



Apartheid in Modernity

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Apartheid in Modernity¹

Nils Christie²

Abstract

This article explores ways of breaking down the social and cultural barriers that lead people to place others in closed categories rather than regarding them as individuals. Christie begins by briefly describing his own experience of living in a 'ghetto' before moving on to discuss the role of institutionalisation, notably of children, in the creation of 'apartheid'. He deplores the erection of walls between children and adults, the middle and working classes. Christie sees an important role for criminologists in the breaking down of barriers. He argues that, rather than being the servants of the State, they ought to work as 'translators', giving meaning to the actions of those who seek to resist the conditions of apartheid. Finally, he advocates deinstitutionalisation and the return of children to society as a means of moving beyond apartheid.

Life in a ghetto

I once lived in one. It was a good life in a good ghetto. Close to 200 persons lived there. A sort of village. No walls, but apart from neighbours by distance and culture. No public transport, no television. No salaries, income shared according to needs. Some families with children, but most single and a bit different from the majority of Norwegians. Outsiders might have used terms such as 'dumb', 'insane', 'illiterates' etc. to refer to these people. My preference was to call them 'extraordinary'. In addition, there were some more ordinary people there who liked the ideas behind these ghettoes. The daily interactions made us to persons, not categories. I wrote a book about the place. In English: *Beyond*

¹ This text was given as a lecture in June 10, 2013 at Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches und Internationales Strafrecht, Freiburg, Germany. Together with David Rodriguez Goyes and Per Jørgen Ystehede, I (Hedda Giertsen) have added information in some of the footnotes, proofread the text, made a few edits and completed the references. I know it would have been a great pleasure for Nils to know that this text now is published.

² Nils Christie was a sociologist and criminologist, Professor of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Oslo from 1966 until his death in May 2015.

Loneliness and Institutions (1989). My preference had been to call the book *In Defence of Ghettoes*. There are bad ghettoes, the enforced ones; memories of their horrors come easily to the mind. But there are also good ghettoes, those selected for their qualities: apartheid by choice.

Life in this ghetto brought me to the core of what has been my personal as well as scientific interest throughout my life: the question of conditions for, and consequences of coming close to others.

One of my first studies in criminology was a comparative study of killers versus non-killers among Norwegian guards in a concentration camp in the north of Norway in 1942 and 1943 (Christie 1952, 1972). The prisoners had been deported from Yugoslavia to Norway. The non-killers described the prisoners as suffering human beings, 'who behaved as we would have done in such a situation', while the killers described them as 'wild animals from the Balkan area'. A later book of mine had the title *How Tightly Knit a Society?* (1982). Again the central question: how to create social systems where we are able to see each other, systems where we are coming so close to the other, through life or art, that it becomes possible to recognise elements of common humanity in all sorts of people.

The man behind the atrocities in Norway on July 22nd 2011³ seems to have been an especially lonely person, one standing outside social life, a man forcing himself to remain an outsider, not seeing the others. A man blinded by his mission. The challenge ahead will be to see him as one of us. Hopefully, this might be helpful to him, if he ever is released. But more importantly, also helpful to us as Norwegians; if the man behind the atrocities is seen as one of us, what is it with us and our culture that made these acts possible for him?

In all simplicity, it is my supposition that the more we are brought to positions that enable us to see each other as full human beings, not only stereotypes as evil, criminal, insane, the more we are influenced by that knowledge. We might recognise similarities with ourselves, and are then sensitised to the whole set of norms ingrained in us throughout life on how to behave towards people of all sorts, from babies to old folks. To see the other is to be captured in the web of norms that makes us human. The closer we in this way come to another person, the more inhibitions are also created against

³ On this date the 32 year-old Norwegian detonated a homemade bomb on the government buildings, killing eight persons. Shortly after, he left for a small island southwest of Oslo where AUF, the Labour Party Youth, had their yearly summer camp. Bringing with him machine-guns, he shot and killed 69 people and injured 66, most of them young people.

handling that person in ways usually seen as unacceptable within the culture we belong to.

But, and as already touched upon, the ghetto must be for all sorts of people. Secluded, but with internal variation. Not only insane, not only blacks, not only Nobel Prize winners, not only persons with Down syndrome, not only... . I could go on forever. The point is to give attention to *manageable variation*, one where human beings can get to see each other as individuals, not only as categories.

When kids were useful

Then to a man I got to know some fifty years ago. He was rather old when we first met, and still living in the house where he was born. It was a house close to the shore in a little inlet on the North Sea. His father had been a fisherman. As was usual for most children of this place and time, he and the other kids were out in the boat with the father when needed. Often they were.

One of his stories was about what once happened late in the autumn. They had been on the fjord most of the day, catching fish and crabs. It had become dark. They rowed homeward, rounded the point where they could see the house, and cheers erupted from the kids. There was light from *two* windows! This meant they had guests in the house. And that meant there would be no more work that evening.

Like this it was, all over the country. For survival, all hands were needed. He got to know that as an itinerant teacher arriving somewhere along the coast in 1870. Edmund Edvardsen (1989) describes him in a book he called *Den gjenstridige almue (The Obstinate Commoners)*. These ambulant teachers walked from district to district, used farms and kitchens as classrooms. They came to teach the children rudimentary reading and writing. The children were obliged to come and the parents might be punished if they did not. Yet, sometimes the kitchens remained empty. In a letter to his employer, the local bishop, one of these teachers complained bitterly; the children had not arrived, and he himself was made to sleep in the pigsty.

But he had arrived at the peak of the cod-season. Children were needed to clean tools and hang fish for drying; they could not be expected to attend school at such a time. The pigsty was chosen as a means to get him to move on all the more quickly to the next school district.

The emerging teachers

But then it changed. Gradually teachers came to be among the most respected in their local communities – maybe lousy at fishing, but good at reading and fast talk. Schools of various sorts were built all over the country.

There were several reasons for this. Some of them obvious; bigger boats were built, engines installed in boats and everywhere, soon we lived in an industrialised society. Production moved out from homes to factories. So did much of the care for the sick and feeble. Abstractions became important and slowly there developed a special class of people; the academics. Children were in this process converted from producers of necessary services to consumers of learning.

And there were additional reasons to keep them in institutions described as educational. Where else should they be? The useless child represents a hindrance for adult life in general. Far back in time, I wrote a book with the title *If the School Did not Exist?* (1971). Parents maybe bought the book to motivate their kids for school. But my main answer was a simple one: If the school did not exist, that would be bad for the life of their parents. The home is empty during daytime and the streets are dangerous.

The last stage in the development of apartheid in modernity did not fully arrive until quite recently. The majority of small children down to the age of one have now been institutionalised. At present nearly 90 percent of preschool children in Norway go to some form of daycare or kindergarten (SSB 2015). Well, to say that they go, in the meaning of walking, is a bit of a misnomer. Many of the youngest are not yet able to walk and many of the older ones are not allowed to; they are driven or pushed in strollers – we are all short of time in the morning.

And they don't stay for just a few hours. A new kind of kindergarten is in the process of being established: the extended-hours kinder-garten. One of them reports (Bakken 2011) that 'here the children are given a bath and put to bed just as they would be at home. Then they are carried, soundly asleep, out to the car when their parents come to pick them up...'. This kindergarten is open from five in the morning until eleven at night – and there is increasing demand for even longer opening hours. 85 percent of kindergarten-aged children are attending them for more than 40 hours a week. We are told that private daycare centres and kindergartens with extended opening hours have a competitive advantage.

As a next step, the nearly inevitable occurs: Kindergartens are transformed into preschools. In one week-plan I came across, the children start every day with 'Good Morning', sung in English. Later they continue with various pedagogical topics, including training in good manners at the dining table. I quote from the plan: 'At mealtime we pretend that we are at a fancy restaurant. We eat at tables set with candles and inspire the children to engage in conversation.' This is for four-year olds. It is good for socialisation and development, it is said. And for some, it is probably fine. I would have died.

The Danish filmmaker Lise Roos (1984) portrays a preschool that shifted course. From having shepherded the children through one organised activity after the other, the staff held back for a period, intervening only in crisis-situations. Otherwise they allowed the children to do whatever they wanted. Much happened. The noise level sank dramatically as the children no longer had to compete for new positions in the constant stream of new activities. Moreover, now they got to decide when they were finished with their tasks. The main character in this film was a little slow. In the first part of the film, whenever a staff member clapped her hands to indicate that it was time for everyone to begin with something else, this boy had seldom managed to get started with his first task. But then, when the grown-ups had retreated from directing the children, this boy stood for most of the time out in the washroom with large scissors. A thick, even stream of water ran from a faucet, and he was cutting the stream. Cutting and cutting until, finally satisfied, he put down the scissors. It *was* possible to cut the stream of water. I found myself quite at home with his situation.

But kids need other kids! They find each other more easily in these 'gardens for children'. True enough. But they also need to be on their own. Manage things without the help of others, discover imaginary friends, do something for hours on end. Endless hours. Maybe it's OK if kids get bored? I like little kids who, left to themselves, become engrossed in their own doings. Cutting water, for example.

Apartheid, modern times

Apartheid has to do with keeping people apart. Some in privileged positions – gated communities – others in deprived positions as we remember from South Africa. My concern is about the situation of children and young people in modernity. From age 1 to 19, most of them, in our types of countries, are stowed away in educational institutions. They are kept outside of the most important

arena for adult life; work for money. That is apartheid in modernity. And even more; it is an internally class-divided apartheid.

An important part of kitchen equipment on old farms was a hand-driven separator. Milk poured in at the top, out on one side came a stream of thick cream, on the other skimmed milk. I watched in awe. The educational system has a similar centrifugal power, separating the cream of youth from the rest, but then, as a refinement, continuing by dividing the remaining youth in thin layers based on supposed abilities, until point zero: those good for nothing. No wonder that there are strong incentives to convert kindergartens into pre-schools.

In a way, it sounds good. Justice at last. A move from ascribed status to the achieved one. The best out at the top, measured through objective scales of examinations. Maybe the best was the daughter of a poor illiterate immigrant, while the son of the bank-director dropped out at an early stage. Justice, at last! The road is open for all. From being born at the bottom, personal achievement can bring all sorts of youngsters to the top. For societies with emphasis on egalitarian values, it is a beautiful story.

This occurs, sometimes. But as we know, it is not the usual result. Those born at the top tend to remain there. They have the correct cultural background; books on the shelves, a language suited for the educational system, and their surroundings ensure that they keep up with the demands from the school. The kids succeed, but now in harmony with egalitarian values.

Last month (*Aftenposten*, May 28, 2013)⁴, there was a report from a district in Oslo called Tøyen. It is the district where the museum for Edvard Munch, the painter, was built. This was and still is a working class area, filled with immigrants. The school has 250 pupils. Two of them have Norwegian as their mother tongue. It is what I would say is a damaging type of ghetto. The immigrant-parents complain bitterly, 'No Norwegian classmates or friends. Our kids will fall behind.' The Norwegian parents feel guilty, but nonetheless move themselves or at least their children to another district where the children will meet their equals; children suited for school. As expressed by parents; 'We have to think of the future for our child.' Like this it is, throughout the educational system. As usual, class trumps.

To counteract this type of injustice, a popular slogan has been used.⁵ It is: '*Nobody shall be left behind!*'

⁴ <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kommentarer/Den-hvite-flukten-fra-Toyen-7213488.html>

⁵ This slogan was used by The Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*) before the election to Parliament in 2013, http://arbeiderpartiet.no/file/download/6510/79501/file/utdanning_hefte.pdf

And the slogan is taken seriously. Much is done to help as many as possible to pass. But the slogan is also a dangerous one. It has two major defects.

First; *if* you fail, after receiving so much help, the fault is yours. So much is done to help you, that if you do not make it, it is somehow you, as a person that is not good enough. For a person from a working class background, it might in many ways have been less damaging to experience defeat in school 50 years ago. Back in time, a young person with a safe identity as a worker might have climbed the barricades with demand for social and economic justice. Today, in an educational system seemingly designed for all, defeat is easily experienced as a personal defeat. It is not the system, but you as a person who are not good enough.

Unemployment may lead to anger transformed to personal shame, to resignation, – or sometimes – to spontaneous rage. This may more easily happen in Scandinavia where there appear to be more opportunities and more social welfare offers, compared to most other European countries.

Here, in my view, we are facing an important element in the youth turmoil which hit Sweden some months ago,⁶ and probably soon also Norway and other welfare states. It is an anger directed against an undefined enemy. Something is wrong. You have been given all opportunities, all sorts of help, but were not able. Not able enough. You take to the streets, your own streets, yell, smash what you find, set cars on fire, they belong probably to someone more able than you who has made it in life. You fight a system that is supposed to be just, but not for you. Rage of this sort is not easy to convert into political activism. Police power becomes the answer. Cameron in London and Reinfeldt in Stockholm agree on this point.

The slogan, ‘Nobody shall be left behind’, contains also another message: ‘To be left behind’ – that sounds like a terrible destiny; most probably unemployment or to become an ordinary worker of some sort.

My thoughts go to craftsmen I have met. They are maybe not always so good in explaining why they do what they do, but good at doing it. I was in a repair-shop for bikes the other day. It was a very old-fashioned one. Happily, my bike

⁶ On May 19 2013 there were riots in Stockholm, in a part of the city inhabited mostly by immigrants. Several hundred people took part, and the riot lasted for five nights and spread to other cities in Sweden. *Megafonen*, a youth organisation, made a statement that the reason for the riots was that an armed 69 year-old man had been shot dead by the police. A Swedish criminologist, Sarnecki, says that the background for the riots is a general disapproval caused by social problems like lack of jobs, education, and of problems with the police. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/sweden-riots-revive-immigration-debate/story-e6frg6so-1226648963077>

was not ready yet, so I had time to hang around. The master was continuously in the middle of it all, giving small hints to some four or five younger workers. There was a spirit of inventiveness, and also joy and accomplishment in the room. If necessary, they kept on to midnight, they said. My bike was already perfect by nine o'clock.

A case of theft

What I say here can also be given a different focus. The story can be seen as a grave case of theft. It is a case where the upper and middle classes stole the knowledge base of workers, abstracted the principles, put them in books and claimed that no work of value could be done by persons who had not first proved that they could master these abstractions. But the thieves did not succeed with Stradivarius.

As recounted by Sennet (2008) in his book on craftsmen and craftswomen, nobody was ever able to describe how Stradivarius and his co-workers in his craft-shop were able to create these masterpieces of violins. As other able workers, Stradivarius had probably much of his knowledge in his body, in his fingertips, in his way of moving around in his workshop to encourage, inspire or correct his assistants. All good craftswomen and men have such a body knowledge, writers also. Much thinking takes place in fingers.

Observers were not able to watch Stradivarius carefully, study all his moves in minute detail, write it down, convert it to productive machines, and make the recipe parts of the obligatory curriculum in high schools for violin-makers. It has been easier to tap into the carpenter's experience, and convert it to curriculum in schools of architecture, or use social work practice or nursing practice in the same way. And to reproduce it in textbooks presented in courses available to those who have not dropped out of school.

Destruction of the neighbourhood academies

Schools, universities, academies – they form a blossoming industry. When I think of it, I can only find one type of important academy that has been destroyed in my lifetime. That is the neighbourhood academy – that created by ordinary people living close to each other, reflecting on and reacting to matters of common interest. From living glued to local neighbourhoods and dependence on those living there – to global citizens. They are killed by opportunities and possibilities for geographical and social mobility.

It is as we act according to a prescription on how to dissolve community ties. Neighbours become less and less important. We don't see them, we don't know them, and we don't think we need them. We have lost the knowledge base for evaluation of what happens. And we know what then follows: when mutual knowledge moves out of a neighbourhood, experts move in. They are supposed to know, and often they do. Under these conditions, it is obvious that many among us feel incompetent when things go wrong. Better to hide in front of the television and let the children and youth live their own lives.

Working class kids in this situation are double losers in many ways. They lose in a school system built by and for an academic background they don't have. They are, by lack of formal academic qualifications, barred from access to what for many would be 'real life.' And, as the rest of us, they have lost access to the neighbourhood academies.

What to do? Some answers seem obvious. First:

Abolish youth

We have created a sort of apartheid in modernity. It is a wall between children and youth on the one side of the divide, and the adults on the other. Since children are seen as being of no practical use in the type of society we have created, we place them in institutions called kindergartens and schools. A reform of importance would therefore be to reduce the number of years young persons are compelled to spend in institutions called schools. It is ten years now in my country. A good first step would be to reduce the compulsory stay to seven or eight.

At the same time, we ought to *open* the walls around these schools, so that the kids can be released for other than purely academic tasks. My life has recently led me to many visits in nursing homes. In the entrance hall, or where the lifts end, I find flocks of elderly people; in wheel chairs, ordinary chairs or just standing. Why there? Because, just there, at the entrance points, it is a hope that someone might appear, someone to say hello to, someone with a sign of life from the external world. What a blessing for such places if they on a regular basis could be invaded by hordes of children, to disturb those old people, but maybe also to be told stories from life passed. Teachers might get fascinating new challenges as coordinators in such situations. Kindergartens are other possible arenas for segregated kids. What a blessing if kindergartens, on a regular basis, were invaded by older kids. Or children might be let free from school one or two days a week to do 'real work' and receive salaries for it. There exists in many countries a powerful organisation called 'Save the children', or in

my country 'Redd Barna'. I would like to give them as a central task to rescue youth from state and school regulations intended to prevent them from engaging in adult tasks at an early stage in life.

Impossible, says the establishment. We would fall behind in development. OECD, the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*⁷ says the same. Based on standardised exams, they claim that Norwegian school children are *not* among the best among 56 countries in language and mathematics. It is in the so-called PISA-study that they find this.⁸ The result created a panic in Norway – a completely unfounded one in my view. The major goal for our compulsory school, decided by the Parliament, is that the basic school ought to help to shape what in old-fashioned Norwegian is called '*gagns menneske*': these are persons with valuable human qualities; cooperative, kind to others, and stable and good at work – qualities once welcomed among decent people.⁹ These qualities are not, and cannot be, measured by tests in language or mathematics.

Philippe Ariès (1960) pointed to historical periods where children, as a social category, did not exist. I don't think he is right, and would not in any case go that far. But I believe it would be a good thing to considerably shorten the period of childhood. And in the same line of thinking, we ought to change social conditions to undermine, preferably abolish the social category called 'youth'. We might rescue them, and us, from the grip of apartheid based on age and instead convert them to young adults from a much earlier age.

Another point on reform:

Restore the neighbourhood academies

It is obvious: Mobility kills neighbourhoods. If we want to restore the neighbourhood academies, we must create types of social organisation where ordinary people get to know each other. I have said so much about this in my book on *A Suitable Amount of Crime* (2004) that I will not go further into it here.

⁷ http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/pisa-2012-results-skills-for-life-volume-v_9789264208070-en#page1

⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-norway.pdf>

⁹ LOV 1998-07-17 nr. 61. § 1-1.

Criminologists – interpreters or servants?

I am not unaware of the amount of vested interests I am confronting here. But what I am talking about is large-scale crime prevention. Not of that type that is so easily embraced by everybody, the one that focuses on increased street lighting and more uniformed police in certain districts. I am back to basics:

If we create a society where the most important rewards are supposed to be available to all, but this is a fake, then that society will face trouble. If we make these rewards for those few more and more valuable, and visible, then the system is in even more trouble. If we create a society without responsible tasks for many of those living there, chances are great that relatively many among those without responsibility will answer with irresponsible behaviour.

But this ordering of life is in the interest of large parts of the population. Apartheid is useful. Adults could not function as they now do in their daily work if not. As things are, female interests in waged labour would be particularly threatened. But with this ordering of life, accepted by powerful segments, it is also clear what becomes the expectation placed on criminologists: help us to defend our system, 'our common system'. 'Help' means upholding the system. 'Upholding' means assistance to keep children and youth under control in their segregated quarters or enmeshed in their youth culture.

Criminologists are in this situation strongly encouraged to take on the role as servants to power. Children that protest might need treatment, or maybe to be met by more severe sanctions as deportation to other schools or in severe cases forms of penal sanctions. Maybe drop-outs ought to be seen as a new form of youth delinquency and their parents punished due to their lack of control. The school-fires have already given surveillance experts a profitable new market. Cameras are installed and cover the schools day and night. In Swedish schools thermo-sensors are installed. They register heat from anybody approaching the schools, and a patrol from a security company will immediately appear. Schools must be helped in their roles as containers.

But there is an alternative path open, one I am fond of. This is one that sees the schools on fire as part of a language. Acts are words; a major role for criminologists ought to be to work as translators from acts to words and thereby

give meaning to what happened! The fires have a message, a message important both to understand and to answer.¹⁰

* * *

I feel a sort of melancholy watching this development. In much of my life I have been striving to come close to other people, see them as whole persons, and being seen by them as such a person myself. I am deeply convinced that closeness to others is one of the factors that makes civilised interaction possible. This is about to evaporate. This is a fundamental threat against what is often called *Scandinavian exceptionalism* in penal policy (Pratt 2008). Why should we, the rich, well-fed people from Scandinavia, handle those that threaten our wealth, welfare and security – such as bewildered drop-outs from schools, or immigrants, or drug users – in any other way than what is usual in other rich countries? We are even rich enough to build new prisons, beautiful prisons: single rooms with a bath and television for all, the last of these prisons in Norway was inaugurated by the King himself in 2010.

Academics as dangerous people

Have I then no respect for the culture and values and knowledge we are carrying as intellectuals?

I have. I love my work as an academic. And I am happy if I receive respect for my work, as a craftsman. I think this work is important. But academics are at the same time dangerous people. Particularly, there is no guarantee that people of our sort are the best to protect fundamental values. Our more recent history has an endless amount of examples on what experts have been allowed to do according to theories on what is best for other people, or for their countries.

The committee in Wannsee who accepted the ‘final solution’ to the Jewish question in January 1942 had among their members quite an extraordinary number of academic people. Dr. Norbert Kampe (no date), director of the *House of the Wannsee Conference* had this to say:

The 15 participants at the conference were among the elite of the National Socialist regime. Their biographies show that many had

¹⁰ Bourdieu and colleagues (1999) exemplify this approach from France. In my country, Høigård (2002) gives a revealing interpretation of graffiti as a language, while Larsen (1992) and Giertsen (2000) do the same with forms of serious violence. Such studies help us to make acts intelligible and dialogue possible.

completed an academic education and had brilliant careers. Eight held doctorates. Most were from 'good middleclass' homes. Some were staunch National Socialists but others had joined the party for opportunistic reasons. Their average age was just 43.

In Norway, civil servants with law-degrees obediently registered all Jews in the country (Johansen 1984) and were also organisers when the registers were used for arresting and later deportations of all Jews that could be found, as well as confiscation of their property. Those arrested ended in Auschwitz. Law degrees were no guarantee.

Law degrees were no guarantee. Nor were medical degrees. The extermination of whole unwanted folk-groups was often seen in analogy with medical treatment of the body. The unwanted had to be removed from the national body, just as an infected appendix from the individual body. So also with the selection at the ramp when trains arrived in Auschwitz. Selections between those who were to die immediately in the gas chambers and those who got a respite by being evaluated as able to work for a while; this evaluation was always done by medical personnel. If no doctor was available, a dentist might do. Seen as a medical operation, it all became easier (Lifton 1986).

In contrast to this, we have moving stories from all over Europe about how ordinary people rescued refugees that knocked on their doors. They saw it as a self-evident thing to do, even under threat of execution, nothing to brag about after the war (2002). Or in a formulation by Rochat (in Hagtvet 2012): they expressed 'the ordinariness of goodness' – a picture opposite to 'the banality of evil'.¹¹

But then, again, we have the contrast to the contrasts; ordinary people phoning the police in Norway, informing the authorities that the neighbour probably was a Jew (Johansen 1984), or villagers in Poland, hunting the Jews in the village, forcing them into one big barn, and then setting it on fire.¹² Or

¹¹ Hannah Arendt used this concept in her book on Adolf Eichman (*cf.* Hagtvedt 2012). Thanks to Bernt Hagtvedt who gave another reference on 'the ordinariness of goodness', which took place in the French village Chambot where approximately 1000 Jews were hidden, or transported, to Switzerland during the war of 1939-1945 (Halle 1979). This was done by ordinary citizens lead by Huguenot priests who had received a simple 'yes' from the ordinary citizens when asked to help Jews (Hagtvedt e-mail, September 6 2015). According to Hagtvedt (2012) it is common that ordinary people intervene and help others, even if they risk heavy sanctions.

¹² This is known as the Jedwabne pogrom, July 1941 in Poland, *cf.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jedwabne_pogrom for further references.

Bosnia, where attempts to create national identities led to ‘killing in broad daylight, with the murderers known by face and name to their victims and the victims being the murderers’ kith and kin, acquaintances and next door neighbours’ (Bauman 2009:105).

There are no guarantees, except the old one: attempt to create social systems without great social distance between people, distance in class, ethnicity, geography – and education. But experts represent here a particular danger. They have the armour of professionalism. They are difficult to control. To get them back to the ordinary, they ought to be made vulnerable.

My particular experience in life is with experts on social matters. Let me therefore exemplify from that area when it comes to the de-armouring of a profession:

Professionals like to flock, in offices, in whole buildings, – preferably all for themselves. It gives access to a pool of knowledge, they claim. I want to make them lonely. Social workers, one or two in small offices close to the streets, visible to the local people, forced to know their clients from encounters in local shops or the post office, if that still exists. Social workers will gain knowledge from these encounters, but they will also be seen, evaluated and controlled by those in the neighbourhood. Slowly, those living around might regain trust in their own sense and understanding.

I also have another suggestion about how to make highly educated people vulnerable. I want to take much of their language away. So much of it is just status language, words to express their high-ranking positions. Some years ago I published a little book, well hidden in Norwegian, with the title *Small Words for Big Questions* (2009).¹³ It is an attempt to make academics as ordinary as they ought to be.

I want academic people, university people included, made highly ordinary, in rank and pay and language. But if education were no ladder to particular status and income, then would motivation for higher education go down? Fine. We would be left with those particularly interested in that type of craft. But then, it would be because of the craft, not the money.

But this might hamper our material and economic development. Again fine, both for us and for the Globe. With the breakdown of the UN Climate Summit 2009 in Copenhagen in mind, it is close to obvious that continued material

¹³ By 2015 this book is published also in Danish and Russian. In 2016, it will be published in Spanish (cf. reference list).

growth is not the right course. I am not much in doubt that our material level in Scandinavia is much too high, and also that the race towards the top has damaging consequences. We could live well at a much lower level. Soon we might be forced to do so. But we do not need a system where craftsmen and craftswomen as an obvious fact are to be seen as losers, 'too dumb' to reach our level, the level all obviously would like to be at, and only more so the more we are rewarded also materially.

Maybe the future is somewhere in the past?

In January 1949 Harry Truman was installed as president in the US. In his program-talk on the occasion he said: '...we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvements and growth of underdeveloped areas' (Truman in Esteva 1992:6).

This was the point when underdevelopment was invented, was the dry comment from Gustavo Esteva (*ibid*). And he continued: 'On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of others' reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue. ...' (p. 7.). Or, from the perspective of Ivan Illich (1992:90) in the same volume: 'The human being was transformed from *Homo sapiens* (the wise and tasteful human) into *Homo Miserabilis*'.

On the caretaking of social systems

The Scandinavian states are generally seen and also called 'welfare states'. An alternative term is sometimes found in Sweden. *Folkhemmet* it is called, or in English 'the people's home'. It is an extraordinary designation for a state. It entails some unpleasant aspects; the State might be intrusive, become too much of an authoritarian caretaker. But at the same time, it is a system where ideas of common welfare, solidarity and unity remain central.

All the Scandinavian countries are Welfare States. As a general principle, it is not a debated form. On the contrary, this form is by and large a matter of pride, a form of social organisation we to a large extent take for granted. And so it still is, but nowadays as a threatened form, one of those rare species in danger of extinction. The fundamental ideas in the Welfare States are under siege from ideas of market-liberalism with its emphasis on individuals in contrast to

community, the acceptance of huge differences in rank, income and standards of living, the adherence to the idea that the best takes all: these are thoughts in grave contrast to much of the welfare thinking that up to now has ruled in Scandinavia.

If we want to keep the welfare model, I think it is essential to shift attention from material growth to caretaking of the social system. It is not money and houses and new commodities we need. It is the Welfare States that are in need of care, not our material system.

To me, the burning schools indicate that the institution of education has been allowed to embrace too much of essential life-activities in society. In contrast, activities outside that institution have lost both meaning and respect. One answer to this seems to me obvious:

Return the stolen property

If we really want to prevent the degradations and drop out situation for working class kids in school, we ought to move as much as possible of what needs to be known for performing the jobs out of schools and theory and into places of concrete work. Much instruction can be transferred from teachers in school to workers on jobs. If impossible to arrange, some teachers might leave their castles, the school buildings, and join as instructors at their places of work. Foreign languages might be easier to learn in the workshop than in the classroom. The best training of social workers, nurses and all sorts of helpers might also come out of instructions from those that work, those that can, and not from those that teach. It would make the instruction directly relevant, and also upgrade the instructors. It would not be necessary for nurses to leave the patient to gain teachers status. One could remain at the bedside as a nurse, and as an instructor. Some courses or seminars might be necessary in addition to what could be explained in the ordinary work processes.

Nothing new in this. It is the ancient way, the young person close to mother and father, learning their ways. Or maybe it was a master somewhere, a master in the old system of apprenticeship. To move education for work out of schools and back into places for work would be to restore respect for the work-process and for the master workers. That knowledge has to be respected wherever found, as among carpenters or plumbers, or bakers, mothers or writers. Some of the old masons wore full evening dress at work, just as conductors in music halls today. A reminiscence of this can be found in the black top hat still used by

some chimneysweepers. They knew something of importance, demanded respect, and got it.

Of course, I know the reactions to sayings like this: the utmost of naiveté. Workers need, as all of us, a solid basic education. And several tests show that Norwegian children fall behind many nations on international comparative tests of the PISA-type. Particularly when it comes to mathematics, we are far behind. The need for upgrading seemed obvious, according to the minister of education, and she promised to make that possible.

What I am advocating here is an upgrading of workers' knowledge and workers' culture (a theme I have touched upon above). To be a worker ought not to be something to be educated out of, and with terrible consequences if you fail. To be a worker, a craftswoman or craftsman, ought to be given such conditions that it again becomes a position of pride and status.

* * *

It was on a train home from Germany, early in the 1950s. At the bench just across from me a young Norwegian threw himself down. He had been abroad half a year as a sailor. Now he was on his way home to mother somewhere on the coast, but only for a short vacation, until the next boat out. Maybe he was 15. Age limits protecting young workers from entering the labour market were not so strict at that time. Today, he would have been a pupil somewhere, maybe, with his activity level, in danger of being diagnosed with ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. Sometimes I wonder how they in the old days had managed to get youngsters to climb the mast and reef the topsails in stormy weather with crews where the hyperactive were screened out and calmed down with drugs before they left harbor.

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