bode had been more familiar with Social Reconstruction,¹⁹ or even if he had been less antagonistic in his interpretation of the first two chapters of Education and the Social Order.²⁰

In his sarcastic reply to Bode, Russell states, "His attack would have been more effective if he had read my chief book on the subject."²¹ It is significant that of twenty-six footnotes listed by Bode, twenty-two of them referred to the text Education and the Modern World.²²

However, although Bode did not appear familiar with much of Russell's relevant work, and even though Bode virtually caricatured

¹⁷Schilpp, op. cit., pp. 621-42.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 621.

¹⁹Bertrand Russell, Social Reconstruction (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960).

²⁰Russell, Education and the Social Order, pp. 9-44.

²¹Schilpp, op. cit., p. 731.

²²This is the American title of the book Education and the Social Order.

Russell's position regarding the individual and the citizen, Russell seems to have taken note of the criticisms. In Human Society in Ethics and Politics,²³ and in the book Fact and Fiction,²⁴ Russell carefully develops his position regarding the individual and the citizen.

Sources of Data

The main references for this study are the published works of Bertrand Russell. The two major sources are, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, and Education and the Social Order. Three other books, Principles of Social Reconstruction, On Education, and Fact and Fiction, are also important references.

Method of Procedure

The first four chapters in this study are mainly expository, while the last chapter is evaluative. The first chapter comprises introductory material. The second chapter discusses Russell's ideas of man which are basic to understanding his moral theories. The third chapter discusses the conflicts which arise between man and the society in which he lives. It also shows the connection between morality and moral education. The fourth chapter is a detailed analysis of Russell's theory of moral education. The last chapter considers Russell's theories from the viewpoint of practical application.

²³Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, pp. 15-21.

²⁴Bertrand Russell, Fact and Fiction (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), pp. 49-101.

Definitions of Some Concepts in Russell's Philosophy

Russell on Philosophy. Bertrand Russell makes "logical analysis the main business of his philosophy."²⁵ This method of philosophy reflects his bias towards a belief in the efficacy of the scientific method. Writing of logical analysis, he says:

It has the advantage . . . of being able to tackle problems one at a time, instead of having to invent at one stroke a block theory of the whole universe. Its methods, in this respect, resemble those of science.²⁶

This method of philosophy applies to natural philosophy which is concerned with entities like space, time, and matter. It does not apply to "ethical and political doctrines as to the best way of living."²⁷ Russell goes on to say, "The failure to separate these two with sufficient clarity has led to much confused thinking."²⁸ Thus, Russell makes a distinction between the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of ethics. To the former logical analysis applies, to the latter it does not except in the limited sense of "meta-ethics" which is discussed below.

Russell on Ethics. The school of philosophy espoused by Russell may improve man's knowledge as to the nature of the world, but it cannot

²⁵Robert E. Egner and Lester E. Dennon (eds.), The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.), p. 36.

²⁶Ibid., p. 305.

²⁷Ibid., p. 306.

²⁸Ibid.

increase man's ethical knowledge except in a limited way.²⁹ Logical analysis is concerned with matters which are factual and external to man. Ethics is concerned with man's feelings, to which logical analysis does not apply. The only connection between ethics and philosophy, which Russell admits, is the argument that, ". . . ethical propositions should be expressed in the optative and not in the indicative."³⁰ This concept limits ethics to intellectual debate, and it can have little influence on the practical life of men. For this reason Russell foresakes ethics and turns to morality in an effort to improve the condition of humanity.³¹

When limited to intellectual debate, ethics is sometimes termed "meta-ethics."³² This term will be used throughout the thesis when referring to the limited use of the term "ethics."

Russell on Morality. Russell considers morality to be the force that controls human behaviour.³³ He also sees it as a means to improve the conditions of human life.³⁴ Meta-ethics is avoided by Russell because he feels it may interfere with his endeavour to improve the

²⁹Ibid., pp. 306-7.

³⁰Quoted in Paul Schilpp, op. cit., p. 720.

³¹Ibid., p. 730.

³²William K. Frankena, Ethics (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 4.

³³Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, pp. 15-6.

³⁴Ibid.

condition of man.³⁵ It is claimed by Russell that science has demonstrated its success as "educated common sense," yet there is no consensus regarding its metaphysical premises.³⁶ By analogy, Russell claims that common-sense principles may be applied to the problem of practical living without considering meta-ethical arguments.

Russell on Common-sense. The common-sense attitude is a scientific attitude as far as Russell is concerned. When studying a particular subject Russell collects all the available evidence and, using the latter, makes what he considers to be the most reasonable decision possible. New information that may cause him to change his decision is always a possibility. For this reason all of Russell's decisions are tentative and undogmatic. Thus, for Russell, "common-sense" and "scientific attitude of mind" have virtually the same meanings.³⁷ It is this common-sense approach that Russell adopts when he treats morality:

Philosophers are fond of endless puzzles about ultimate values and basis of morals. My own belief is that, so far as practical living is concerned, we can sweep aside all these puzzles and use common sense principles.³⁸

³⁵ Stated by Bertrand Russell in Paul Schilpp, op. cit., p. 730.

³⁶ Bertrand Russell, The Scientific Outlook (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931), p. 100.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 100-7.

³⁸ Alan Wood, op. cit., pp. 230-1.

CHAPTER II

RUSSELL'S CONCEPT OF MAN

Russell desires to improve the condition of man, but he does not wish to be restricted in his action by any meta-ethical considerations. He believes that he knows enough about man to give advice on means to improve the condition under which man exists. In this chapter Russell's concept of man will be considered, since this concept is basic to his moral theories.

Russell's Naturalistic Outlook

Russell's completely naturalistic view of man is apparent when he says, "Man is a part of nature, not something contrasted with nature."¹ In the same book, Why I Am Not A Christian, he says of man:

His body, like other matter is composed of electrons and protons, which, so far as we know, obey the same laws as those forming parts of animals and plants.²

In a characteristic generalization Russell outlines his Darwinian concept of the development of man:

It should begin with the sun throwing off planets, and should show the earth as a fiery ball, gradually cooling, with earthquakes, volcanoes, boiling seas and deluges of hot rain. Then gradually the various forms of life should be shown in the order of their appearance--forests of ferns, flowers and bees, odd fishes, vast reptiles fighting furious battles in the slime, awkward birds

¹Bertrand Russell, Why I Am Not A Christian (London: George Allen and Unwin, 195), p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 39.

learning to fly, mammals, small at first, but gradually growing bigger and more successful. Then comes early man Pithecanthropus, the Piltown man, the Neanderthal man, the Cro-Magnon man.³

In the above it is suggested that the difference between man and animals is one of degree and not of kind. Evidently it is Russell's view that man has evolved from inanimate nature to his present position which he calls "Lord of Creation."⁴

Continuing in this scientific frame of thought Russell says, "God and immortality, the central dogmas of the Christian religion, find no support in science."⁵ The importance of this opinion is that Russell's moral theories will have reference only to life on this world since men, like animals, are uninfluenced by the supernatural, and are mortal. Russell goes into a detailed argument regarding immortality and he concludes:

For my part, I consider the evidence so far adduced by psychical research in favour of survival of life after death much weaker than the physiological evidence on the other side.⁶

The above quotation summarizes Russell's opinion regarding both God and immortality. The scientific, common-sense attitude is apparent since Russell's conclusion is obviously tentative. But it is a sufficient hypothesis, as far as Russell is concerned, from which to work.

³Bertrand Russell, Understanding History (New York: Wisdom Library, 1957), p. 11.

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

⁵Russell, Why I Am Not A Christian, p. 39.

⁶Ibid., p. 4.

The opinions of Russell which have so far been expressed in this chapter are:

1. Man's body, being composed of protons and electrons, obeys the same laws as the protons and electrons of inanimate objects.
2. Man differs from animals in degree only.
3. Man is mortal.
4. There is little scientific evidence to support a belief in God.

An implication which seems to arise from Russell's line of reasoning is that, if there is no power external to man and if the electrons and protons that comprise the human body obey the same laws as all other electrons and protons (which is Russell's claim), then human physiology may eventually be reduced to a factual science:

There are some who maintain that physiology can never be reduced to physics, but their arguments are not very convincing and it seems prudent to suppose that they are mistaken.⁷

Russell does not stop at thinking that physiology alone is amenable to science. He goes on to suggest that man's mental faculties may also be subject to the scientific method:

What we call our 'thoughts' seems to depend on the organization of tracks in the brain in the same sort of way in which journeys depend upon roads and railways. The energy used in thinking seems to have a chemical origin; for instance, a deficiency of iodine will turn a clever man into an idiot. Mental phenomena seem to be bound up with material structure.⁸

Russell's opinion is that the physical and mental structure of animals and men are amenable to the methods of science. This opinion added to the four above suggests that Russell's ethics will be oriented to the

⁷Ibid., p. 39.

⁸Ibid., p. 39.

"here and now" world. He believes that once sufficient knowledge is available, the scientific method may be used to achieve social goals. Furthermore, these goals will be attainable with the kind of certainty that physics now possesses when it predicts the acceleration of a falling body. It will be noted that science may be used to achieve these goals, but the problem of setting these goals is a different matter. This problem is discussed in a later chapter.

The Difference Between Animals and Men

Two major features that man possesses to a much greater degree than animals are intelligence and desires. Animals, so Russell claims, possess both intelligence and desires, but the animal's intelligence is not as developed as that of man, and the animal's desires are more limited than the desires of man.⁹ The essence of intelligence lies in the ability to control present desires in an effort to plan for the future. Writing of desires and intelligence in men Russell says:

. . . his intelligence has shown him that passions are often self-defeating, and that his desires could be more satisfied, and his happiness more complete, if certain of his passions were given less scope than others.¹⁰

Animals, not possessing intelligence to the degree held by man, are neither capable of resisting their desires nor of foreseeing the consequences of their impulsive acts, except in a very limited fashion. Russell suggests a doubtful illustration of intelligence in animals.

⁹Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1954), p. 16.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 15.

He implies that a dog illustrates intelligence when it permits its master to remove a thorn from its paw regardless of its impulsive desire to withdraw the paw.¹¹ Intelligence is not limited to the control of passions, but Russell evidently believes that, with regard to ethics, this is the most important function of intelligence.¹²

As well as intelligence, man is born with desires. Initially these desires are merely demands for the basic needs of life. In animals, when these needs are satisfied, there is little growth or development of desires.

Between man and other animals there are various differences, some intellectual, some emotional. One of the chief emotional differences is that some human desires, unlike those of animals are essentially boundless and incapable of complete satisfaction.¹³

In man, as the basic needs are satisfied, new desires are felt, and there is a continual growth of desires:

The impulses and desires of men and women, in so far as they are of real importance in their lives, are not detached from one another, but proceed from a central principle of growth. . . .¹⁴

This "principle of growth" forms an important part of Russell's educational theories.

¹¹Ibid., p. 15.

¹²Russell, using intelligence in a much broader context, believes it to be "that quality of man that is responsible for civilization as we know it today." See Paul Schilpp, The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1944), p. 739.

¹³Bertrand Russell, Power (London: Unwin Books, 1960), p. 7.

¹⁴Bertrand Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 19.

Russell's Vocabulary

In the above quotation Russell draws a distinction between impulses and desires. An impulse, as the investigator interprets the word, refers to a desire that must be immediately satisfied. The word "desire," on the other hand, is a desire that need not be immediately satisfied, but can be guided by intelligence. If an impulse is guided or controlled by intelligence, it loses the very quality which makes it an impulse. If an individual lived by impulse alone he would be little more than an animal, but if man suppressed or re-directed all his impulses then he would lose the quality of spontaneity which, in Russell's view, is necessary to man's happiness.¹⁵

The last quotation also introduces Russell's "principal of growth." As one desire is satisfied, others develop and these desires tend to proliferate. Once man has satisfied his physical desires, he then develops mental desires.¹⁶ Russell seems to think that if these desires are properly encouraged they can become desires that are satisfied by the pursuit of art, poetry, music, dance, and similiar interests. He believes that this growth of new interests will continue ad infinitum, unless it is stopped due to some factor of the environment.

Russell believes that desires are instinctive, but he does not give a specific definition of either a desire or an instinct. As far as ethics is concerned, he seems to hold no objection to using the words

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 15-16.

¹⁶Bertrand Russell, Fact and Fiction (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961), p. 131.

synonymously. One critic claims that:

Mr. Russell uses 'instinct', 'passion', 'impulse', and 'desire', etc. interchangeably, and there is thus no need for nice distinctions.¹⁷

The investigator's opinion is that Russell believes impulses, desires, and passions to be instincts, but, as has already been explained above, he distinguishes between an impulse and a desire. A passion, on the other hand, does not seem to be significantly different from a desire.

Heredity and Environment

According to Russell, man is born with intelligence, desires, and impulses. It is possible for heredity to influence man's intelligence and desires in such a fashion that the individual ceases to have the characteristics that are normally referred to as human. An extreme example of the influence of heredity may be seen in people who suffer from amentia in its various forms. It is also possible for the environment to influence the individual in such a fashion as to prevent the qualities which are normally termed "human" from developing. This has been illustrated by the few known feral cases. From such examples it would seem that man's intelligence and desires are subject to the influences of heredity and environment.

But heredity and environment need not have only an adverse influence on the individual. The environment may be used to develop man's intelligence and to widen the field of his desires. Russell realizes

¹⁷V. J. McGill, "Russell's Political and Economic Philosophy" in Paul Schilpp, The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, p. 588.

that the whole environment cannot be manipulated to any particular end, but he does believe that education, which makes up part of an individual's environment, can be used to develop a particular kind of individual. The kind of individual that Russell desires will be discussed in a later chapter.

At birth the child is mere potentiality. How the child will develop in terms of intelligence, desires, and impulses, depends to a large extent on his environment. The maximum growth of an individual can only be realized under ideal conditions. Russell does not profess to know what the ideal conditions are, but he does imply that he knows how to improve the present situation. His desire to improve the environment of the young is manifested in all his books and essays on education. The books were written as guides to parents and teachers¹⁸ so that the school, which is the part of the environment which can most easily be controlled, may be used to encourage the maximum possible development of the potentiality of the child.

The Moral Quartet

The qualities of man, upon which Russell concentrates in developing his moral theories, are intelligence, altruism, and the conflicting desires for gregariousness and solitude. These desires are not, in themselves, the most important desires. Russell writes:

Of these [desires] the most imperative are those concerned with survival, such as food, shelter, clothing, and reproduction.

¹⁸Bertrand Russell, On Education (London: Unwin Books, 1960), pp. 7-9.

But when these are secure other motives become immensely strong. Of these, acquisitiveness, rivalry, vanity, and love of power are the most important.¹⁹

Since Russell writes of man living in a scientific society, he assumes that the physical necessities of life can be, or are already, satisfied. He also assumes that the "principle of growth" will be in operation. If man's physical desires are satisfied, the "principle of growth" will cause a proliferation of mental desires such as vanity and love of power. These mental desires should be guided, as they grow, by intelligence and altruism. They must also be influenced by the conflicting desire of solitude and gregariousness.

Solitude and Gregariousness

In each individual there is, to some degree, a desire to be gregarious. There is nothing absolute about this quality and it varies from individual to individual. Some people are quite non-social and others are so gregarious as to desire the company of other people almost all the time. Russell believes people are gregarious from a "more or less obscure sense of collective self-interest."²⁰ There is some question as to whether the gregarious desire is a desire in the same area as such things as rivalry, vanity, and love of power are desires, since Russell also uses the word to imply a quality of desires. But one thing is certain as far as Russell is concerned: gregariousness is a basic quality in man and it is distributed amongst men after the fashion

¹⁹Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 18.

²⁰Ibid., p. 35.

of desires.

The desire for the company of other people is felt, with few exceptions, by all people. But, as well as the desire for company, the majority of people also, on some occasions, desire solitude. For artists, scientists, musicians, and other people of a creative nature, solitude often seems to be a prerequisite of their work. Most people desire solitude on some occasions and company on others. Russell considers that man must be guided by an ethic that accounts for both the desire for solitude and the desire for company. He writes that "an ethic which takes account only of the one or only of the other will be incomplete and unsatisfying."²¹

The Necessity of Altruism for Morality

The "altruistic" desire, which is the third of the desires upon which Russell bases his moral theories, is, like the desire for solitude and gregariousness, not clearly a "desire" in the sense which Russell normally uses the word. It seems that altruism is a quality of desires; that is, Russell believes that men have desires which are altruistic. But this altruism seems to be in itself like a desire since it is inherent in man and most people seem to experience it. An example of altruism as Russell uses the word is illustrated below:

It is not only possible, but usual, to have objects of desire which lie wholly outside our own lives. The most common example of this is parental feeling. A large percentage of mankind, probably the majority, desire that their children shall prosper

²¹Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 17.

after they themselves are dead.²²

But Russell believes that altruism extends even beyond this:

Some men desire not only the welfare of their family and their friends, but of their nation, and even of all mankind. In some degree this is normal; there are few men whose last hours of life would not be rendered more unhappy if they could know that within a hundred years atomic bombs would extinguish human life.²³

Altruism is an asset possessed by man which predisposes him to consider his fellow human beings. Russell believes that altruism can be developed through a proper education, and that if it is encouraged it will develop according to the "principle of growth."

Intelligence and Morality

Man is more than a bundle of desires and emotions since he possesses a well-developed intelligence. The function of intelligence, as far as morality is concerned, is to guide the impulses and desires of man. Russell claims that there is usually a conflict between intelligence and desires. Contemporary morality in western society reflects the conflict between intelligence and desires. Russell claims that contemporary moralists "lay more emphasis on the virtue of present sacrifice than on the pleasantness of subsequent reward."²⁴

Russell admits that intelligence must be used in order to select the impulses and desires that must be sacrificed. Russell believes that these sacrifices are only necessary if the impulses or desires are

²²Ibid., p. 63.

²³Ibid., p. 64.

²⁴Ibid., p. 52.

detrimental to society, or if the impulses or desires can bring greater satisfaction to the individual in the future. Since intelligence must choose between desires, or choose to postpone or sacrifice desires, there is a conflict between intelligence and desires:

Ethics and moral codes are necessary to man because of the conflict between intelligence and impulse. Given intelligence only, or impulse only, there would be no place for ethics.²⁵

But, to preserve the human quality in man, Russell contends that man must indulge in some impulsive behaviour and control other impulsive behaviour. He claims that:

Although the life of impulse is dangerous, it must be preserved if human existence is not to lose its savour. Between the poles of impulse and control, an ethic by which men can live happily must find a middle point.²⁶

The Meaning of Morality

Besides claiming that "ethics and moral codes are necessary to man because of the conflict between intelligence and impulse," Russell also claims that "the main purpose of morality is to promote behaviour serving the interests of the group and not merely of the individual."²⁷

It would seem that Russell believes ethics must do two things:

1. Produce harmony within the individual by endeavouring to ameliorate the conflict between intelligence and impulse.
2. Produce harmony by eliminating or ameliorating the conflicts that arise amongst individuals due to the contradictory desires for solitude and gregariousness.

²⁵Ibid., p. 15.

²⁶Ibid., p. 80.

²⁷Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 80.

Russell is faced with the problem of finding a way to satisfy the conflicts between intelligence and desires, on the one hand, and between the solitary and gregarious desires, on the other. He believes that this problem can be overcome if man lives in the right kind of society, and if he enjoys the right kind of education. The question of what kind of society and education Russell considers to be "right," remains to be discussed.

Summary

Russell views man as a part of nature and he accepts the Darwinian concept of evolution. Because he believes that no supernatural force guides man's destiny, and because he believes that man is of the same kind of matter as everything else in the universe, he believes that man is amenable to scientific technique. Science in Russell's view can be applied to man's physical and mental life in order to produce certain results. The goals of life, however, are outside the scope of science, but they should be goals that can be achieved in this life since, as far as we know, there is no other.

Men have evolved from animals and the difference between men and animals is only a matter of degree. Men possess a more developed intelligence and have a greater variety of desires. Russell's use of the word "desire" and his concept of an "instinct" is vague. He uses the words when he refers to specific attributes like the instinctive desire for food and warmth. He also uses the same words in application to desires which appear to have developed as a result of the environment e.g. Russell claims "altruism" is an instinct and a desire, yet the

altruistic instinct will only develop when given the correct environment. Russell farther broadens the use of such words of altruism, gregariousness, and instinct, by using these words to qualify other desires. Hence, "gregariousness" is not simply an instinctive desire, but it is used to describe such qualities as love and cooperation.

The "principle of growth" operates on man's desires, and Russell feels that education can be used to encourage desires to grow in a particular direction. Education may also be used to develop man's intelligence. From the perspective of morality, intelligence is used to select sacrifice or postpone desires. There is usually a conflict between intelligence and desires, and there is often a conflict amongst the desires that any particular person may hold. Russell hopes that the choice made by intelligence will be guided by altruism, and by the conflicting desires for gregariousness and solitude.

Morality for Russell means the amelioration of conflicts. These conflicts may be within man, they may be between men. The succeeding chapters will discuss the kind of society in which conflicts may be ameliorated or eliminated. The part which education will play in such a society will be studied in detail.

CHAPTER III

MAN IN SOCIETY

Russell believes that man can only achieve happiness if society is organized to ameliorate or eliminate the conflicts that presently exist in society. In his opinion these conflicts can only be ameliorated if there are some radical changes in the structure of modern society. The chief aim of this chapter is to discuss the society proposed by Russell and to consider the happiness of man as the ethical goal of this society.

The society described by Russell will meet with resistance from the forces of church and state. This resistance has important educational implications since Russell believes that either the church, the state, or a combination of both institutions, control education in modern society. The ethical consequences of church-state control of education are also considered in this chapter.

The Inviolable Individual

A consideration of Russell's view of man in society must start with the statement of another conflict. Russell maintains that the maxim "all men are equal" must be carefully interpreted since "it is not the case that all men are the equals of Newton in mathematical ability or of Beethoven in musical genius."¹ There are certain aspects

¹Bertrand Russell, Fact and Fiction (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961), p. 98.

in which all men are equal, "They have equal rights and should have an equal share of basic political power All men should be equal before the law." Above all Russell feels that the life of each individual is equal to the life of every other individual. He agrees with Shakespeare who wrote:

The poor beetle that we tread upon
In corporal sufferance feels a pang as great
As when a giant dies.²

Russell considers the individual as inviolable, but he also recognizes that the individual normally wishes to live in a society.³ In order to live in a society an individual must consider the rights of other people. To ignore these rights would produce a chaotic situation in which man's animal desires are allowed free reign. A strong individual may control such a society. But Russell denies that physical power should be the criterion for selecting a ruler, because, amongst other things, it denies the use of that specifically human characteristic, a well-developed intelligence.

However, there must be some hierarchy in societies as they are known today, and some people do acquire the power that enables them to control others.⁴ Russell believes that these powers should be acquired and not inherited. Furthermore, Russell denies that financial power, military power, or corrupt political power, is the right way to acquire

²Quoted in Bertrand Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), p. 70.

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Bertrand Russell, Power (London: Unwin Books, 1960), p. 10.

authority over others. Russell's present opinion is that the best available method of acquiring the power of political control is through the democratic process.⁵ The principles of democratic government gives the opportunity for each adult person to use his intelligence when he elects a representative.⁶

Russell's approach to man in society closely parallels the arguments of John Locke in his Second Treatise of Government.⁷ The inviolable nature of man is recognized, but in order to live in society man must forego some of these rights. Locke permits man a choice of living in a "Political or Civil Society" or of withdrawing from such a society.⁸ Russell does not consider such a choice. Locke was writing of England during the days of the Restoration when transportation depended on horses and when wars were insular affairs fought by comparatively small armies. Russell is writing of the scientific and technological era when the whole world is interdependent. The contemporary world is one in which communication and transportation are swift and efficient, and wars have the propensity of universal annihilation. In Locke's day it was possible for any man to withdraw from a "Political Society," but under modern conditions, such a withdrawal is virtually impossible.

⁵Ibid., pp. 130-8.

⁶See Russell's essay, "A Scientist's Plea for Democracy," in Bertrand Russell, Fact and Fiction, pp. 102-9.

⁷Carl Cohen (ed.), Communism, Fascism and Democracy (Random House, New York, 1962), p. 436.

⁸Ibid., p. 448.

However, there is reason to believe that if any man knew of some isolated haven, then Russell would not interfere with his "unpolitical" state.⁹ In most people, however, there is the desire to be gregarious, and in order to satisfy this desire it is inevitable that they surrender some of their inviolable rights.

The World Group

Presently Russell feels it is illogical to sacrifice one's inviolable nature to anything less than that group which comprises the whole of mankind. Russell argues that science and technology have made the world an economic unit, and all nations are interdependent.¹⁰ Because of this interdependence, Russell argues that the world requires a single government that holds sway over all national bodies.

Russell desires each nation of the world to be democratic, and he desires elected representatives of these nations on a world governing body. That many nations of the world are not democratic, and the fact that democracy is a word of many meanings, does not deter Russell from claiming that a start towards world government should be made.¹¹ Russell believes that the United Nations could be used as a model for world government.¹²

⁹Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 58.

¹⁰Russell, Impact of Science on Society (Columbia University Press, New York, 1951), p. 33.

¹¹Ibid., p. 57.

¹²Ibid., pp. 51-7.

Initially the United Nations should take charge of all the armed forces of the world, and this would remove the chance of nuclear warfare. Any kind of warfare could be suppressed by the United Nations since this body would have the only major military forces. Once the threat of world annihilation has been removed, the world government should turn its attention to the problem of hunger and misery that pervades large areas of the world. Russell claims that science has provided the means to release all men from the dread of hunger, drought, and cold.¹³ He feels that the necessities of life can be satisfied, but nationalism stands in the way. It is Russell's opinion that if nations submit to a government similar to the United Nations, and if this government made a scientific approach to world problems, then the living conditions of all men would be improved.

Universal Democracy

Russell desires the "world group" to be governed according to the principles of representative democracy. He admits to no possibility of direct democracy even in the government of small states. The problem faced in representative democracy is that minorities may lose their rights. To safeguard against this, Russell suggests a "devolution" of authority. Russell's concept of universal democracy is based on this principle of devolution, or as he sometimes calls it, the "geographical devolution of authority."¹⁴ The world government would

¹³Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁴Russell, Fact and Fiction, p. 87.

control the armed forces and it would direct scientific efforts aimed at improving severe problems of physical or mental hardship. State governments would still exist and would look after problems of a more localized nature. In complete devolution, even minorities in a nation would be permitted to decide on purely local matters.

Russell perceives two kinds of authorities in democracy. The elected representatives of the people hold authority because it has been delegated to them by the people whom they represent. The scientists in a democracy hold authority because they can use the methods of science in an effort to achieve the ends desired by the majority in a democracy.¹⁵

This link between democracy and science is strengthened further in Russell's analysis of the relationship. Both democracy and science developed due to the overthrow of dogmatic authority. Russell claims:

The pragmatic advantages of science were irresistible, but the attitude of indifference to authority which it inculcated could not be confined to strictly scientific matters. The American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the growth of democracy in England were its natural consequences.¹⁶

The difference between authority in non-democratic countries and authority in democratic countries, is that the former is dogmatic and coercive, while the authority of the latter is, or should be, tolerant and open to criticism. There is in Russell's view an overlap between the scientific attitude to authority and the democratic attitude

¹⁵Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 104.

to government.¹⁷ Both are tolerant of opposing opinions since the decisions made on any question should be based on available evidence and not on the whim of a ruler.

Regardless of the fact that democracy suits Russell's scientific frame of mind, he cautions that there are dangers in democratic government. Liberty, for example, is not always guaranteed, because it is possible to legislate the rights of a minority out of existence.¹⁸ Furthermore, an elected majority in a democratic government can legislate against its own dissolution if it is sufficiently fanatical. Fanatics can ruin democratic government because fanatics are not tolerant.¹⁹ The success of democracy is due as much to the attitude of toleration as to the actual form which a government takes.

Yet, in Russell's view, the merits of a democracy far outweigh its demerits. Firstly, disputes can be settled by reason and without resorting to war. Secondly, in a democracy it is not possible for any large minority to be persecuted. Thirdly, even a small minority can make its grievances known.²⁰

Even though Russell views democracy as better than any other known form of government, he recognizes that it has limits. The chief limit of democracy is that it can only function where people are

¹⁷Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 94-5.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 88.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 99-100.

sufficiently well educated to appreciate its advantages.²¹ Still the merits of democracy outweigh its demerits, and provided people are educated to recognize the pitfalls of democracy, Russell is convinced that it is the best known form of government that can encourage both individual initiative and submission to majority rule.²²

Individual and the Citizen

Individual initiative and submission to the authority of majority rule are conflicting desires which Russell believes must be satisfied in order to produce happiness in man. In order to achieve this end Russell develops a continuum. At one extreme he calls a man a "citizen," at the other extreme he calls him an "individual." A man is classed as a "citizen" when his actions are likely to have an influence on other people. Man is called an "individual" when his actions have reference only to himself.²³ This polarized concept that Russell has of man is based on his belief that man desires solitude on some occasions and company on others. It is not a clear dichotomy since the actions of most men never produce universal results, and rarely are any person's actions restricted in their results to the individual who acts.

There is, however, strength in Russell's position if it is

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 87.

²³Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, pp. 15-21; also see Bertrand Russell, Education and the Social Order (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), pp. 9-29.

considered from another perspective. When man is at work, when he is travelling to and from his work, when he is attending public functions, etc., he is obliged to obey the rules that contribute to the good of his community. When he is away from work indulging in leisure, he can create for himself the conditions under which, as nearly as possible, his actions influence only himself, or only those who desire to be influenced.

Russell believes that this kind of continuum grows more and more necessary. As technology increases industrial production, so man should have more leisure. Eventually man's leisure may play a larger part in his life than his work. When this occurs man must be educated to use his leisure. This education will be aimed at teaching the individual how to indulge his impulses and how to satisfy his desires without interfering with the lives of other people. Education will also have the task of teaching people to live together. This is what Russell means when he talks of education of the citizen.²⁴

Subjectively Rights Acts and Objectively Right Acts

A person acting as an individual may be distinguished from a person acting as a citizen. The distinction is evident in the attitude of the performer. An individual who acts merely to satisfy his personal desires, performs what Russell calls "subjectively rights acts."²⁵ A citizen who acts after considering the rights of other people performs

²⁴Russell, Education and the Social Order, pp. 9-29.

²⁵Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 87.

"objectively rights acts."²⁶

There is no necessary conflict between a subjectively right act and an objectively right act. An extremely altruistic person may desire the good of mankind more fervently than anything else. In such a case the objectively rights acts and the subjectively right acts would coincide. Although Russell sees no necessary conflict between subjectively rights and objectively rights acts he does not wish to become involved in any argument concerning the necessary coincidence of these acts. In other words, Russell would not debate the position of Leibniz who claims:

The good individual is he who ministers to the good of the whole, and the good of the whole is a pattern made up of the goods of individuals.²⁷

To indulge in arguments of this nature would be meta-ethical, and Russell claims that he desires to avoid such arguments so that he is not diverted from his aim to improve the condition of mankind.

Altruism in Society

Where an individual is faced with a definite conflict between a subjectively right act and an objectively right act, Russell appeals to altruism. An altruistic person will be prepared to forego his personal or selfish desires for the good of mankind. It is evident that altruism is of vital importance to Russell's moral theories.

Supposing there is a real conflict between an individual and

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Russell, Education and the Social Order, p. 10.

society and the individual refuses to be altruistic? According to Russell there will be conflicts in all but mechanical societies. If the individual feels so strongly against society that he uses violence, then the law of the land should be enforced impartially by the police. Justice should reflect the desires of society at large, or, as Russell puts it, "Justice is that system that gives the least commonly recognized ground for complaint."²⁸ There will usually be some complaint, but if just laws are not obeyed, the rule of 'muscular individuals' will ensue.²⁹ Thus, any individual who violates the laws of society must be apprehended. Russell, it should be stressed, is not an anarchist. He believes that strictly enforced laws are necessary before the world he conceptualizes becomes a reality. But Russell hopes that enforced obedience to law will disappear as students are educated under the system he proposes.

The Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number

The aim of Russell's moral theories is the greatest happiness of the greatest number of human beings who comprise the population of the world.³⁰ Russell defines happiness as the satisfaction of desire.³¹ He feels that the best way to know anything about the desires of indi-

²⁸Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 37.

²⁹Russell, Power, pp. 138-44.

³⁰Russell, Fact and Fiction, p. 143; also Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 60.

³¹Russell, Fact and Fiction, pp. 131-2.

viduals who comprise the population of the world is through a world democracy. It should be the duty of the world government to seek to satisfy the desires manifested by the majority of the world population, provided that the principles of democracy are not violated.

Russell claims to have chosen this end affectively since he only feels it to be the best ethic available for man. Having stated this end it is clear that Russell's ethical theories form a fairly consistent whole. Russell is concerned with the happiness of men who are now living on this earth; he believes in the fundamental equality of all men; he believes nuclear war will cause misery; he believes that only world government can avoid a nuclear war; he believes in the satisfaction of physical and mental desires, and he believes that man has the knowledge to achieve happiness.

But regardless of these criteria chosen to support his position, Russell claims that his desire for the greatest happiness of the greatest number is purely affective. He points out:

Some think that prison is a good way of preventing crime; others hold that education would be a better way. A difference of this sort can be decided by sufficient evidence. But some differences cannot be tested in this way. Tolstoy condemned all war; others have held the life of a soldier doing battle for the right to be very noble. Here there was probably involved a real difference as to ends. On such a matter no argument is possible.³²

Russell feels his choice of ends to be right, but he repeatedly insists that, "the sphere of values lies outside science."³³

³²Bertrand Russell, Why I Am Not A Christian (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 44.

³³Bertrand Russell, The Scientific Outlook (London: George Allen

A Moral Theory Based on Desires

It has been established that Russell believes man's actions depend upon his desires. In Human Society in Ethics and Politics, he says:

Desires, emotions, passions (you can choose which ever word you will) are the only possible causes of action. Reason is not a cause but only a regulator.³⁴

Reason regulates, but all motivation to action comes from desire, and it is upon desire that Russell bases his moral theories. However, qualities like altruism and intelligence are integral parts of his theory.

In order to establish his universal moral theory Russell claims that the number of desires manifested by man are limited. If man had desires for innumerable ends, each end being subjective, then it would be virtually impossible to establish any kind of universal moral theory. Russell, however, claims that the ends that man really desire are only three in number. The question arises, 'Does man really know what he desires?' It would seem that Russell's answer would be that man may know what he desires, but that he may not know that these desires fall into one of three generic groups or classes. These three classes, which Russell calls intrinsic goods, are described as follows:

First; goods in which there can be private ownership, but which can, at least in theory, be sufficiently supplied to everyone. Of these, the stock example is food. Second, goods which are not

and Unwin, 1931), p. 273; also Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 25.

³⁴Ibid., p. 8.

only private but, by their logical character, are incapable of being generally enjoyed . . . fame, power, riches . . . Third, there are intrinsic values of which the possession does nothing whatever to diminish the possibilities of equal enjoyments for others. In this category are such things as health, friendship, love, and the joys of creation.³⁵

Russell claims that intrinsic goods of the first kind should no longer be a matter of strife and competition. In the specific field of food production, science has enabled man to produce enough food for the whole human race. His scientific knowledge should also enable him to satisfactorily distribute the food. However, artificial barriers, created by nations or other 'groups' tend to prevent this from occurring. Enjoyment of the third type of intrinsic good is also impaired by group influences since countries, nations, and religions tend to divide the world into separate camps. The naturally altruistic feelings that one individual may have for a neighbour, who may belong to a different group will be calumniated by their group differences.

Russell's "principal of growth" is complemented by his theory of intrinsic goods. Most men will seek material goods until they have sufficient for comfort. Once the material needs are satisfied, man will desire either intrinsic goods in the second group or intrinsic goods in the third group. The intrinsic goods in the second group include power, fame, and riches. The desire for these intrinsic goods will involve strife and competition since in any given society a man can only be considered as powerful, famous or rich if he is more power-

³⁵Ibid., pp. 132-3.

ful, more famous or more rich than other people in the society. Russell desires to avoid this competition which he feels will ensue if the second group of intrinsic goods are sought.

The third group of intrinsic goods do not involve competition, but actually improve the possibility of the satisfaction of desires amongst greater numbers of people. This third group comprises the desires that Russell stresses in education. The individual will obtain satisfaction in seeking these intrinsic goods and since they are stressed in school they are the desires which will tend to proliferate according to Russell's "principle of growth."

The Main Problem Faced by Russell

Before studying Russell's theory of education it will be useful to consider the predominant cause of the inability to men to live in harmony. Russell believes that the main cause of man's conflicts is his tendency to form groups. The most powerful groups in the world today are nations and churches. National governments encourage the growth of nationalistic feelings through the media of the press, radio, and television. Ministers, priests, and other religious leaders develop narrow religious feelings in their congregations. The individual becomes enveloped by the group he joins, and he identified the interests of the group as his interests. When the leaders of a group become embroiled with the leaders of another group, the ordinary members of both groups eventually get involved.³⁶

³⁶Ibid., pp. 60-71.

Russell dislikes the idea of groups because he feels that their existence makes the possibility of universal harmony remote. Groups cause conflicts because they set themselves ends that are not compatible with the general good. In Russell's view, any group makes a claim that falls into one of three different classifications:

First he may say that the interests of mankind are, in the long run, identical with the interests of his group, although members of other groups, in their selfish blindness, are unable to see this. Second: he may say that his group alone counts in the realm of ends, and that the rest are regarded as mere means towards satisfying the desires of his own group. Third: he may hold that while he should only take account of the interests of group A, to which he belongs, a man belonging to group B should similarly take account only of the interests of group B.³⁷

In criticising these three claims, Russell states that the first assertion is a scientific problem about means, and not a moral problem about ends. In considering such a claim, Russell believes that economists, sociologists, and other scientists, should study the truth of the assertion. If the claim of the group was substantiated by scientific evidence, then Russell would encourage the group to pursue its aims.

The claims of the second group is that it alone counts in the realm of ends. This is the claim of racial supremacists, nationalists, and religious fanatics. In this view Russell sees nothing but woe. He claims that the most recent philosophical exponent of the view was Nietzsche, who wrote of the superiority of the 'overman.' Compared with the "overman," no one else counts in the consideration of ends.³⁸

³⁷Ibid., p. 64.

³⁸Ibid., p. 67.

Russell suggests that if a group of "overmen" did achieve power, and if they did use "lesser mortals" as means to an end, they would eventually be overthrown. An elite may rule for a period of time, but, like the Spartans, their rule would eventually be terminated. Russell contends that any group which claims to be an elite will only detract from the general good, if not immediately, then certainly in time.

The third claim is made by isolationists. It is an outdated view, as far as Russell is concerned, since national interdependence, not national independence, is necessary in the modern world.

Russell believes that the claims made by the various groups are in error. He suggests that the error is due to the fact that group affiliations detract from the general good. It is Russell's opinion that the kind of attitude held by members of the groups cited above can only lead to strife, either immediate or postponed. Because Russell feels that no one really desires to produce strife, he considers support of any of the groups described to be absurd.³⁹

Groups and Education

Unfortunately the divisive influence of state and church is evident in education. The concepts of patriotism and sectarianism permeate most schools that are controlled by church or state. The result is that the conflicts that are evident in adult life will be transmitted to the children. The division is perpetuated from generation to generation, and the schools are prisoners of their sponsors.

³⁹Ibid., p. 71.

in the foregoing quotation refers to a scientific approach to pedagogy. It is clear that Russell believes that educational institutions can, through using scientific techniques, achieve the goal which is "socially desirable." A study of these factors comprises the body of the next chapter of this thesis.

Summary

Russell sees a basic conflict in man since man desires both solitude and company. This conflict may be greatly ameliorated by developing a dichotomous approach to life. When in contact with other people, man must sacrifice some of his inviolable rights. On the other hand, when man is alone he may satisfy his own personal and private desires. Russell believes that in the future there will be more opportunity for man to choose the kind of leisure he desires to enjoy. Man will then be able to satisfy his desires for solitude or for company. However, as long as man desires to live in society he will have to forego some of his inviolable rights, otherwise society may become anarchical. When man acts, bearing in mind the good of society Russell says that he is indulging in objectively right acts. When a man acts to satisfy his own desires he is said to be an individual performing subjectively right acts.

In Russell's view a man who sacrifices his inviolable nature in order to satisfy his gregarious desires is unwise, unless he sacrifices his inviolable nature to the largest possible group of people. This largest possible group, as far as Russell is concerned is the human race. To sacrifice one's individuality to any group less than the

largest possible group can only lead to strife. Strife is caused because the individual sacrifices his subjective desires to the group desires. Where there are numerous small groups there is a tendency for conflict to take place amongst the small groups. Where the individual sacrifices his inviolable nature for the largest possible group, the tendency to conflict is diminished.

Russell believes that the best means of establishing the largest possible group is through the process of universal democracy. He desires a universal government which would be sufficiently powerful to force dissident nations to settle their disputes by negotiation rather than by warfare. The elimination of warfare should be followed by an utilization of science to satisfy the necessities of life of all people throughout the world. Russell considers universal democracy as a means of getting to know the desires of the greatest number of people. Once these desires are known it should be possible for science to find a way of satisfying those desires. Since Russell claims that happiness is a satisfaction of desires, he considers universal democracy as a necessary step in his ethic, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." However, Russell recognizes that even universal democracy will be unable to eliminate conflict from life.

Conflict cannot be completely eliminated from life since desires, which motivate action, are common to all men. Where men desire the same object or position, a conflict will arise. Desires, however, fall into three general types as far as Russell is concerned. By the intelligent manipulation of these desires and by the use of altruism it should

be possible to prevent much of the conflict which is now evident in the world.

If the elimination of conflict is not possible, at least it can be ameliorated, and this can be done if education is oriented to the elimination or amelioration of conflict. The educational orientation which Russell desires is a system aimed at the general good, i.e., the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as far as can be determined by the democratic process. Russell claims that his goal was chosen affectively, but once the goal is known, science may be used to achieve it.

Russell does not believe that a system of education based on the principles which he advocates will eliminate conflict, but he does believe that man's attitude to competition will change, and strife will be decreased. Russell also realizes that before his theories of education can be put into operation, tremendous resistance will have to be overcome. This resistance will emanate from the various churches and nations that presently control education.

CHAPTER IV

BERTRAND RUSSELL ON MORAL EDUCATION

Russell's ethics have as a goal the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people who comprise the human race.¹ In Russell's view this goal can be achieved if one has, amongst other things, the correct educational institutions. These institutions should be based on a scientific pedagogy.² The purpose of this chapter is to consider Russell's discussion of the relationship between educational institutions and a scientific pedagogy.

Attention will be given to the relationship that exists between Russell's concept of man, his ethical goal, and the educational methods that may be used in order to achieve this goal. The first part of the chapter will entail conclusions drawn from that which has gone before; the second part of the chapter will describe the educational institutions that Russell perceives from the perspective of the citizen and from the perspective of the individual; the third part of the chapter will discuss Russell's pedagogy and its influence on the growth of the individual and on the development of the citizen.

Education, Man, and Morality

Initially Russell's theories may be divided into two parts.

¹Bertrand Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1954), p. 60 and p. 129.

²Ibid., p. 150.

This division is based on the fact that man is neither completely gregarious nor is he completely solitary by nature. In order to live a satisfactory life, it is Russell's contention that man must know how to satisfy both his desires for solitude and the desire which he has to enjoy the company of his fellow men. Because these desires are contradictory, they cannot both be fully satisfied, but Russell believes that the right kind of education can produce a greater degree of satisfaction than is possible under existing schemes of education.³ Russell hopes to educate people so that they are able to satisfy their desires by performing subjectively good acts, when the opportunity for such actions occur. It is also Russell's hope that the education which he proposes will enable people to live together in harmony. There is, furthermore, a third implication, which, although not a direct aim, seems to be a logical outcome of Russell's theories. The best education would be that which enables the subjective goods of individuals to coincide with the objective good of world society. Russell would only propose this last aim for his educational theories provided it would not turn the individual into a automaton who lacked the zest to enjoy spontaneous impulses. Desires that emanate from man's gregarious instincts, and desires that emanate from man's solitary instinct, are equally important and neither can be totally subsumed to the other. If either desire becomes totally dominant, Russell believes that man

³Ibid., p. 52.

loses a quality that makes him human.⁴

Man is possessed of a wide variety of instincts many of which are of great importance for the development of Russell's proposed ethic. It would appear that Russell believes that all instincts vary according to the same continuum evident in man's variation from his desire for solitude to his desire for the company of other men. Altruism, for example, is opposed to selfishness; the former term being applied to a desire that considers other people, and the latter term referring to one's own desires without considering other people. Russell considers the opposite to creativity to be possessiveness, since a creative person creates something that everyone can enjoy. A person who desires to possess great material wealth is depriving other people from enjoying the wealth which he owns.⁵ Russell develops this kind of continuum when he discusses most of the desires or instincts that he considers to be inherent in men.

Although Russell prefers what he calls the "Negative Theory of Education," he actually makes a positive approach to the subject. In his theories Russell stresses that those desires which he believes contribute to world harmony should receive strong emphasis in the educational program. Those desires that detract from the general good should be ignored. The positive stress on Russell's "desirable" instincts will tend to prevent the undesirable instincts from developing

⁴Ibid., p. 52.

⁵Bertrand Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1960), p. 162.

since the "principle of growth" will operate in the direction of those instincts which receive the attention of the school.⁶ As will be seen below, this does not mean that Russell will ignore anti-social behaviour if it does arise, but he believes that if the school provides the child with the right environment, there will be no need to stress the negative aspects of education such as, do not use bad language, and do not be curious about sex.

The environment of the school and the examples set by the personnel of the school should all be democratically and scientifically oriented. The aim of the school will be to develop the concept of universal happiness, and after this concept is established as a part of one's being, then efforts will be directed to developing the individual.

Russell's Educational Theory

In 1932, when Russell wrote, Education and the Social Order, he suggested that there were three theories of education current in the world.

Of these [theories] the first considers that the sole purpose of education is to provide opportunities for growth and to remove hampering influences. The second holds that the purpose of education is to give culture to the individual and to develop capacities to the utmost. The third holds that education is to be considered rather in relation to the community than in relation to the individual, and that its business is to train useful citizen.⁷

⁶Ibid., p. 19.

⁷Bertrand Russell, Education and the Social Order (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1961), p. 29.

Russell prefers the aim suggested by the first theory which he calls the "Negative Theory of Education." Such an approach to education shows the influence of Rousseau, but, unlike Rousseau, Russell does not believe that this theory can be used on its own. The "Negative Theory," in Russell's view, would produce individuals unconscious of the general good. It is likely that the products of such an education would have difficulty living in harmony. Because the "Negative Theory" is not in itself sufficient, Russell believes it necessary to make use of the third theory listed above which he calls the "Citizen Moulding Theory."⁸

Russell desires to let the individual grow freely, and yet he realizes that the individual is also a citizen who cannot be permitted unlimited freedom of action. Thus, Russell endeavours to make use of two theories which, on the surface, appear contradictory. From a philosophical perspective Russell does not try to validate his position, but from a common sense point of view he feels that the approach he advocates is the only logical one to take.⁹

In the context of education, Russell would try to eliminate the concept that men are citizens of any particular country. He considers that all men are citizens of the world and they should be educated to believe this. Awareness of this concept is a necessary step that is aimed at eliminating the influence of the state and church in education.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., p. 30.

⁹Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 71. Also

However, if a person becomes only a citizen and considers only the good of mankind, he will lose the ability to enjoy spontaneous action (impulse), which Russell believes to be a prerequisite of happiness for most people.¹¹ In order to reconcile the individual and the citizen, Russell claims that it is first necessary to educate for universal citizenship. Once the concept of universal citizenship is firmly implanted, Russell would endeavour to give the individual an opportunity to grow. Political considerations make Russell feel it necessary to educate the citizen before the individual. He writes:

Survival will demand as a minimum condition the establishment of a world state and the subsequent institution of a world wide system of education designed to produce loyalty to the world state. No doubt such a system of education will entail, at any rate for a century or two, certain crudities which will militate against the development of the individual. But if the alternative is chaos and the death of civilization, the price will be worth paying.¹²

In educating the citizen Russell would use propaganda to develop certain attitudes and to stress certain instincts that he believes to be inherent in man.¹³ When Russell educates the individual he endeavours to inculcate nothing. He attempts to remove "hampering influences" so that man's impulses may operate, and he wishes to stimulate the individual to pursue his various interests.¹⁴ However, when man's

see Bertrand Russell, Fact and Fiction (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1961), p. 123.

¹¹Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 52.

¹²Russell, Education and the Social Order, p. 27.

¹³Ibid., pp. 213-231.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 29.

desires and impulses conflict with the general good, they must be sacrificed.¹⁵ Russell endeavours to inculcate the concept of the general good by appealing to altruism, intelligence, and finally law. Under present conditions Russell sees the development of world citizenship as necessary to survival.

The World Educational Organization

Russell's concept of universal citizenship, and an universal democracy, leads him to conceive of an universally organized system of education.¹⁶ Russell feels that science and technology have made men so interdependent that world democracy and an universal education system are necessary to world order. He considers that the only alternative to an acceptance of democratic world government is world war.¹⁷ Russell goes on to suggest that after the next world war there will be a victorious power that will be sufficiently powerful to impose its will on the whole world. Thus, world government will be a reality, but it may not be democratic. Russell reasons that it is far wiser to eliminate the possibility and to start developing world government and universal education forthwith.¹⁸

Once a world government is established, one of its major duties

¹⁵Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁷Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays (Unwin Brothers, Ltd., London, 1950), p. 50.

¹⁸See Russell's essay, "The Future of Mankind," in Unpopular Essays, pp. 50-63.

would be to take control of all state and church educational organizations. All education of children would come under the control of a centralized committee which would serve the function of a curriculum committee. Attached to the curriculum committee would be an inspection branch, and this branch would have the task of ensuring that the instructions of the curriculum committee were carried out.¹⁹

The curriculum committee would comprise experts in various fields from all over the world. The aim of the committee would be to draw up a curriculum that is honest and which would develop world harmony. Russell believes that if the curriculum is drawn up honestly it would almost certainly contribute to world harmony. The question of what is honest would have to be decided by experts who would be drawn from various countries in the world. A panel of historians would decide the 'truth,' in for example, a problematical question in history. Once an international group of specialists decided on the 'truth' in any particular case, then the schools would be obliged to teach the 'official line.' Russell suggests that if history, in particular, is not treated in this fashion, then the subject may well be used dishonestly. An example that Russell uses to illustrate a dishonest approach to history, is the treatment given to the Battle of Waterloo by France, Germany, and Britain. Each nation uses the battle to extol their respective military prowess. The French complain of the deceitful behaviour of

¹⁹Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction, p. 105; also see Bertrand Russell, Impact of Science on Society, pp. 62-4; also Bertrand Russell's essay, "University Education," in Russell, Fact and Fiction, pp. 150-6.

Blucher and the overwhelming odds they had to face. The Germans proclaim that Blucher arrived just before the French devastated the British army. The British mention only that a general named Blucher also took part in the fight, but the battle was virtually over when he arrived.²⁰ It is to such mistreatment of history that Russell objects. He claims that if students knew the truth they would see the futility of warfare instead of imagining that it is something glorious.²¹

A major aspect of the work of the central curriculum committee would be to reduce the emphasis on military history. In 1932, when Russell wrote Education and the Social Order, military and nationalistic history played an important part in education in England, France, and Germany. Under Russell's approach battle plans, pictures of proud soldiers and glorious leaders, and descriptions of exciting battles, would all be pushed into the background by the curriculum committee and the results of warfare stressed. Such things as the Belsen prison camp would be described; a survey of the battlefield, two days after the battle would be considered; a look into a home shattered by war, or the study of the results of warfare on a family where the father had been killed would be pursued. Russell feels that these are the aspects of warfare that should be considered and understood by children, because these are the lasting effects. All of these studies would, in Russell's view, encourage the young to believe that warfare is futile.

²⁰For a contemporary illustration of this point see Appendix A.

²¹Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction, pp. 104-5.

If people take this view, then Russell feels that a contribution towards world harmony will have been made.²²

To replace war heroes Russell suggests that heroes be made out of scientists, humanitarians, and men who have mastered the material universe. Russell feels that, given the right approach, the "hero aura" now surrounding the soldier could be transferred to people who have made contributions to art, science, medicine, and similar endeavours. The same approach would be taken towards nationalism to make it into a force for universal good. The curriculum committee would be responsible for ensuring that the schools would divert nationalistic feelings into channels that would develop the same feelings for mankind in general as patriots presently have for their nation. Russell hopes that his educational theory can produce universal nationalism.²³

The purpose of the curriculum committee is evident. It should ensure that schools teach what is honest.²⁴ But it should also use such tools as propaganda to see that the passions of young persons would be directed towards the good of the world in general, rather than towards the good of any particular nation. Inspecting officers would aim to ensure that the facts, as conceived by the central curriculum committee, were being taught.

Russell claims that this kind of educational control need not

²²Russell, Education and the Social Order, pp. 136-144.

²³Ibid., p. 27.

²⁴Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction, p. 105.

be absolute. Devolution of authority would enable schools to develop any particular artistic or cultural trait peculiar to the locality in which the school is situated. Russell seems to conceive of a situation in which all schools have a good deal of freedom in order to adapt to local conditions. But, regardless of Russell's stress on freedom, it is evident that every school would have to contribute to Russell's concept of the general good.²⁵

Uses of Propaganda

To instill a respect for the general good, Russell would apply the propaganda techniques that are presently used for nationalistic purposes, to obtain international cohesion. He defines propaganda as "an attempt, by means of persuasion, to enlist human beings in the service of one party to any dispute."²⁶ All education has some propaganda in its content if it is only in the personal views and preferences of the teacher. But propaganda becomes critical according to Russell, when it is organized by a powerful body to achieve some particular end. Russell believes that universal government should use the techniques of propaganda to establish the claims of the general good.

Propaganda, although often associated with dishonesty, is not necessarily dishonest. In exemplifying this position one may refer to Russell's approach to the teaching of history. He feels that wars detract from the general good so Russell would present the evidence that

²⁵Russell, Fact and Fiction, p. 156.

²⁶Russell, Education and the Social Order, p. 213.

supports this belief. He also feels that the stress on national history tends to split the world into factions, so Russell would tend to concentrate on the history of humanity rather than on the history of any particular nation. Russell admits to using "uncompensated propaganda," which means that he would emphasize those aspects of history that contribute to the end he proposes. Since history must be selective Russell claims that he is not being dishonest. In any case, Russell's historical facts would have to be "screened" by the curriculum committee before he used them. He feels that such propaganda is necessary for social cohesion:

If wars are ever to be avoided, there will have to be international machinery to settle disputes, and it will be necessary to teach respect for the body that makes settlements.²⁷

Obviously, uncompensated propaganda would be used to teach "respect for the body that makes settlements." Russell has great confidence in the propaganda device. He says:

Propaganda will not fail as a rule . . . perhaps when mass psychology has been perfected, there will be no limits to what government can make their subjects believe.²⁸

Propaganda, when dishonestly used, may close the mind to the scientific and democratic spirit, and it may also be the cause of disaster and war. To safeguard against the misuse of propaganda, Russell feels that students should have a full understanding of the subject. Students may come to a better understanding of propaganda if they

²⁷Ibid., p. 226.

²⁸Ibid.

listen to discussions between such people as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the President of the Soviet Presidium. Russell suggests that these discussions could be broadcast weekly over the radio. In this way students would become familiar with the propaganda techniques used. Russell evidently works on the proposition that once familiar with the concept of propaganda, students would be less likely succumb to its wiles. But, however familiar the students become with propaganda, Russell still believes that uncompensated propaganda would be effective in revealing to young people the values of democracy, the scientific attitude, and the concept of the general good.²⁹

The School

The actual school which Russell describes would be democratically oriented. Since, in Russell's view, science and democracy are closely linked, the school would also have a scientific orientation. Both science and democracy can contribute to the general good. The aim of the school, as Russell sees it, would be to produce citizens who will contribute to the general good.³⁰

This, however, is only an initial aim. Once the school has set the tone so that the student accepts the concept of the general good, then the school must provide opportunities for the individual to "grow." It would be part of the school's duty to educate the citizen,

²⁹Ibid., p. 217.

³⁰Ibid., p. 29.

but it would be equally the duty of the school to educate the individual. One aspect of education is as important as the other, but Russell believes that without training in citizenship the individual will have no opportunity to flourish.³¹

Discipline

Since the school must produce citizens who are disciplined to consider the rights of others, Russell believes that the school must exert the necessary discipline in order to bring about such an attitude. Discipline, as far as Russell is concerned, is not a matter of fear and coercion. Indeed, Russell stresses the case for the greatest possible freedom in education. A discipline based on fear is bad for numerous reasons, and in explaining them Russell shows the influence of Freud. Fear will force a child to suppress his desires, and the desires which he suppresses may well reappear in later life in a distorted form. Furthermore, Russell contends that a child who is forced to submit to discipline will react with hatred. The hatred may not become immediately operative but no one can tell when it will appear.³²

Russell uses the same kind of reasoning when he considers discipline and the learning process. A student who is compelled to learn will resist learning, and this in turn will restrict his ability to think. Students must be stimulated to learn, and since Russell feels that students have a natural desire to learn, he believes it is easier

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 58.

to make use of the natural desires than it is to impose a coercive discipline. Furthermore, Russell maintains that stimulation of what is already present in the child is much more effective than imposing an external discipline.³³ Russell claims that the coercive discipline about which he writes is characterized in the British Public School System, the Jesuit schools, and in most state systems of education. As a result of this discipline Russell suggests that immediate goals are achieved, but at the expense of the intellect.³⁴

To avoid coercion Russell suggests that students should be free to attend classes or to stay away. If they do not desire to attend classes, they may sit alone in empty rooms without anything to entertain them. This is Russell's equivalent of punishment, although he claims it is not coercive in the usual sense of the word. A child does not have to sit in an isolated classroom, he may prefer to learn, and the desire to learn is what Russell is attempting to stimulate. Immediately the child decided that he wants to work, he can leave his isolation, and of his own free will, join the regular classroom.³⁵

The school, however, must enforce certain attitudes, which, in Russell's view may have to be enforced through using coercive discipline. According to Russell, children must know how to be clean. Russell, does not mean cleanliness in the sense that children should not

³³Ibid., pp. 60-64.

³⁴Bertrand Russell, On Education (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1960), pp. 28-34.

³⁵Ibid., p. 95.

get dirty when they play. But he does mean that a child should obey the scientifically considered rules of hygiene and health. Not to do so would present a danger to other members of the human community who live in this crowded world. So, consistent with his concept of the general good, Russell feels that students should be indoctrinated into following good health rules.³⁶

Punctuality is another "humble virtue" which Russell feels should be instilled in the young because it is necessary to modern society. Merely to consider the chaos which would ensue if buses and trains ignored schedules is sufficient to realize that Russell has a significant point when he claims that punctuality should be indoctrinated.³⁷

Associated with punctuality is routine, and Russell believes that children should have a routine with which they are familiar. The routine should not be completely rigid, but it should remove the fear of uncertainty from the child, and it should provide him with a fairly secure plan for the immediate future. Russell feels that security in early childhood is a necessary basis from which courage is built in later years.³⁸

Honesty is another quality that must be indoctrinated early in life. In contemporary society it is essential to respect the property

³⁶Russell, Education and the Social Order, p. 34.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 36-7.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 38-9.

of others, and since honesty is not a natural attribute of man, Russell feels it must be indoctrinated. But Russell's whole attitude to discipline is quite different from the attitude of the old British schoolmasters. Russell stresses that:

What is as important as imposing limitations upon the desirable amount of discipline is that all training should have the co-operation of the child's will, though not of every passing impulse.³⁹

Russell believes that some discipline is necessary, and that certain definite limitations must be placed on the actions of the individual. These limitations would only be imposed if they are necessary to the general good. Russell would also do his utmost to reveal to the students the reason for his disciplinary actions, and he would endeavour to obtain their cooperation in all that he did.⁴⁰

The education of the citizen is a necessary first step to world harmony and to the enjoyment of impulses under contemporary circumstances. Both world harmony and impulsive behaviour are, according to Russell, integral attributes of happiness in man. Man should know how to enjoy citizenship and he should know how to enjoy his impulses, but care should be taken to ensure that one aspect of education does not exclude the other. Educating the citizen is considered to be a first step in the educational process. The second step is the education of the individual.

Education of the Individual

³⁹Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 40-2, also Principles of Social Reconstruction, pp. 110-1.

Russell sees the satisfaction of the desires of the individual as being the private affairs of the individual, providing that they do not interfere with the general good. He conceives of these personal desires being satisfied via philosophy, art, drama, debate, hobbies, games, and other creative, intellectual, aesthetic, and athletic occupations. All these subjects should be taught in school. Russell does not go into detail regarding actual teaching methods, but it is evident that Russell believes that the removal of "hampering influences" will do much to stimulate the desires of students in these areas. Russell considers coercive discipline to be a hampering influence, and this is a reason for his objections to it.⁴¹ Once coercive discipline is eliminated all the efforts of the school will be directed towards stimulating the students to pursue their varied interests in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The very fact that there are few restrictions in the school proposed by Russell would contribute towards intellectual curiosity since he believes that students are by nature curious. Russell believes that the removal of these hampering influences will produce more initiative and develop creativity in students.⁴²

Creativity deserves a special place in the education of the individual. This is not only because it may satisfy the desires of the individual, but in addition, it contributes to harmonious relations

⁴¹Russell, Education and the Social Order, pp. 33-4; also, Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction, p. 163; this point is also developed in numerous essays.

⁴²Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction, p. 64.

among people. As has been indicated, Russell believes that one of the intrinsic goods desired by individuals is the possession of material wealth. This is a source of conflict since individuals compete with each other in order to obtain these riches. Russell makes the following claim:

Possession means taking or keeping some good thing which another is prevented from enjoying; creation means putting into the world a good thing which otherwise no one would be able to enjoy.⁴³

Creativity is an important concept in Russell's theory of education since it straddles any dichotomy that exists between the individual and the citizen. It is possible for creativity to aid in harmonizing the lives of men and it can bring satisfaction to the creator.

Creativity seems an unmitigated boon, but physical activity, although an important means of individual satisfaction, is wrought with danger. The history of physical education in Europe is closely linked with military development programs. This influence is very obvious in such games as wrestling and boxing. In these games the stress is on defeating another human being in physical combat. Rugby football possesses even a greater military orientation, since the team is organized along military lines and the stress is on "fighting for the ball."⁴⁴ Russell feels that a move away from this concept is necessary. Since, however, Russell feels that there may often be belli-

⁴³Ibid., p. 162.

⁴⁴Robert E. Egner, and Lester E. Denonn (eds.), The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell, 1903-1959 (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1961), p. 404, and p. 409.

cose individuals who desire a particular kind of bloodthirsty excitement, he suggests that they be specially treated. Individuals who desire violent thrills should be made to sail a light craft in a storm around a rocky coast; or perhaps they should be made to shoot some particularly dangerous rapids in an extremely light canoe. To replace situations where men emulate armies by uniting in teams to defeat other teams in "body-contact" sports, Russell suggests that teams exert themselves by climbing difficult peaks, or by combining against nature in other fields of endeavour. Russell's physical education program would eliminate highly competitive "body-contact" sports, but he would certainly encourage such things as gymnastics, sailing, swimming, and athletics.⁴⁵

In the education of the individual Russell believes that freedom of action, encouragement, and a stimulating atmosphere, will do more to help the growth of happy individual than will formal teaching. However, both formal teaching, especially in science, history, and current affairs, will be necessary for the education of the citizen and for the education of the individual, since the good life is "inspired by love and guided by knowledge."⁴⁶ The question of teaching altruism or teaching love (which the investigator believes to be synonymous terms) is not specifically dealt with by Russell. It is evident that Russell believes that altruism can percolate through to students from examples

⁴⁵Russell, On Education, pp. 72-4.

⁴⁶Bertrand Russell, Why I Am Not A Christian (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 44.

of the staff, from history and literature, and from the general atmosphere of the school. In this respect the quality of the staff is critical.

The School Staff

Teachers must be able to set examples, provide a stimulating atmosphere, encourage the students to "grow," as well as provide a formal education in a wide variety of subjects. The role of the teacher is discussed in Russell's essay, "The Functions of a Teacher."⁴⁷ Russell describes the ideal teacher as one who is intelligent, sympathetic, generous and reverent towards his students. He believes that if parents desire a good education for their children then it will be possible to find teachers who will be able to supply it.⁴⁸

The teachers, however, must be given opportunities which will enable them to think, study and travel. Teachers should not be engaged in a heavy teaching load each day of the week.⁴⁹ Russell is idealistic in his approach, but he is aware of the vicious circle which exists. Teachers who are overloaded cannot produce students who are of the calibre desired by Russell. Neither will overloaded teachers attract the best students to become teachers.

Russell attacks the teacher problem on many fronts. He suggests: better facilities for teachers; more sympathy from parents; administra-

⁴⁷Russell, Unpopular Essays, pp. 146-160.

⁴⁸Russell, On Education, pp. 7-9.

⁴⁹Russell, Unpopular Essays, p. 155.

tors who administer specifically for the convenience of the staff and students and not for the convenience of the time table or the economy of the budget. Russell is aware of the complexity of the problem and of the resistance which his suggestions will meet with. He writes:

Our expectations must not be for tomorrow, but for the time when what is thought now by the few shall have become the common thought of the many. If we have courage and patience, we can think the thoughts and feel the hopes by which, sooner or later, men will be inspired, and weariness and discouragement will be turned into energy and ardour.⁵⁰

If Russell could get teachers of the calibre he desires, they would be given almost complete freedom in the classroom. When teaching history or current affairs, Russell believes that controversial issues should be met without prevarication. Once a controversial issue is broached, the teacher should state the question, state his own opinions of the question and then:

It should be the business of the teacher to stand outside the strife of parties and endeavour to instill into the young the habit of impartial enquiry, leading them to judge issues on their merits and to be on their guard against accepting ex-parte statements at their face value.⁵¹

A little further on in the same essay, Russell says that a teacher should show, ". . . a readiness to do justice on all sides, in an endeavour to rise above controversy into a region of dispassionate scientific investigation."⁵²

This kind of approach is, in Russell's view, a scientific

⁵⁰ Bertrand Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 155.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 151.

⁵² Ibid., p. 151.

approach which avoids a dogmatic attitude. The scientific approach should keep students seeking new solutions to problems that previously seemed insoluble. The sceptical attitude is safer than dogmatism, because Russell believes that sceptics can be reasoned with, but dogmatists are people who are so convinced of their own rightness that they often resort to violence. It is the duty of the school staff to develop a searching attitude in all areas, and this attitude, according to Russell, is best perceived in sceptics and is most poorly developed in dogmatists.⁵³

Oddly enough, Russell is a dogmatist in some respects. He would have all his teachers accept his concept of the general good.⁵⁴ Russell would not employ a teacher who was either a nationalist, or an adherent of an institutionalized religion. This position is consistent with the general position held by Russell, which is that the church and state are major causes of world dissension. The influences of the church and state should be eliminated in order to achieve the good life. It is, therefore, only reasonable to remove the adherents of nationalism and institutional religion from influencing children in the classroom.

Russell feels that a well qualified teacher, who enjoyed teaching would desire to stay in the classroom and teach. The control of the school would remain with the teaching staff, and the administration

⁵³Russell has written numerous attacks on "dogmatism," e.g. Ibid., pp. 3, 15, 39, 42. Also see the essay, "An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish," in Unpopular Essays, pp. 95-146.

⁵⁴Russell, Fact and Fiction, p. 156.

would fall to clerical workers. This would mean that teachers would control the school for the benefits of the students. One of the fears that Russell has is that administration is a way out of the classroom for poor teachers. Russell judges these poor teachers who become administrators, as people who love power. Once in power, the administrator of this type tends to manipulate staff and students as statistics rather than as real living people. The effect of such an administration would be to lose the personal, friendly rapport, that Russell desires to see between students and staff.⁵⁵

Student-staff Relationships

Given a good staff, Russell believes that personal contact between staff and students can achieve excellent results. Close personal contact is a prerequisite for a successful education since it is only through such contact that students may come to realize how little they know. Once students have become aware of their ignorance, Russell feels that they will desire to overcome it.⁵⁶ But the work of the staff will have started only when students have been stimulated to study. Students must be encouraged to persist in their learning, even when the acquisition of knowledge becomes very difficult. The development of this persistent attitude should be pursued through the close personal contact between staff and students. This contact, Russell suggests, may well take place in a combined staff-student study room.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Russell, Education and the Social Order, pp. 240-3.

⁵⁶Russell, On Education, p. 139.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 156.

Besides stimulating students to greater effort, and endeavouring to get students to persist in their goals, the staff must be willing to co-operate with students. Russell is convinced of the essential nature of voluntary co-operation to the democratic life. Co-operation between staff and students should extend to such things as setting up time schedules, and even to selecting topics for study. It is evident that Russell conceives of staff-student decisions being made democratically for the general good of the school. But, although students and staff co-operate, the staff would still retain the right to enforce rules where they believe that the general good is jeopardy. This position is quite consistent with Russell's view of the democratic life, since he believes that law and order are essential to democracy, and, when necessary, law and order must be enforced.⁵⁸

Classroom Teaching

Given the above student-staff relationships, Russell anticipates classes filled with students who desire to attend. The classes would be small and the teacher would be very capable. Thus, there should be no inherent problems to obstruct good teaching. The classroom situation is very important since it is here that Russell hopes to supply knowledge that students will use in their adult life. Altruism (love), as well as knowledge, contributes to the good life, and Russell hopes that the knowledge which will be supplied in the classroom will aid in the development of altruism, and he also hopes it will aid in other

⁵⁸Bertrand Russell, Power (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1960), p. 180.

attitudes that contribute to the general good.

Scientific subjects will be of very great importance, not only because of the knowledge imparted, but because of the familiarity which can be developed with scientific techniques. Besides knowledge of scientific techniques, a scientific attitude will be evoked. Russell believes this attitude to include the acceptance of new scientific evidence; a recognition of the tentative nature of scientific data; the lack of dogmatism, and the denial of authority (simply because it is "authority"). All are attitudes that Russell desires to see in society at large.⁵⁹

The data of science should be presented honestly, as should the data of subjects like history and current affairs. Science, however, does not need the guidance of uncompensated propaganda. It has already been indicated that Russell believes that history can teach lessons for humanity, provided that these lessons are correctly handled. The "correct handling" of history and current affairs requires, in Russell's view, the guidance of uncompensated propaganda.

Russell provides scientific data to prove that wars are detrimental to mankind. He will, therefore, use this evidence to inculcate the belief in the young that wars are to be avoided at almost any costs.⁶⁰ There are occasions when war is the only acceptable alternative open to man, but Russell believes these occasions to be rare.

⁵⁹Russell, Why I Am Not A Christian, pp. 51-2.

⁶⁰Bertrand Russell, Understanding History (Wisdom Library, New York, 1957), pp. 9-56.

Thus, one of the recurring themes in Russell's educational theory is the rejection of militarism. This involves a rejection of nationalism because Russell believes that militarism is a manifestation of nationalism. In the place of nationalism Russell hopes to establish internationalism.⁶¹

Another theme that is common to Russell's theories is that heroes should be looked at as men. Their foibles should be studied as well as the qualities of their characters that gained them their reputations. Such studies would reduce many of the greatest men, and particularly soldiers, to rather ridiculous individuals:

Napoleon, on the other hand, becomes, at close quarters, a ridiculous figure. Perhaps it was not his fault that on the night of his wedding to Josephine her pug dog bit him in the calf as he was getting into bed, but on many occasions on which he appeared in an unfavourable light, the blame was clearly his. In the course of one of his many quarrels with Talleyrand, he twitted his foreign secretary with being a cripple and having an unfaithful wife; after he was gone, Talleyrand shrugged his shoulders, turned to the bystanders, and remarked: "What a pity such a great man should have such bad manners." . . . The Czar Alexander took his measure, and deceived him completely by pretending to be a simple minded youth . . . In the correspondence of the two emperors, all the skill is on the side of Alexander, all the bombast on the side of Napoleon. It is a pity that historians have failed to emphasize the ridiculous sides of Napoleon, for he became a myth and a legend, inspiring admiration of military conquest and the cult of the military superman.⁶²

The converse lesson would be learned from studying other great men. A close study of men like Christ, Paine, and Lincoln, would reveal the tremendous difficulties that great social reformers have had to over-

⁶¹Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 71.

⁶²Russell, Understanding History, pp. 22-3.

come in order to contribute to the good of mankind. Christ should not be seen as a pope, nor should Lincoln be seen as a president. The lessons that these men can give to mankind are perceived in the years of struggle during which time the views of the reformers clashed with the vast majority. Men like Lincoln and Christ can be used to stimulate young people to cherish their own ideas even when they are opposed by the "herd." Russell is not interested in these men as institutional heroes, but he desires to see these men as great because they were original and independent thinkers who were brave enough to withstand the threats of the masses.⁶³

Russell hopes that history can be used to reveal the real causes of past disasters. Convinced that most of the wars and disasters that afflicted mankind since earliest history were due to errors of judgment, Russell hopes to use history in an effort to avoid similar errors in the future. "Perspective" is a key word in this aspect of Russell's theory.⁶⁴ Many of the incidents that caused Britain to "send a gunboat up the river" in the nineteenth century, seem rather comical when viewed from the contemporary perspective. In a similar fashion Russell believes that many of the crises that almost precipitate military holocausts today are really "comical," if only they could be seen in the right perspective. It would be tragic if the world was doomed by a nuclear war because of an incident analagous to a "gunboat up the river"

⁶³Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁶⁴Russell, Unpopular Essays, pp. 151-2.

of the nineteenth century. History, then, puts these incidents in perspective, and because of this fact history can be used as a guide to understanding current affairs.

The approach to current affairs that Russell suggests is not the blandly utopian approach that is normally taken in schools. Russell believes that graft, nepotism, and patronage, permeate governments and this should be known by students. In Russell's view students would be justifiably indignant at this information, and he feels that youthful idealism should be given an opportunity to develop into manhood. If students are given a glossy account of government which conceals all the dishonesty, then society would not benefit from youthful idealism. Instead, a cynical attitude would be adopted by young people. The truth about the government would stimulate individuals with the desire to clean away all the dishonesty, but a glossed over account of government would only lead the youth to "jump on the bandwagon."⁶⁵

Such an approach would throw a tremendous onus upon the teacher, and the teacher would be open to government retribution. Russell is aware of this, so he suggests that teachers be protected from the state. If what the teacher claims can be supported by reasonable evidence, then Russell feels that the state should not be able to harm the individual in any way. The state should recognize the critic for what he is, and it should attempt to correct the criticism, not eliminate the critic.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Russell, Sceptical Essays, pp. 302-05.

⁶⁶Russell, Unpopular Essays, pp. 156-160.

Summary

Russell has a clear concept of what he desires to do, and this is to get people to act according to the greatest good of the greatest number of people who comprise the population of the earth. With this end in view, he confidently steers his educational theories towards its goal.

In developing his educational theory Russell would make use of the "principle of growth." He would stress those desires which contribute to the general good, but he would not develop those desires which detracted from it. If anything should threaten Russell's concept of the general good, he would urge a minute study in order to fully understand the opposing ideas. For example, Russell believes that his concept of the general good is threatened by the church and state. He, therefore, suggests that an honest study of these institutions, a la Russell, would reveal how they detract from the general good, and why the existence of such institutions should be discouraged.⁶⁷

The first step towards achieving Russell's goal would be to stress the concept of universal citizenship, and to attack everything that threatens this concept. The aim of this first step would be to produce people who consider themselves citizens of the world. To do this Russell would use uncompensated propaganda and firm discipline to illustrate to students the efficacy of universal cooperation, and the need for law and order. Russell would endeavour to use the techniques that are presently used by nations to produce nationalism to produce

⁶⁷Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 71.

internationalism and a feeling of world patriotism.

One of the major instruments for achieving this end would be the curriculum committee which would endeavour to direct education for the good of mankind in general. The dictates of this committee would be carried out in the school and an inspection branch would ensure that the instructions of the curriculum committee were actually adhered to. The schools would have freedom to develop local arts, but only so long as the encouragement of these local arts would not interfere with Russell's ultimate goal.

Russell stresses teacher quality and staff-student relationships. Russell feels that students learn as much from the atmosphere or tone of the school as from actual lessons. Therefore, the total atmosphere of the school is important, and Russell feels that part of the total atmosphere includes close personal contact between staff and students at times other than in lessons. The staff-student contact would make students aware of their lack of knowledge, and it should stimulate them to learn. Russell envisages a staff of gifted men who would work in ideal conditions and who would have special protection against state control.

Once the schools have inculcated the concept of universal citizenship so that it is firmly implanted in the mind of the young, Russell desires to educate the individual. Education of the individual means giving the individual an opportunity to grow. This in Russell's view, mainly means providing the right environment.⁶⁸ A

⁶⁸Russell, Education and the Social Order, p. 61.

student educated in the right environment, should grow into an individual who knows how to enjoy spontaneous desires without damaging the concept of the general good. The stress in developing the citizen is on discipline, but the stress on educating the individual is on freedom and stimulation.

Formal classroom study would help to develop both the citizen and the individual. It would provide the knowledge and the attitude needed for living in a scientific era. Formal study would also provide examples of such qualities as altruism, creative thought, and persistence, as well as examples of the way that altruistic and creative people have benefited mankind.

Russell does not deviate from his goal. Throughout his numerous books and articles on education, he keeps the concept of the general good in mind. He disproves with scientific evidence, refutes, ridicules, or ignores anything that tends to threaten his cherished concept. Russell does all these things because he is convinced that unless man accepts universal government he is faced with the definite possibility of universal annihilation.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF BERTRAND RUSSELL'S THEORIES OF MORAL EDUCATION

This final chapter is divided into four parts. The first part discusses Bertrand Russell, the moralist, as an educational theorist; the second part is an analysis and criticism of Russell's theories of morals and moral education; the third part considers some of the specific contributions that Russell makes to moral education; the fourth part makes an assessment of Russell's overall theory of moral education.

Russell the Moralist

Because of Russell's fame as a philosopher, people tend to expect that his writings on education will be written from a philosophical perspective. Russell is aware of this, but he denies that his work on social theory, which includes education, is work of a philosophical nature. Russell stresses that his social works were written from the perspective of one who desires to improve the condition of man as he lives on this earth. His desire is to be practical, not philosophical:

With regard to Social Reconstruction, and to some extent to my other popular books, philosophic readers, knowing that I am classified as a philosopher are apt to be led astray. I did not write Social Reconstruction in my capacity as a "philosopher"; I wrote it as a human being who suffered from the state of the world, wished to find some way of improving it, and was anxious to speak in plain terms to others who had similar feelings.¹

¹Bertrand Russell, "Reply to Criticisms," in Paul Schilpp, The

If Russell does not write as a philosopher, from what perspective does he write his theories of moral education? Certain writers classify men who write on morals and ethics into three groups.² In the first group are ethical philosophers who concentrate on the study of meta-ethics. The second group are men of wisdom and experience who desire to improve the condition of mankind. These men are called moralists. The third group of men are men of action who come by their moral theories second hand. The aim of this last group is simply to propagate a received theory. Stephen Toulmin, who treats this matter fully in his book Reason in Ethics, uses a quotation from Russell's Roads to Freedom to describe men of the second group:

It is only a few rare and exceptional men who have the kind of love towards mankind at large that makes them unable to endure patiently the general mass of evil and suffering, regardless of any relation it may have to their own lives; and who will seek, first in thought, then in action, for some way of escape, some new system of society by which life may become richer, more full of joy and less full of preventable evils than it is at present.³

The investigator is of the opinion that this quotation, which is taken from Russell, describes Russell. Furthermore, considering the statements made by Russell, and having regard for the classifications of Toulmin and others, it seems appropriate to classify Russell as a moralist.

Philosophy of Bertrand Russell (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1944), p. 730.

²For example, John Hartland-Swann, Analysis of Morals, p. 20, and Stephen Toulmin, Reason in Ethics, p. 178.

³Quoted in ibid.

It is of interest to note that Park, when discussing Russell's theories of education, makes an analogous tripartite grouping of people involved in constructing theories of education.⁴ Park suggests that at the first level there is the scientist proper who hypothesizes and who attempts to validate his hypotheses by controlled experiments. At the second level there is the man who hypothesizes from a position of wisdom and experience, but who does not substantiate his theories by controlled experiments. Finally, there is the dabbler in educational theory whom Park calls "the uninformed palaver." Professor Park classifies Russell as a member of the second group, making the following statement:

Russell's ideas on education should be treated as a hypothesis, formulated by a widely read and very wise man, which remain to be substantiated by scientific investigation.⁵

Russell's works, both from a scientific and philosophical perspective, seem to be works of the second degree, i.e. ideas and concepts that come from a man of wisdom and experience, but they are ideas and concepts that need to be tested in practice.

A Criticism of Russell's Theories

Since Russell does not claim to be a social philosopher it would not be appropriate to submit Russell's theories to a detailed philosophical analysis. Russell does claim that his theories are both

⁴Joe Park, Bertrand Russell on Education (Ohio State University Press, 1963), pp. 162-4.

⁵Ibid., p. 164.

practical and scientific. It is the scientific and practical aspects of Russell's theories that will be discussed in this criticism, although obvious philosophical problems will not be ignored.

Russell's whole approach to the application of science to education needs to be considered. As Park points out,⁶ although Russell claims a scientific basis for his theories, he does not appear to have conducted any controlled experiments in education. Even when he ran the Beacone Hill school for children, he seems only to have recorded certain isolated observations, and from these observations he hypothesized certain theories. These theories were tentative and at all times open to change. It would seem that Russell is possessed of the scientific attitude which he feels to be necessary for life, but he does not apply the stringent scientific method to his theories of moral education.

A good illustration of Russell's personal scientific attitude is seen in his approach to the question of "instincts."⁷ Park suggests that Russell has never really given up Thorndike's concept of inborn instincts. On the surface this seems to be true. However, Russell is vague and non-specific on this matter. What he really seems to be saying is that all people are born with certain inherited traits. These traits will develop according to the kind of environment that each individual experiences. Russell does not pretend to know whether environment is more important than heredity, or vice-versa, but since it is

⁶Ibid.

⁷Supra., pp. 16-7.

impossible to do anything about heredity, Russell suggests that one should concentrate on improving the environment. As the total environment cannot be improved, it is sensible to concentrate on those parts of the environment that can. One of the most easily improved areas of the environment is the school. Russell's attitude in this respect is one of common sense; it is speculative, but only vaguely scientific in the technical sense of the word. It would be difficult to test Russell's hypothesis. Probably the nearest approach that one could get to a controlled experiment in judging the relationship between heredity and environment in the development of children would be in controlled experiments involving identical twins who were brought up in different environments. The results of these experiments tend to confirm Russell's opinions.⁸ There do appear to be certain traits evident in each twin, but the degree of development or lack of development of the various traits seem to depend upon the environment in which each child was reared.

But Russell would certainly have been aware of experiments that were proceeding in this field, because, even if he did not indulge in scientific experiment, he frequently used the results of scientific investigation to guide his own theorizing.⁹ It should, however, be noted that, even when Russell is evidently using the result of scientific investigation, he rarely bothers to detail the experiment. Re-

⁸Horatio Hackett Newman, Multiple Human Births (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1940), pp. 192-6.

⁹Joe Park, Ibid., p. 164.

garding detail, Russell rarely bothers to footnote anything, nor, in many cases, does he include an index in his books. It would appear that Russell appreciates the scientific attitude of mind, but, in his social writings, he does not exhibit the painstaking, detailed, and careful approach which is characteristic of the scientist. Speaking of his written work in 1930, Russell is reported to have said:

. . . I dictate at full speed, just as fast as the stenographer can go. I never revise a word . . . I do three thousand words a day . . . I plan it beforehand, so it's all finished before I start . . . when I have to write a book of 60,000 words, I start twenty days before its due at the publishers . . .¹⁰

It would be difficult for work written in this fashion to be rigorously scientific.

The particular concept of the scientific method that Russell holds is both simple and open-ended. First he endeavours to gather all the available evidence on a particular problem with which he is concerned. Once Russell has done this, he makes a decision which is based on the evidence available, and, until new evidence causes him to change his mind, he will act according to his decision. Russell not only recommends this attitude as an essential feature of a democracy, but he acts according to the recommendations which he makes.¹¹

This attitude makes Russell avoid dogmatism and attack fanaticism in very form that it takes. Russell cites the evidence of history

¹⁰Recorded in Alan Wood, Bertrand Russell The Passionate Sceptic (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956), p. 162.

¹¹Of the numerous essays that Russell has written in this field, "The Value of Scepticism" is a good example. See Bertrand Russell, The Will to Doubt (New York: Wisdom Library, 1958), pp. 38-51.

to supply reasons for his anti-dogmatic position:

Arians and Catholics, Crusaders and Muslims, Protestants and adherents of the pope, Communists and Fascists, have filled large parts of the last 1600 years with futile strife, when a little philosophy would have shown both sides in all these disputes that neither had any good reason to believe itself right. Dogmatism is an enemy to peace and an insuperable barrier to democracy. In the present age, at least as much as in former times, it is the greatest of mental obstacles to human happiness.¹²

On the other hand, Russell does not adopt an absolutely sceptical position. What he does claim is that:

. . . it is not enough to recognize that all our knowledge is, in greater or less degree, uncertain or vague; it is necessary at the same time, to learn to act upon the best hypothesis without dogmatically believing it.¹³

In Russell's view, a study of history reveals that this attitude is the only reasonable one to adopt. This conclusion is typical of the common sense attitude which Russell possesses, and which he terms scientific.

Russell has an almost religious faith in the efficacy of the common sense approach to world problems. His latest book, Unarmed Victory,¹⁴ is an effort to illustrate that common sense when applied to international problems can produce satisfactory results. There is, however, no indication in the book of the way that common sense may change the fundamental beliefs of capitalist and communist so that both

¹²Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951), p. 41.

¹³Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁴Bertrand Russell, Unarmed Victory (New York: Simon Schuster, 1963).

can live together amicably. Russell claims that the common sense approach averted a nuclear war, but he can hardly claim that common sense has brought a permanent solution any closer. If Russell's argument is applied in a more general way it can be seen that common sense will have no influence in demonstrating the value of blood transfusions to Jehovah's Witnesses, or of proving to Catholics the value of birth control. These positions are held by faith, and common sense will hardly change them. However, Russell would undoubtedly use propaganda and other psychological techniques to change the views of those whose personal faith interfered with the general good. The problem of faith versus common sense would greatly diminish if ever Russell's universal educational scheme were established. Early indoctrination of children by church, state or political party would be thwarted through the universal control of education by the international curriculum committee.

Russell, using common sense observations, has come to the conclusion that there is a contradiction in man's make-up which is due to man's dual nature. Man desires both solitude and the company of other men. This duality is complicated because of Russell's belief in the inviolable nature of man. How does man satisfy his contradictory desires, and yet remain inviolable? Russell admits that this cannot be fully done, but that conflicts between the social and individualistic desires in man can be best ameliorated in a democracy. Given a good education, in which man's altruism and his intelligence are encouraged, man can learn to satisfy many of his contradictory desires.

This approach is utilitarian in character, but it is not utilit-

arianism after the detail of Jeremy Bentham. Russell judges each act by its consequences, and he considers that acts which satisfy individual desires and which also contribute to the general good are acts which should be encouraged.¹⁵ He does not accept without qualification Bentham's dictum that, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign master, pain and pleasure,"¹⁶ but he does accept that this statement is roughly true. In Russell's view man desires happiness, and happiness is a satisfaction of desires. Desires may be for pleasure, but frequently desires are for some distant act which can produce no beneficial effect upon the person doing the desiring.¹⁷ It would appear that Russell is trying to extend the meaning of the word "pleasure" so that it is not conceptualized simply as the antonym of the word "pain."

Although Russell accepts the basic utilitarian position, he makes an effort to bring it up to date. In this respect he shows a concern for the world as a whole whereas the utilitarian concepts were more limited. Like Hobbes, from whom the utilitarians received inspiration,¹⁸ Russell is concerned with harmony. But Russell seeks world harmony, since he considers contemporary universal discord more danger-

¹⁵Bertrand Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), p. 88.

¹⁶A. I. Melden, Ethical Theories, A Book of Readings (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1960), p. 341.

¹⁷Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 63.

¹⁸John Plamenatz, The English Utilitarians (Oxford: Blackwell, 1949), pp. 10-16.

ous than the state anarchy which Hobbes and his utilitarian successors treated.

Like the utilitarians, Russell is faced with the problem of conflict between the individual good and the general good.¹⁹ But, unlike the utilitarians, Russell is able to cite a specific argument which lends force and urgency to his case. Russell believes that each individual desires to survive, but with the threat of atomic annihilation, the individual can only survive if he considers the general good. For example, a small group that is not considered by a more powerful group may suddenly find itself in possession of a nuclear arm. The small group could use the weapon to exterminate the larger group, and perhaps devastate other large areas of the globe. Since no one, in Russell's view, desires to be exterminated, it would be wiser to put all military resources under the direction of an universal democratic government. As long as nuclear weapons remain in the hands of states, the chance of world annihilation is ever present.

Russell's utilitarianism is universal and he proposes that it manifests itself in a universal democracy. Universal democracy requires the elimination of the influence of church and state, even though Russell recognizes that the state has, up to the present, supplied the necessary law and order which has permitted the development of civilization.²⁰ The present influence of the state as it manifests itself in

¹⁹Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰Bertrand Russell, Power (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1960), p. 180.

nationalism, is detrimental to universal peace and happiness. A persistent and pessimistic theme in Russell is that nationalism may yet be the cause of universal slaughter. To avoid such exigencies, national governments should be subsumed to universal government.²¹ Here lies a major problem with regard to the application of Russell's educational theories: What states, except perhaps the Scandinavian countries, would be willing to hand their armies over to an universal government, and submit to the laws made by that government? Until this problem is solved Russell cannot hope to overcome resistance to his educational theories. Until there is world government, the chances of an universal system of education which resembles the one desired by Russell, are not very great.

Russell's aim is the practical satisfaction of individual desires as well as the general satisfaction of mankind. Because this is upper-most in Russell's mind, he does not go into a detailed meta-ethical consideration of such questions as: What exactly are pleasure and pain? Are they capable of measurement? What exactly is altruism? The utilitarians, like Russell, also ignored these questions.²² Both Russell and the utilitarians were concerned with presenting a course of practical action. Plamenatz, writing of the utilitarians claims:

Everyone who seeks to convince by argument has common ground with the utilitarians. But everyone who seeks to convince by argument also necessarily exposes a large surface to hostile

²¹Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1951), p. 50.

²²John Plamenatz, Ibid., p. 3.

attack. He tries to make his meaning clear; and because clarity is more easily attained than truth, he must expect to be sooner corrected the more readily he is understood. The utilitarians were more listened to than revered. This did at least mean that their reputations never stood in the way of truth.²³

Russell used the same techniques as the utilitarians, ignored the same problems and desired the same end.

An important criticism of Russell, however, is that he insists on skirmishing rather than concentrating his attack on the main problem. There is no doubt that Russell desires the general good, and, to this purpose, he has written numerous books. But in every book read by the investigator which related to social theory, Russell has deviated from his main objective and spent many pages castigating and ridiculing churches, states, politicians, conservatives, people who do not believe in euthanasia or birth control, foxhunters, and any other group that Russell happens to dislike. Members of the attacked groups are hardly likely to be won over to Russell's point of view. Russell, however, believes that to save the world from atomic destruction, men must exhibit the quality of love. Yet in his attack on the groups named above, Russell shows no evidence of possessing this quality. As A. E. Houseman said of Russell, "If I were the Prince of Peace, I would choose a less provocative ambassador."²⁴

It appears that there is some inconsistency between Russell's practice and his theory. It has also been suggested that there is some

²³Ibid., p. 147.

²⁴Quoted in Alan Wood, Bertrand Russell the Passionate Sceptic (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.), p. 103.

vagueness in Russell's vocabulary. However, the most striking feature of Russell's work, is not its occasional inconsistency but its over-all consistency. Russell has written on social problems for over fifty years. He has written over forty books on philosophy, sociology, religion, and politics; he has lectured on every continent in the world; he has been involved in lengthy court battles; he has been divorced and re-married; he has won the Nobel Prize for Literature as well as the Order of Merit. If in addition Russell did not read his own works after they were published,²⁵ one is surprised that Russell is as consistent as he is.

Russell, however, is not overly concerned about inconsistency. He claims that an inconsistent system may well contain less falsehood than a consistent system.²⁶ Russell is far more concerned with truth than with consistency, but he is not inconsistent with his ultimate aim which is to improve the lot of humanity. The problems created by Russell's theories are, however, of much less importance than the theories themselves. These inconsistencies are minor compared with the contributions which Russell has made, and which his theories may yet make, to moral education.

Contributions of Russell to Moral Education

Russell, an implacable enemy of state and religious systems of

²⁵Ibid., p. 162.

²⁶Paul Schilpp, The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1944), p. 720.

education, will hardly have his theories adopted on a large scale by these powerful organizations. It is through individual teachers that Russell's influence will manifest itself. Park has cited specific instances of Russell's influence on such people as F. S. Sanderson, the famous headmaster of Oundle, and William Burnlee Curry, the headmaster of Dartington Hall, an independent school in Britain.²⁷ Professor Park also states that H. C. Barnard, an English historian of education, claims that Russell, along with Alfred North Whitehead and Sir Richard Livingstone "has had a great deal to do with the attempts at formulating some sort of philosophy, or philosophies, of education in England."²⁸ On a less specific level Russell has written over forty books, all of which have had several printings. For example, On Education, first published in 1926, has had three different editions and thirteen different impressions in Britain, in addition to being published in America; Education and the Social Order, published six times between 1932 and 1961 in Great Britain, was also published in America under the title, Education and the Modern World. It is difficult to estimate how often these books have been read, but with such a large circulation it is clear that Russell's influence is fairly widespread.

In the classroom, Russell's major vehicle for moral education is history. History can be used to prove the futility of war, and the self defeating nature of patriotism, national pride, fanaticism, and

²⁷Joe Park, Ibid., pp. 160-1.

²⁸Ibid.

dogmatism. If these can be eliminated, or at least, if they can be perceived in a common sense fashion, then Russell believes that the world stands a chance of becoming a better place. In order to stress the "right" aspects of history, Russell would make use of uncompensated propaganda to inculcate the approach to history advocated by the international curriculum committee. Current affairs would be treated in a fashion similar to history, but the "honest" approach to current affairs would be aimed at making young people indignant at the graft that goes on in government. Russell hopes that this indignation will be alive in young people when they are old enough to participate in government.

The moral purposes of science in the classroom is not very different from the moral purpose of history and current affairs. Science should be directed to improving the condition of man both in a material and in a moral fashion. The former improvement is obtained from the actual matter of the science lesson, while the latter improvement comes from the scientific attitude of mind. In particular the scientific attitude consists of testing all truths that can be tested, and only accepting any truths as truths until such time new evidence suggests otherwise. This attitude is the antithesis of dogmatism, which Russell feels is incompatible with democracy.²⁹

Russell suggests methods by which moral education may proceed in the classroom, but equally important is the relationship between staff and students. This relationship should be characterized by

²⁹Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays, pp. 9-34.

mutual respect, but also important is the close personal contact between staff and students. Personal contact should encourage students to persist in the pursuit of difficult goals since students would become aware of their ignorance. Moreover, a friendly relationship, tempered with respect, should make it easy for staff and students to cooperate in various enterprises for the good of the school community.

The whole atmosphere of the school will be democratic. The atmosphere is aimed at preparing students to live in a cooperative fashion in order to benefit the majority of the human race. It is not, however, a school without discipline, since Russell recognizes the need for it. But he also believes that young people realize the necessity of discipline, and that their voluntary cooperation can be obtained in adhering to disciplinary forms. Such cooperation depends partly on the relationship of staff and students, and partly on the students ability to understand the need for discipline. If this can be done in school, it should then be achieved more easily in adult life, when the reason for these rules and regulations should be more easily perceived.

A General Appraisal

Russell's books on ethics and education are handbooks for the liberally-minded teacher and parent. Russell, however, is not a dreamer, he realizes that the road for the liberal, the reformer, and the radical will always be hard. He believes that in an orderly society that holds as an ethic the concept of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, the individual, the reformer, the radical, and the

liberal must be given room to flourish. Russell makes a great plea for the education of the individual, and he suggests how the individual may be prevented from falling victim to the forces of nationalism and religion. It should be noted, that he does not suggest any specific methods or techniques as far as educating the individual is concerned.

Russell has provided an overall idea for universal education. Some important details of his plan are not worked out, but this can be done by more practical and more mundane men than Russell. His task has been that of the visionary who has provided man with three prophetic alternatives:

1. The end of human life, perhaps of all life, on our planet.
2. A reversion to barbarism after a catastrophic diminution of the population of the globe.
3. A unification of the world under a single government, possessing a monopoly of all major weapons of war.³⁰

If Russell is right in his selection of possible alternatives regarding the future of man, then Russell has provided man with an educational and ethical theory which, if applied, could achieve the third goal. This goal would seem to manifest the desires of the majority of the human race.

The practical application of these theories are limited for reasons that have been discussed. Some of the concepts discussed by Russell are of particular use to the liberal teacher and parent, but in the investigator's opinion it is Russell's general hypothesis that is of greatest significance. Russell's theories are hypothetical, but they may be, and should be, used to guide experiments in international

³⁰Ibid., p. 50.

education. It seems unlikely that the theories could be used without modifications, but Russell has provided a clear alternative to the possibility of atomic destruction.

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A P P E N D I X A

APPENDIX A

The following article and letter illustrate the influence of historical education upon the individual. The article, written in "The Publisher's Notebook," Edmonton Journal, February 8th, 1964, was by the British educated Basil Dean. A reply in the March 2nd issue of the same newspaper by George Espitallier shows the influence of French historical interpretation.

The Publisher's Notebook

General Charles de Gaulle, President of France, is behaving these days for all the world as if France were a first class power.

He is, it seems to me, about 149 years out of date. Even since the French lost the Battle of Waterloo, and with it their political stability, their national policy has tended to be related to a degree of power which does not exist.

There was a time when France was the most powerful nation on earth, but a gentleman by the name of Churchill, otherwise known as the Duke of Marlborough, took care of that in the battles of Blenheim, Ramillies, Quadenrade, and Malplaquet.

I suspect that the French have spent a good deal of time since, yearning for the lost grandeur of Louis XIV, just as the British nowadays tend somewhat to yearn for what the Duke of Marlborough's descendent, Sir Winston Churchill once called the "august, tranquil, and unchallenged age of Queen Victoria . . .".

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

Upon reading Basil Dean's impassioned Notebook of February 15, 1964, I was very much amused by his interest in re-writing history.

Has he forgotten a certain gentleman by the name of "Blucher?" who was from Prussia. May I recall that any British victory has been one of coalition? Since Mr. Dean has turned back two hundred and fifty years to introduce the gentleman known as the Duke of

Marlborough, I am forced to remind him that a Shepherdess by the name of Jeanne d'Arc also took care of the most powerful nation on earth. And what about M. Lafayette?

I bet that if God had not provided Britain with the so-called English Channel, in 1940 the gentleman called Churchill would have smoked his huge cigar in some provisional government somewhere in the world . . .

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