

## (21) The Educated Person

- o *Post-capitalist Society* (the book) deals with the environment in which human beings live and work and learn.
- o It does not deal with the person.
- o But in the knowledge society into which we are moving, individuals are central.
  - s Knowledge is not impersonal, like money.
  - s Knowledge does not reside in a book, a databank, a software program; they contain only information.
  - s Knowledge is always embodied in a person; carried by a person; created, augmented, or improved by a person; applied by a person; taught and passed on by a person; used or misused by a person.
- o In so doing it raises new challenges, new issues, new and quite unprecedented questions about the knowledge society's representative, the educated person.
- o The knowledge society must have at its core the concept of the educated person.
- o **It will have to be a universal concept, precisely because the knowledge society is a society of knowledges and because it is global—in its money, its economics, its careers, its technology, its central issues, and above all, in its information.**
- o Post-capitalist society requires a unifying force.
- o It requires a leadership group, which can focus local, particular, separate traditions onto a common and shared commitment to values, a common concept of excellence, and on mutual respect.
- o The educated person needs to be able to bring his or her knowledge to bear on the present, not to mention molding the future.
- o “Liberal education” ... is in crisis today
  - s ... all over the world today's students, a few years after they have graduated, complain that “what I have learned so eagerly has no meaning; it has no relevance to anything I am interested in or want to become.”
  - s Their liberal education, in other words, does not enable them to understand reality, let alone to master it.
- o Post-capitalist society needs the educated person even more than any earlier society did, and access to the great heritage of the past will have to be an essential element.
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    - s The educated person we need will have to be able to appreciate other cultures and traditions:
      - i the great heritage of Chinese, Japanese, Korean paintings and ceramics;
      - i the philosophers and religions of the Orient; and Islam, both as a religion and as a culture.
    - s The educated person also will have to be far less exclusively “bookish” than the product of the liberal education of the Humanists.
    - s He or she will need trained perception fully as much as analysis.
    - s The Western tradition will, however, still have to be at the core, if only to enable the educated person to come to grips with the present, let alone the future.
    - s Tomorrow's educated person will have to be prepared for life in a global world.
      - i It will be a “Westernized” world, but also increasingly a tribalized world.
      - i He or she must become a “citizen of the world”—in vision, horizon, information.
    - s But he or she will also have to draw nourishment from their local roots and, in turn, enrich and nourish their own local culture.
    - s Post-capitalist society is both a knowledge society and a society of organizations, each dependent on the other and yet each very different in its concepts, views, and values.
      - i Most, if not all, educated persons will practice their knowledge as members of an organization.
      - i The educated person will therefore have to be prepared to live and work simultaneously in two cultures—that of the “intellectual,” who focuses on words and ideas, and that of the “manager,” who focuses on people and work.
  - o We neither need nor will get “polymaths” who are at home in many knowledges; in fact, we will probably become even more specialized.
  - o But what we do need—and what will define the educated person in the knowledge society—is the ability to understand the various knowledges.
    - s What is each one about?
    - s What is it trying to do?

## PD's View of Developmental Directions

- s What are its central concerns and theories?
- s What major new insights has it produced?
- s What are its important areas of ignorance, its problems, its challenges?
- s Without such understanding, the knowledges themselves will become sterile, will indeed cease to be “knowledges.”
- s They will become intellectually arrogant and unproductive.
- s For the major new insights in every one of the specialized knowledges arise out of another, separate specialty, out of another one of the knowledges.
- o The specialists have to take responsibility for making both themselves and their specialty understood.
  - s Specialties must be understood for what they are: serious, rigorous, demanding disciplines.
  - s This requires that the leaders in each of the knowledges, beginning with the leading scholars in each field, must take on the hard work of defining what it is they do.
- o There is no “Queen of the Knowledges” in the knowledge society.
- o All knowledges are equally valuable; all knowledges, in the words of the great medieval saint and philosopher St. Bonaventura, lead equally to the truth.
- o It would be as foolish to predict the knowledge society as it would have been foolish to predict in 1776—the year of the American Revolution, of Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations, and of James Watt’s steam engine—the society of which Marx wrote a hundred years later.
- o **But one thing we can predict: the greatest change will be the change in knowledge—in its form and content; in its meaning; in its responsibility; and in what it means to be an educated person.**