

7 Education for an anarchist society

Vocational training and political visions

As the preceding discussion suggests, many anarchist ideas and experiments in education stemmed from the belief, informed by the anarchist view of human nature, that a key aspect of the revolutionary process involved nurturing and developing those moral qualities deemed necessary to create and sustain a social-anarchist society. In other words, the emphasis in anarchist educational programmes was not so much on attempting to bring about a pre-conceived alternative model of social organization but on laying the ground for the natural evolution of such a model by means of fostering the attitudes that underpin it, alongside the experiment of creating a microcosm of anarchist society. This perspective underpins the experiments in anarchist education described in Chapter 6, but it is often unarticulated, so it is only by unpacking the philosophical and ideological insights of anarchism as a theory that one can appreciate the uniqueness of such experiments in the world of libertarian education.

As suggested earlier, the means-ends model is insufficient to capture the relationship between education and social change within anarchist thought. Nevertheless, the picture painted in the preceding chapter of some typical anarchist schools, alongside the suggestion for a more fully developed account of moral education, answers, to some extent, the practical question of 'What should an anarchist educator do in order to bring the possibility of an anarchist society a little closer?' The present chapter attempts to answer this question from a different, but related, angle, namely: 'What should the anarchist policy-maker or educational theorist do – in keeping with anarchist theory – in order to bring the possibility of an anarchist society a little closer?'

By focusing on a particular educational question with important policy implications, I hope to draw out what I have described as the anarchist perspective a little more clearly, and to contrast it with other perspectives – notably, the Marxist and the liberal ones. With this aim in mind, I shall discuss the issue of vocational education, which is especially pertinent due to the important anarchist idea of integral education. As the following discussion will reveal, the question of the role of vocational training within the school curriculum, like other educational questions, can, from an anarchist point of view, only be understood within a broad political context. Therefore, this

discussion will lead into a further development of the idea of the moral and political content of anarchist education, and will tie this in with the general theme of the anarchist perspective on the relationship between education and social change. Accordingly, this chapter consists of two interrelated sections. In the section on Vocational Education: Theory and Practice, I discuss the way the notion of vocational education is understood both within the anarchist tradition and in the work of two contemporary philosophers of education, Christopher Winch and Richard Pring, who have developed rigorous philosophical accounts of this notion in the context of the liberal educational tradition. In the section on The Moral and Political Content of Education, I examine the moral and political content which, I argue, plays a crucial role in anarchist education and which, accordingly, underlines the distinct perspective offered by the anarchist position.

Vocational education: theory and practice

Integral education

The anarchist notion of integral education – that is, an education which combined intellectual and manual training – was an important feature of all anarchist schools, notably the Escuela Moderna in Barcelona (see Chapter 6), and Paul Robin's educational experiments in France (see Smith 1983: 18–61). But the chief theoretical exponent of this idea was Kropotkin who, in 'Brain Work and Manual Work' (Kropotkin 1890) and in *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow* (Kropotkin 1974), set forth the ideal of a society in which, instead of the current 'pernicious distinction' between 'brain work' and 'manual work', reflecting divisions between a 'labouring' and an 'educated' class, all girls and boys, 'without distinction of birth', should receive a 'complete education'. Kropotkin's theory was informed by the assumption, shared by Marxist theory, that labour – as a central aspect of human life and an element in personal well-being – is to be distinguished from work – which, in capitalist society, becomes merely a commodity, to be sold for a wage. Yet, perhaps more importantly, Kropotkin's views were guided by the belief in social equality as a valuable and attainable goal and the ideal of a society based on mutual cooperation and fraternity.

From this perspective, Kropotkin's analysis of capitalist industrialized states and their inherent inequalities convinced him that it is the capitalist system itself which divorces manual work from mental work and thus creates the false dichotomy between the two and the associated inequalities in social status. The only way to break down these divisions was to provide an education in which, in the words of Proudhon, 'the industrial worker, the man of action and the intellectual will all be rolled into one' (Edwards 1969: 80). In fact, by the late nineteenth century, this idea had become an established tenet of revolutionary socialist educational thinking. This is reflected in the fact that one of the first acts of the Paris Commune was to establish an

Educational Commission committed to providing all the children of the community with integral education. The idea, as described by Edwards in his account of the Commune, 'expressed the desire both to learn a useful trade and at the same time escape from the specialization caused by division of labour and the consequent separation into educated and uneducated classes' (Edwards 1971, quoted in Smith 1983: 273).

Thus the notion of integral education involves more than just a breaking down, at the practical level, of the traditional liberal-vocational distinctions; it does not propose, that is, merely to ensure that all children leave school with a useful trade and appropriate theoretical knowledge so that they may become fully participating members in the productive economy. The theoretical assumptions behind this notion are, first and foremost, political. Integral education programmes along these lines were seen as an essential element of educational experiments such as those of Paul Robin, in France, where the school was intended to create an environment embodying a commitment to social equality and the belief that communities run on the principles of co-education, freedom from coercion, respect for the individual child and self-government could form the vanguard for the socialist revolution. Thus, at Paul Robin's school for orphans, Cempuis, intellectual education was seen

as essentially complementary to manual and physical training. Questions, problems, needs, arose out of the day-to-day practice of the workshops, but not in a mechanical, over-programmed way [...]. If manual training was carried out in the right way, the child would want to know more of the principles behind it.

(Smith 1983: 34)

The political motivation behind this approach, then, was explicit and was an intrinsic part of the project of laying the foundations for the social-anarchist revolution. Similar to the theoretical defence of polytechnical education systems established in the Soviet Union immediately after the revolution, and in Communist China, one of the main reasons for believing in the value of an education which involved real encounters with the world of work was that distancing children from this world in an academic environment would cut them off from the experience which lay at the basis of social and political consciousness. Both Marx and Mao explicitly defended the view that 'combining work with study would keep the young in touch with those moral and political truths which were part of the consciousness of the working class' (Smith 1983: 52). Although Kropotkin was less focused on the struggle of the working class, and emphasized instead the needs of a complex industrial society and the value of cooperative social organization, this theme can nevertheless be found in much anarchist writing on the content of the school curriculum, as illustrated, for example, in the educational writings of Francisco Ferrer (see Chapter 6).

The early social anarchist thinkers were only too aware of the realities of the growing industrialization they were witnessing and of the fact that they were educating workers. They held, with Proudhon, that 'the work a man did was something to be proud of, it was what gave interest, value and dignity to his life' (Smith 1983: 25). Thus,

An education that was divorced from the world of work, that is, an education that was entirely bookish or grammar-schoolish in conception, was valueless from the point of view of ordinary working-class children. Of course, an education that went too far in the other direction, which brought up children merely to be fodder for factories, was equally unacceptable. What was required was an education which would equip a child for the work-place but would also give him a degree of independence in the labour market.

(Ibid.)

Furthermore, the anarchist concept of integral education, apart from reflecting the anarchist social ideal, also involved an important notion of personal well-being. The social-anarchist challenge to the typical division of labour in society would, it was hoped, help to avoid the sense of monotony involved in working in one occupation throughout life. This was regarded as reflecting what the anarchists called the 'fundamental organizational principle of diversification' (ibid.: 19), which itself was seen as a consequence of the essential human need for diversity.

But, crucially, anarchist educational programmes also involved a commitment to political and moral education, in the sense of challenging the dominant values of the capitalist system – for example, the wage system, the competitive market-place, the control of the means of production, and so on – as well as fostering the social virtues. Thus, while challenging the existing system and trying to minimize its damaging effects on future workers, social anarchist educators never lost sight of the radical new reality that they wanted to create – and which, they believed, was fully within the scope of human capabilities and aspirations. It is in this sense that they represent a shift in perspective from mainstream thinking on these issues.

The social anarchist perspective on vocational education can be interestingly contrasted with both the Marxist and the liberal one. It is of course because Marxists focus on the class dimension as basic to all notions of social struggle and resistance that they see the necessity of educating a proletarian revolutionary vanguard. They are traditionally, then, concerned with the education of workers. Specifically, the role of education from a Marxist perspective is, above all, to bring class political consciousness to the worker (a role which, according to Lenin, could only be done from the outside, by an enlightened educator) (see Bantock 1984: 242).

Bantock suggests that the Marxist enthusiasm for comprehensive education (i.e. an education which combined academic and vocational training) was a

result first and foremost of the Marxists' environmentalist position – that is, the fact that it is environmental influences – amongst them education – and not natural capacities which influence human potential. They therefore rejected as bourgeois ideas such as intelligence-testing and streaming. The Marxist attitude to vocational education is also informed by the critique of labour as a commodity in the capitalist system and the conviction that the labour process should be 'a purposive activity carried on for the production of use-values, for the fitting of natural substances to human wants' (ibid.: 229).

While anarchists share with Marxists many assumptions regarding the nature of labour in capitalist society, the anarchist perspective on social change and the role of the state leads to a very different conception of vocational education, as the following discussion will show. Similarly, this distinct anarchist perspective can be illustrated by a contrast with common perceptions of vocational education within the liberal tradition.

Fraternity as a component of integral education

As mentioned earlier, certain commentators have suggested that it is in fact fraternity, rather than freedom or equality, which should be regarded as the chief goal of social anarchism. However, as the preceding discussion suggests, I believe that such philosophical exercises in establishing the theoretical priority of any one goal or value within anarchist thought are misconceived. Of course, one could make a general point about the incommensurability of values within political theories, as Isaiah Berlin has discussed with reference to liberalism. However, in the case of anarchism, this general philosophical point is particularly salient as it is, I believe, partly a reflection of the anti-hierarchical stance of anarchist thinkers. Thus the anarchist antipathy to structural and permanent hierarchies in social and political organization could be read as analogous to a general suspicion of hierarchical thinking when it comes to concepts and values.

The aforementioned remarks notwithstanding, it is certainly true that, as discussed in Chapter 6, fraternity can be regarded as an important educational goal for anarchists.

The educational experiments described in Chapter 6 illustrate how the moral qualities involved in the attitude of fraternity, which are an essential requisite for the creation and maintenance of social anarchist communities, were promoted largely through what we would refer to as 'school climate' – in other words, through the fact that the school itself was run as a microcosm of a social-anarchist community in the making. Geoffrey Fidler, on the basis of research into the work of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century French anarchist-libertarian educators, has argued for a conceptual connection between fraternity and the anarchist idea of integral education.

The notion of integral education, as described earlier, developed primarily out of the anarchist aim of breaking down the class divisions of capitalist society by doing away with the distinction between intellectual and manual

labour. But, Fidler argues, in his analysis of early nineteenth century French experiments in anarchist education,

At the heart of libertarian as 'complete' education lay the urge to realize an equal, voluntary and 'right' espousal of the mutual arrangements of the fraternal community. This was construed as 'natural' and 'spontaneous' in the particular sense of self-realization succinctly expressed by *Les Temps Nouveaux* [the journal of Libertarian education, edited by Sebastian Faure].

(Fidler 1989: 46)

What Fidler seems to be suggesting here is that the anarchists' critique of capitalist society hinged primarily on their objection to the socio-economic inequalities created by the division of labour in such a society. In positing an ideal society, therefore, they regarded it as crucial that no such division should obtain, out of both a commitment to social equality, and a notion of individual well-being as conceptually and psychologically connected to the well-being of the community (see the discussion on Bakunin and freedom, in Chapter 4). Yet such a society could not be created or maintained without promoting and nurturing the human propensity (already present, but often suppressed by capitalist institutions and values) for benevolence, mutual aid and fraternity.

Fidler, in fact, in a passage reminiscent of Ritter's discussion of 'reciprocal awareness' as the moral underpinning of social anarchist society, talks of anarchist education as being, at heart, an endeavour to 'awaken the social instinct'. This was to be achieved, as illustrated by the educational projects discussed in Chapter 6, largely through the climate of the school and the moral example of teachers who were expected to exhibit what Kropotkin regarded as the ultimate moral principle of anarchism, namely, 'treating others as one wishes to be treated oneself' (Fidler 1989: 37).

Fidler argues that this anarchist perspective, best reflected in the work of Kropotkin and Reclus, makes a distinctive addition to the world of libertarian education, in that the notion of integral education was regarded, above all, in an essentially moral light, as 'a means of achieving the conscious or ethical form of fraternity' (Fidler 1989: 35). The social anarchists involved in such educational experiments, according to Fidler, 'enunciate a practical utopianism by affirming their commitment to apparently unrealistic moral principles as a vehicle for the realistic purposes of persuasion, education and guidance in present conduct' (ibid.).

The anarchist emphasis on the moral qualities necessary to sustain a society characterized by a breakdown of the manual-intellectual distinctions and their resulting inequalities, then, is part of their radical vision of the possibility of a stateless society. As such, it seems more linked to a specific political vision than the general idea of polytechnic education. However, many theorists within the liberal tradition have also dealt with the conceptual problems

involved in the traditional liberal/vocational distinction, and it is important to understand how the anarchist treatment of this distinction differs from the liberal one.

Reconceptualizing the liberal-vocational distinction

In recent years, some philosophers of education have raised philosophical challenges to the apparent dichotomy between liberal and vocational education. Notably, Richard Pring has argued for a broadening and reformulating of the liberal ideal so as to embrace the idea of vocational relevance, along with 'practical intelligence, personal development [and] social and community relevance' (Pring 1995: 195). Similarly, Christopher Winch has developed a detailed and rich conception of vocational education, embracing concerns about 'moral and spiritual well-being' alongside notions of economic and political goods (Winch 2000).¹ Pring's motivation for this reconceptualization seems to be primarily the recent attacks that the traditional liberal view has come under – notably the claim that it excludes many people from the 'liberal conversation' – and the threat to liberal educational values from those who, in response to such attacks, reduce educational goals to the language of 'efficiency' or to narrow economic ends. In contrast, Winch's chief motivation seems to be a sense that the issue of vocational education has not been given the serious philosophical treatment it deserves – presumably partly because of the dominance of the traditional liberal conception.

Richard Pring is rightly critical of the tendency to talk of liberal education as if it were, conceptually, diametrically opposed to vocational education. Yet his chief criticism is the point that this implies that

the vocational, properly taught, cannot itself be liberating – a way into those forms of knowledge through which a person is freed from ignorance, and opened to new imaginings, new possibilities: the craftsman who finds aesthetic delight in the object of his craft, the technician who sees the science behind the artefact, the reflective teacher making theoretical sense of practice.

(Pring 1995: 189)

Pring's criticism, in other words, is not an external critique from a socio-political perspective (a perspective which, as the foregoing discussion shows, characterizes all anarchist thought on education) but comes from within the educational sphere itself. He argues that vocational education, just like the traditional conception of liberal education, can be intrinsically valuable and connected to a sense of personal well-being and therefore should not be so rigidly conceptually separated.

The conception of freedom which Pring appeals to here is the very conception which lies at the core of the classic liberal account of education from Plato onwards, namely the idea of education as liberating in the sense

of freeing the mind. This impression is strengthened by the role Pring assigns to the work of Oakeshott in his discussion of the model of education which forms the background of his analysis. In Oakeshott's idea of education as conversation, freedom is conceived as a freeing of the mind from everyday, concrete concerns; liberal education, on this account, involves an 'invitation to disentangle oneself from the here and now of current happenings and engagements, to detach oneself from the urgencies of the local and the contemporary...' (Oakeshott, quoted in Pring 1995: 186). As Pring notes, this particular conception of liberal education, in focusing upon the world of ideas, 'ignores the world of practice – the world of industry, of commerce, of earning a living...' (ibid.). Yet in arguing that, in our reconceptualizing of the liberal ideal, it is this 'art of reflection' that we must preserve, Pring, it seems, is still subscribing to a basically liberal notion of what it means to be free.

In anarchist thought, in contrast, the concern with the concrete aspects of social justice, distribution of goods, and the material well-being of the community, is always at the forefront of educational thought and practice. Freedom is understood as, first and foremost, effective freedom from all forms of oppression. Thus the emphasis, for the anarchists, in breaking down the liberal-vocational distinction, is not on encouraging critical, detached reflection in the sphere of vocational training in order to create more reflective, more intellectually developed craftsmen, but on paving the way for the concrete freedom of the worker from the restrictions of the capitalist state by, amongst other things, abolishing the division into manual and non-manual labourers.

Of course, at the time at which Kropotkin was writing, the social divisions into 'brain workers' and 'manual workers' of which he speaks were far more apparent and clear-cut than they are today. Early socialist thinkers could not have predicted the socio-economic developments of late capitalism, in which the traditional category of 'workers' is no longer such a clearly demarcated social class. Yet the important point to understand in this context concerns precisely this relationship between educational goals and existing economic and social reality. For Pring, Winch, and many other writers in this field, the structure of the economy, the labour market, and the social and political institutions in which such educational debates take place are obviously acknowledged to be subject to critical appraisal on the part of active citizenship, but it is not the aspiration to radically reform them which forms the basis for educational philosophy and theory. This may appear to be a subtle difference, and, indeed, it is important not to understate the presence, within liberal theory, of a tradition of critical enquiry and reform, and of the idea of citizens as actively shaping society. But, especially within the context of liberal philosophy of education which, over the years, has increasingly become concerned with education in the liberal state, this assumption of the liberal state's inevitability as a basic framework sets thinkers in this tradition apart from the radical social anarchists, in spite of their agreement on certain underlying

values. Even theorists like Winch and Pring, whose analyses present a radical challenge to the traditional conceptual parameters of liberal education, still operate within these basic assumptions regarding the inevitability of the liberal state.

As argued earlier, although the aspiration to radically restructure social and political organization lies at the heart of anarchist thought, the chief concern of anarchist educators is not to directly promote a specific model of the good society but to create an environment which will foster and encourage the development of the human propensities and virtues necessary to create and sustain new forms of social organization without the state. Thus the school, for anarchist educators, is seen primarily as a microcosm of one of the many possible forms of anarchist society; an experiment in non-hierarchical, communal forms of human interaction where, crucially, alongside a rigorous critique of existing capitalist society, the interpersonal relationships which constitute educational interaction are based on the normative role assigned to the human qualities of benevolence, mutual aid and social cooperation.

Pring and other writers in the liberal tradition note the importance of fostering critical attitudes in pupils, but because of the liberal state perspective which informs their work, their discussion seems to lack the normative vision which guides anarchist educators. Indeed, whether out of an explicit commitment to autonomy or an endorsement of some version of liberal neutrality, liberal educators are often reluctant to speak in anything other than general terms of providing pupils with the tools needed to make critical judgements and life-choices. In arguing, for example, for a breakdown of the distinction between education and training, Pring makes the point that one and the same activity could be both 'educational' and 'training' (ibid.). But, again, the political, moral aspect is entirely absent from this discussion. One can, as Pring says, change vocational approaches to education so as to aim to educate 'broadly liberal, critical' people through the activity of training them; but this in itself does not challenge the way we conceptualise society; the basic socio-economic distinctions would still hold, even if one aspires to have educated workers.

All this is not to suggest that theorists like Pring and Winch overlook the political and economic context of educational policy. Indeed one important contribution of such critiques of the traditional ideal of liberal education is the claim that it does not fully take into account the importance of addressing, at the level of educational goals, the needs of society and the economy. As Pring puts it, 'there is a political and economic context to education that we need to take seriously' (Pring 1995: 22).

Much of Winch's work has been devoted to developing a detailed account of this point, drawing on the notion of social capital. Starting from the assumption that all education aims at personal development and fulfilment, Winch develops the idea of 'liberal vocationalism', which embraces civic and vocational education, entailing a concept of vocational education which is at once far richer and broader than the instrumentalist conception and also, in

drawing on social capital theory, implies a far wider definition of productive labour than the influential one developed by Adam Smith and later by Marx.

In thereby insisting that vocational education should by no means be conceptually confined to 'preparation for producing commodities, or even necessarily for paid employment', but that it involves such aspects as civic responsibility, cognitive skills, social practices and spiritual development, Winch's analysis may, at first glance, seem to be completely in tune with the anarchist aspiration to breakdown the narrow delineation of vocational, as opposed to academic, education.

However, in social anarchist theory, the political and economic context is defined by a normative set of values, the concrete implications of which demand a radical restructuring of our social arrangements and institutions.

Writers within the liberal tradition commonly refer to the 'liberal traditions of education' (Pring 1995: 9) as opposed to the 'utilitarian ones of training' (ibid.). The point of both Winch's and Pring's analyses is to break down these distinctions so as to provide a broader conception of what it means, within a liberal conception of the good society, to be educated. Yet the conflict to be resolved, for the anarchist, is not that between 'Those who see the aim of education to be intellectual excellence (accessible to the few) and those who see its aim to be social utility (and thus accessible to the many)' (Pring 1995: 114) – a conflict which Pring regards as 'the most important and most difficult to resolve' (ibid.) – but that between our vision of what kind of society we want, and what kind of society we have. Education, on this view, is an inherently normative process, and, crucially, a form of human interaction and relationship. Yet as such, it is not merely a means for achieving our political ideals, but part of the process for discovering, articulating and constantly experimenting with these ideals, in the course of which those particular human qualities assigned a normative role in our concept of the good society, need to be continually reinforced, articulated and translated into educational practice.

Thus, while most social anarchists would probably agree with Winch that 'it is important to maintain a very broad vision of "preparation for work"' (Winch 2000: 163), they would go further than his conceptual point that 'a society that sees the development of individuals, of economic strength and of civil institutions as closely connected, would find it natural to attempt to achieve a balance in combining liberal, vocational and civic education' (ibid.: 191). For social anarchists are not concerned merely with insisting that any discussion of education in society must take these issues into account, but are motivated by the belief that there is something radically wrong with current society, and that reconceptualizing education and engaging in specific, normative educational practices, is one way to go about changing it.

It would be misleading to characterize either the traditional liberal view or the kind of liberal vocationalism promoted by Winch as views lacking in aspirations for improvement or for social reform. It does however seem true to say that both these views – as evident in the work of the authors cited

here – assume that the way forward lies in a broadening and deepening of the democratic aspects of our social institutions, out of a belief that this will both contribute to personal well-being and strengthen the moral fabric of society. The unwritten assumption behind much of this work is that the basic structure of the liberal state is not itself subject to debate. Thus Winch, while clearly committed to democracy and to further democratization of social institutions, carefully avoids making any normative pronouncements as to the preferred mode of social organization. Indeed he attests to this position early on in the book, defining the brand of liberalism to which he subscribes as ‘the contingent and non-foundational kind described by Gray as “agnostic” or “contested”’ (Winch 2000: 2).

Likewise, liberal theorists of vocational education cannot be accused of insensitivity to the moral and political aspects of the kind of educational values being promoted. Pring, for example, mentions the moral aspect of the social utility conception. However he discusses this in the narrow sense of the promotion of virtues (such as enterprise) seen to be essential for helping learners function more positively (i.e. morally) in the world of work and business.

Similarly, in arguing for a broadening and elaboration of the often vague concepts of personal development and flourishing employed in educational policy documents, Pring outlines a philosophical concept of what it means to be a person. In discussing the moral aspects of this concept, he refers to two senses in which it is a moral one: ‘It implies the capacity to take responsibility for one’s own actions and one’s own life. On the other hand, it indicates the desirability of being so treated – of being given the opportunity for taking on that responsibility and of respecting it in others’ (Pring 1995: 126–127). This seems, in contrast to the anarchist perspective, to imply a rather passive idea of what being moral is; it leaves out completely the idea of the subject as creator of social reality, or as engaged in the ongoing project of making the world a better place. It is true that Pring, in the course of his discussion, does emphasize the notion of the person as a ‘social animal’ (ibid.: 132) and refers to the Greek tradition that true human life requires participation in the political life of the state (ibid.: 133). However, one cannot get away from the sense that ‘social and political life’ in this perspective, is not viewed primarily, as it is for the anarchists, as something essentially malleable and subject to constant, and often radical, experimentation.

Winch, too, notes the importance of moral education. But this, again, is in terms of virtues required by workers as people interacting with others – the workplace, in other words, is seen as

an essential location for the validation of life-choices, for the acquisition of technical skills in conditions where they are to be applied seriously, in forming young people into the values, disciplines and virtues that are prized in a particular occupational context and in making them aware of the social ramifications of their chosen occupation.

(Winch 2000: 79)

It is in this context that Winch argues for the role of schools in preparing people for such choice-making, and for the continuation of this moral aspect of education in the world of the workplace. Again, this world, it is implied, is simply ‘out there’. In other words, it is not at the meta-level that moral and political questions seem to enter such debates on educational aims but at the level of implementation of educational programmes within an already accepted social structure.

So both Winch and Pring, although rejecting the narrow conception of vocational education as ‘preparation for the world of work’, still seem to remain pretty much within the tradition that regards ‘the world’ – however richly theorized – as something which is simply out there, to be prepared for and adapted to by the education system and its graduates, rather than to be created or changed.²

Education and the socio-economic structure: cause or effect?

In general, although most philosophers in the liberal tradition now acknowledge the relationship between educational ideas and political and economic issues, this relationship is often implied to be one-way: education should fit in with economic and political trends, rather than, as has been traditionally argued by radical dissenters, opposing them and standing for something different.

The danger, for Pring, is that education may, by clinging to the traditional liberal ideals, become ‘disconnected from the social and economic world which it should enlighten’ (Pring 1995: 123). This is, indeed, a welcome criticism and an important reassessment of the traditional liberal ideal. However, it reveals the central contrast between this and the far more radical anarchist vision which, rather than merely ‘enlightening’ the social and economic world, seeks to radically change it. So while Winch’s general conclusion seems to be in favour of the idea that ‘educational, moral and economic ideals are linked, both conceptually and causally’ (Winch 2000: 134), the interesting question here is which way the causality goes. For the social anarchists, ‘politics, and for that matter economics, is subservient to morality’ (Adan 1992: 175). Although one suspects that both Winch and Pring would sympathize with this remark, it is hard to find explicit support for it within their writings on vocational education.

Another interesting illustration of this difference in perspective comes from John White’s recent book, *Education and the End of Work* (White 1997). In criticizing dominant theoretical analyses of the role and nature of work in society, White, while questioning Marxist-influenced views on the centrality of labour to human life, nevertheless acknowledges, in a way which may seem in tune with the anarchist account discussed earlier, that ‘any reasonable account of education should make work-related aims central’ (ibid.: 16). He goes on to address the question of how parents, teachers and policy makers

should conceive the relationship between education and work. This question, he says, cannot be answered in the abstract. 'If we could see into the future how things will be in 2050 or 2100, we would be better placed. But the future of work is radically uncertain' (ibid.: 69). White then goes on to discuss two possible scenarios: one involving the 'continuance of the status quo' with regard to the dominance of what he refers to as heteronomous work in societies like Britain; the other involving a 'transformation into a society in which heteronomous work is less dominant'. Interestingly, White himself acknowledges the implications of this approach whereby education may be seen to have a primarily reactive function, and makes the important point – a point in keeping with the anarchist perspective – that 'education can help to create social futures as well as reflect them' (ibid.: 78). However, in spite of these important broad points, the focus of White's analysis is a far narrower one, namely, the role of work in individuals' lives. Thus, to the extent to which social questions such as equality play a part in his work, they do so in the context of notions like 'universal equality of respect', intended to further the aim of helping everyone to attain the means for a life of autonomous well-being. Although White acknowledges that this liberal ideal will in all likelihood entail a policy of educational investment in the less well-off, any social restructuring involved is secondary to the educational goal of fostering children's ability to become autonomous adults. White's preference for a society in which industriousness is no longer regarded as a central moral value, and in which there is a reduction in heteronomous work and a more pluralistic social and cultural perception of work, is ultimately a result of this ideal rather than, as in the anarchist case, the reflection of a vision of a particular kind of society.

The social-anarchist revolution: within the state and beyond the state

These issues may be further clarified with reference to the distinction (a distinction that, as mentioned, anarchist theorists commonly fail to make) between the pre-revolutionary and the post-revolutionary stage, or, more accurately, between life within the state and life beyond the state. This is not a purely temporal distinction for, in the anarchist view, the social revolution is an ongoing endeavour. Therefore one cannot talk of a clear distinction between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary reality. I suggest, however, that it is helpful to distinguish between life in a stateless, social-anarchist society and life within the state.

Thus for example it is, of course, quite possible that once the social-anarchist revolution is successful and society is organized in such a way that basic needs are met and communal arrangements, ideally, have secured relatively stable economic relations, it may make sense to talk of the kind of 'liberal-vocationalism' that Winch is sympathetic to – in other words, an education

which, in addition to providing a sound intellectual and moral basis, 'encourage[s] young people to make occupational choices from amongst those that society considers worthwhile' (Winch 2000: 31). However, within the nation state, where, according to the anarchist critique, inequalities are entrenched and reflected in, amongst other things, the division of labour and the market economy, such 'choices' cannot be made freely for they are dictated by the economic needs of the state which, by definition, is inimical to human freedom and flourishing.

Furthermore, even if the state is successfully dismantled, given the anarchist commitment to perfectibility and to constant experimentation, and bearing in mind the contextualist conception of human nature, it is important for the community to continue to provide an education which maintains a critical attitude towards existing practices and institutions and fosters attitudes of fraternity and mutual aid.

The aforementioned points about the anarchist perspective on education may suggest that the anarchists were unduly concerned with questions about the social good, overlooking the question of personal fulfilment and well-being. Indeed, Richard Pring makes the point that the apparent conflict between liberal education and social utility 'reflects a deeper divide between the pursuit of individual good and the pursuit of social welfare' (Pring 1995: 121). But this again presupposes a particular way of looking at the individual. In anarchist ethics, as discussed earlier, individual freedom and well-being are created and sustained in the context of social interaction; one cannot consistently talk of the individual good without taking the social context into account. In the anarchist view of morality, indeed, the individual and the moral good are conceptually and logically bound (see Adan 1992: 49–60). Many anarchist theorists, most notably Bakunin, were concerned to develop a conceptual defence of 'the intrinsic identity between the individual and the common good' (Adan 1992: 56). Their conception of the community as the basic social unit was of

a whole of wholes, whose function is making possible the fullest realization of common good; i.e. the creation of conditions for personal actualization to an unlimited degree [...]. The individual is a whole in itself and the good it attains is also an objective good, not merely subjective and thus, in a way, the actualization of society at large.

(Ibid.)

On the policy level of devising specific educational programmes which would help children enter the world of work, Winch's analysis makes several important points, some of which have interesting connections to the anarchist view. But again, from an anarchist point of view, these points are mostly relevant to education beyond the state. For example, in his discussion of the issue of transparency of markets, Winch points out that all vocational education

depends to some extent, for it to have been considered a success, on speculation as to the availability of certain jobs in the labour market. But, as he explains,

at the level of skills acquisition, the labour market is often a futures market, trading in commodities whose value will only become clear at some point in the future [...]. One is, in effect, betting that a current investment will be worthwhile in two or three years' time.

(Winch 2000: 128)

The implicit picture of economic life behind these remarks is of the economic sphere as something which is, as John White puts it (White 1997: 78), 'reflected by' rather than 'created by' education. Anarchist educators like those discussed in Chapter 6, fuelled by the desire to replace the capitalist state system with what they regarded as a morally superior social model, assume a very different picture. An outspoken and, perhaps, rather extreme expression of this view comes from Harry Kelly, in his outline of the purpose of the Modern School in New York at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Chapter 6). The anarchist educational movement involves, Kelly argues, 'the idea of making all industry cooperative,' from which it follows that 'it is inconceivable that education in its future evolution will not sometime take complete control and possession of the world's industry' (Kelly 1916: 53). Sinister as this may sound, I believe the main point of Kelly's remarks is not the proposal of any revolutionary tactics for seizing control of the capitalist state infrastructure, but rather the insight that socio-economic structures, moral values and educational ideals are all bound up in the normative project of constructing educational policy and processes. In this, Kelly was echoing Kropotkin's belief that the social anarchist socio-economic model is

of absolute necessity for society, not only to solve economic difficulties, but also to maintain and develop social customs that bring men in contact with one another; [it] must be looked to for establishing such relations between men that the interest of each should be the interest of all; and this alone can unite men instead of dividing them.

(Kropotkin 1897: 16)

Accordingly, while anarchist educational projects run within the reality of the (capitalist) state sought to embody, in their structure and day-to-day management, the principles and practice of communal living, their long-term programmes for vocational education also embodied the hope that the 'outside world' for which they were preparing their children would be – largely as a result of this moral groundwork – a very different one from that of the present.

Education and the market

Winch notes that in neo-classical economic theory, the assumption is that markets are 'transparent', in the sense that all participants in the market place

have access to information about price, quality, supply and demand. But, as he remarks (Winch 2000: 128), 'this is patently false', and

it is now much more widely admitted, particularly through the influence of the 'Austrian' school of economics, that markets are not completely transparent, that they filter information and depend on local and tacit knowledge of buyers and sellers for their successful operation.

In the case of labour markets, even though professionals may be available to advise novices – for example, pupils undergoing vocational education programmes – 'it is still highly likely that there will be insufficient information to make an informed decision when the availability of jobs depends on larger macro-economic factors that most people will not be in a good position to understand' (ibid.: 129).

In an anarchist society, the market would be run along cooperative lines – a point which, anarchist theorists were keen to stress, was not hostile to competition. Indeed, as the anarchist economist Stephen P. Andrews has argued, 'competition itself is not socially negative. [...] Correctly employed, economical competition leads to the growth of a perfectly balanced system of social cooperation' (in Adan 1992: 190). The term 'correctly employed' here presumably refers to a climate of individuals cooperating in freedom on the basis of a sound moral education. But aside from this point, Winch's point about market transparency may be relevant in the reality of anarchist society beyond the state, and in fact suggests that small-scale economies, such as that of the anarchist commune, would be more conducive to such transparency than the markets of the capitalist state, due not only to the simple question of size but also to the anarchist commitment to participatory self-government and bottom-up forms of social organization.

So although Winch is in agreement with elements of the anarchist critique in stating that young people are

potentially at the mercy of a market which may not have a particular call for their skills and knowledge at a stage in life when, by definition, and according to a well-established account of how markets work, they are in a poor position to make rational decisions on the labour and training market.

(Winch 2000: 130)

His solution to this problem is to find ways of linking demand and supply of labour so that vocational education can successfully provide students with jobs in the market. He does not see these problems as inherent features of market capitalism which can only be remedied by radical political and social change. Similarly, Winch argues convincingly that

for vocational education, it is important to maintain a very broad vision of 'preparation for work' which not only encompasses the different forms of paid employment, but also domestic and voluntary labour. It also

follows, from the reluctance that I have argued one should have towards unduly elevating the value of some occupations and denigrating others according to personal taste and preference, that a society that wishes to continue to develop various currents not just of skill, but of value and outlook on life, needs to take a generous attitude to the provision of vocational education, so as to allow for the proper development of a wide variety of occupations.

(Ibid.: 163)

But the denigration and preferences which Winch refers to may in fact be, as the anarchists would argue, largely a result of the inherent structural features of our society. If this is the case then, again, only a radical reconceptualization of our social institutions could adequately address these issues.

We have seen, then, how the anarchist conception of integral education breaks down the traditional distinctions between the liberal and the vocational ideal not just from a conceptual point of view, nor from the point of view of creating a broader educational goal for modern liberal states, but as part of the radical challenge to the existing political order.

When working within the constraints of life within the state, the task for the anarchist educator is to lay the grounds for the transition to an anarchist, self-governing, equitable community. One can begin this process, as argued by Kropotkin, Ward and others, on the smallest possible scale, by challenging dominant values and encouraging the human propensity for mutual aid, cooperation and self-governance. Indeed, as discussed in previous chapters, the anarchist revolution is conceptualized by most of the social anarchists not as a violent dismantling of the present system in order to replace it with a radically new one, nor, as in the case of Marxism, as a remoulding of human tendencies and attitudes, but as a process of creating a new society from the seeds of aspirations, tendencies and trends already present in human action. As Kropotkin emphasizes, the foundations of anarchist society are, above all, moral, and thus one cannot escape the conclusion that the emphasis of the educational process must be on fostering those moral attitudes which can further and sustain a viable anarchist society. Of course, part of this process involves adopting a critical attitude towards current institutional and political practices and arrangements, with an emphasis on the manifestations of oppression and social injustice. But this critical stance has to be encouraged in a climate which itself reflects the values of solidarity and equality.

Another essential ingredient in this educational process is the absence of fixed blueprints for future organization; in other words, although pupils should be encouraged to reflect on broad social and political issues, and to question current institutional arrangements, they must not, in the anarchist view, be manipulated into advocating a specific form of social organization, but should be encouraged to see themselves, first and foremost, as potential social innovators and creators. Of course, the question of whether the anarchist educational projects discussed here in fact succeeded in avoiding

such manipulation is open to debate. The crucial point of such educational endeavours, nevertheless, is to encourage pupils to grasp the central anarchist idea that society and political life are malleable and potentially subject to constant improvement, rather than a fixed backdrop to passive consumers or bystanders. It is in this context that the idea of integral education plays such an important role. Thus, although for the social anarchists, the aim of creating a different form of social organization remains at the level of an aspiration, with no fixed delineations, the moral qualities necessary to sustain such a society are clearly determinate – based on solidarity and mutual aid.

Scarcity and the circumstances of justice

The aforementioned discussion has interesting conceptual connections with the discussion of the Rawlsian notion of the circumstances of justice. For the circumstances of justice which form the starting point for Rawlsian liberalism not only assume the absence of fraternal interpersonal ties as a basis for human action (see Chapter 5) and thus for decisions taken under the veil of ignorance but also make assumptions regarding the level of scarcity of resources. Kropotkin, in contrast – the principle theorist of anarchist economics – developed a notion of a global economy based on the assumption that sufficient resources are available, on a global scale, to satisfy all basic needs, thus rejecting the basic assumption of fundamental scarcity that underpins both classical political economy and the type of neoclassical economic theories which Winch cites. Kropotkin, as Knowles (2000) discusses, was scathing in his criticism of the way in which Malthusian ideas had permeated economic theory. 'Few books', he remarked, 'have exercised so pernicious an influence upon the general development of economic thought' (ibid.: 30), describing this influence as follows:

This postulate stands, undiscussed, in the background of whatever political economy, classical or socialist, has to say about exchange-value, wages, sale of labour force, rent, exchange, and consumption. Political economy never rises above the hypothesis of a limited and insufficient supply of the necessities of life; it takes it for granted. And all theories connected with political economy retain the same erroneous principle. Nearly all socialists, too, admit the postulate.

(Ibid.: 30)

In contrast, Knowles argues, 'The driving force of Kropotkin's political economy arose from his perceived need to satisfy the needs of all: to achieve the "greatest good for all," to provide a measure of "wealth and ease" for all' (ibid.).

Similarly, in arguing that well-being could be guaranteed partly by ensuring that all members of society worked no more than 5 hours a day, Kropotkin claimed to be presenting an important challenge to mainstream economic thought (which he referred to as 'the metaphysics called political economy'),

and which had ignored such aspects of economy in the life of the worker: 'few economists, as yet, have recognized that this is the proper domain of economics' (ibid.).

In short, the earlier discussion supports the insight that, for the social anarchists, economic principles and the world of labour were, in an important sense, subservient to moral principles, and that it is the moral picture of an ideal social structure which underlies the anarchist view of education as crucially intertwined with socio-economic reality.

The moral and political content of education

Removing state control of schools

The actual policy steps required to translate this radical political reconceptualization into educational practice bring us back, naturally, to the central anarchist objection to the state. Part of the necessary process of emancipating the workers, for the social anarchists, involved removing education from the control of the state. Proudhon, Godwin and other early anarchist theorists regarded education as a key factor in creating intellectual and moral emancipation, much along the lines of the traditional liberal ideal. Yet in schools controlled by the state, this was virtually impossible, in their view. The first step, then, had to be to remove state control from education. This move, in and of itself, of course would not be enough unless the education offered was substantively different, in moral terms, from the traditional one; that is, unless, as discussed earlier, it challenged competitive, authoritarian instincts and encouraged instead values of mutual aid, cooperativeness and self-management.

Proudhon, one of the first anarchist theorists to develop the concept of integral education, envisaged the school becoming something like a workshop. Crucially, he insisted that the education system must, like other aspects of society, become decentralized, so that the responsibility for the setting up and managing of schools would rest with parents and communities and would be closely tied to local workers' associations (see Smith 1983: 26). In this, Proudhon articulated, perhaps more than any other anarchist theorist, the idea of the necessary intimacy between school and work. He held something similar to the Marxist conception of labour as central to human well-being, and insisted that education should be polytechnical – enabling the students to master a range of skills, including the theoretical knowledge they involved, and only later to specialize. But Proudhon's ideal seems to stem largely from a romantic picture of pre-industrial society. To translate this conception of the school as workshop into our own society would be highly problematic. The 'ties with the world of work' which Proudhon envisaged would be more likely to be ties with huge corporations and financial companies, involving market-capitalist values, than the associations with small artisans and workers guilds which formed part of Proudhon's rather naïve romantic vision.

This problem simply illustrates, once again, the point that although decentralization and the consequent undermining of state power are key goals of anarchist programmes, they cannot be achieved without laying the moral and political groundwork – without, that is, fostering values capable of sustaining a truly stateless, decentralized society. For a more detailed discussion of this point, with reference to current proposals for removing education from state control, see Chapter 8.

To sum up the argument so far, and to connect these points back to the discussion of perspective with which I began this chapter; approaching educational (as well as economic) thought from a vision of what the ideal society would look like, and making questions about how feasible this vision is, why it is desirable, how different it is from our present one, and what the transition would involve part of the educational-philosophical debate itself, puts this debate in a very different light. From the point of view of a commitment to anarchist principles, it may well be that the main conclusions of this discussion are that far more emphasis needs to be placed on fostering particular values, aiming to create an educational environment which reflects these values – solidarity, mutual aid, sensitivity to injustice and so on. But even if one disagrees with these specific normative conclusions, one can still appreciate the general point that reconceptualizing the relationship between philosophy of education and political thought so that the two interact in a way which assumes questions about the future form of society to be very much still open to debate, and which approaches children, teachers and parents as people engaged in its creation, can add a valuable perspective to such debates. At the very least, they may help us to rearticulate, re-examine and imbue with greater relevance, some of the very values – such as freedom, critical thinking and justice – which we so often assume lie at the core of liberal thought.

Education for social change

The aforementioned discussion of vocational education has, I hope, helped to draw out the way in which anarchist educational programmes and policy reflect the conviction that there is a substantive, positive core of moral values which is the crucial ingredient in any educational process aimed at transforming society in keeping with the vision of a stateless society. Particularly, anarchist educators were concerned in identifying and nurturing the social virtues which, so they believed, reinforced both the feasibility and the desirability of their ideal.

This analysis illustrates how the political dimension of anarchist thought is reflected at all levels of the educational process – not in terms of imposing a blueprint or training a revolutionary vanguard, but in terms of raising awareness of the radical possibilities for political change and the vision of a society radically different from our own – in which we are concerned not merely to educate workers, but to believe that the distinctions between workers and non-workers will disappear.

The utopian aspect of anarchism is already implied by these comments, and I wish to elaborate on how it is reflected in the curriculum by means of a discussion of political education. This discussion is connected to the idea of vocational education in several important respects.

Roy Edgley (1980) presents the tension between liberal aspirations to break down class-based social inequalities and social-political reality rather depressingly, suggesting that students are 'prepared for manual work, at least in part, by being failed in the predominantly mentalistic process of the schools' (ibid.: 9). Edgley draws on D.H. Lawrence's description of the 'malcontent collier' who, due to the 'myth of equal opportunity' which permeates the liberal education system, cannot be but a failure in his own eyes. If, Edgley argues, education is to take seriously the goal of preparing students for the world of work,

it must ensure that there is at least a rough and at least a relative match in skills between its student output and the skill levels of the job positions of the occupational structure. That means that education must reproduce, at the skill levels of its students, the gross inequalities, in particular the class inequalities, of that occupational structure. Given such a task, education's commitment to social justice and equality, an essential part of its liberal idealism, is then understood in terms of equality of opportunity. Higher and middle-class job positions and their associated educational qualifications are seen as scarce goods to be distributed as prizes in the time-honoured bourgeois way, by competition, and although the competitors must finish unequal, education meets its moral ideal by ensuring that they start equal and compete fairly.

(Ibid.: 8)

It is, Edgley argues, extremely unlikely that education can eliminate inequalities to such a degree, and thus equality of opportunity represents, in the liberal educational tradition, 'an unhappy compromise between education's liberal ideals and the reality of a class-structured division of labour' (ibid.: 9).

The anarchist response to this depressing scenario is to postulate an ideal reality in which the class-structured division of labour – which, anarchists argue, is a result of the modern capitalist state – simply does not exist, to argue that such an alternative social reality *could* exist and to construct an account of the types of human propensities needed to support such a reality. Education then needs to focus on fostering such propensities and on providing both liberal and vocational training so as to prepare children to be the creators of such a social reality. Yet this approach on its own may seem naïve and, clearly, has to be supplemented by some form of political education, so that students understand the critique of existing society, and have the analytic tools necessary to forge new forms of social organization. A similar realization characterizes some more critical liberal positions and, indeed, one possible way out of Edgley's depressing conclusion is the type of radical political education formulated by Patricia White.

Edgley argues, drawing largely on Patricia White's work, for a radical role for political education. As White theorizes this idea, political education should have as its goal education for action and not simply the production of 'spectatorial armchair politicians' (quoted in Edgley 1980: 13). Specifically, political education should emphasize democratic processes, whereby through experience pupils would be encouraged to democratically transform social institutions into less authoritarian and more democratic structures.

Although Edgley, largely due to his acceptance of some version of Marxist reproduction theory, believes White is overly optimistic with regard to the power of political education to democratize social institutions and practices, he acknowledges the potential of this type of educational approach. And while White's analysis is focused on the democratization of society, the anarchist conception goes further in arguing for a complete transformation of social organization, in which, alongside the role played by school climate, school structure and other informal ways in which social-anarchist values are reflected in educational practice, there is clearly an important role to be played by systematic political education. Such an education, in addition to fostering a critical attitude and an appreciation of democratic principles (both aspects which White would endorse), would take the further step of encouraging students to reflect on the possible construction of radically different social futures.

The descriptions of anarchist schools in Chapter 6 suggest that anarchist educators often indeed assigned something like political education a key role in their curricula. For example, in Ferrer's school, the vocational training which students underwent was accompanied by analyses of the class system and an attempt to critically understand the workings of the capitalist market place. But if political education as a distinct curricular subject is to have any uniquely anarchist significance, it must reflect the utopian element of anarchist thought. The liberal perspective focuses on the notion of autonomy, and from here in calling for greater democratization of the work-place, the school and other social institutions. The anarchist perspective, in contrast, involves not only the 'leap of faith' that a stateless society is possible, and can be sustained along communal, non-hierarchical principles, on the basis of already present human capabilities and propensities but also, crucially for education, the utopian hope that the very imaginative exercise of encouraging people to conceptualize the exact form of this society, and to constantly engage with and experiment with its principles and manifestations, is itself a central part of the revolutionary process. It is here – in this practice of imagining a world radically different from our own, and in daring to believe in its possibility – that the role of political education takes a central place.

Although there is no systematic treatment of such a programme for political education in the historical accounts of anarchist educational projects discussed here, nor in the theoretical works on education by leading anarchist theorists, political education, in some form or another, clearly permeates all aspects of anarchist educational endeavour. Whether in the course of visiting

factories at Ferrer's school, or of planting their own vegetable garden and managing the produce at the Strelson school, pupils were encouraged to develop a critical awareness of the problems and complexities of the existing state system and to speculate on alternative modes of socio-economic organization. It is interesting, though, to consider a more specific attempt to translate the utopian, imaginative element of anarchist thought into concrete pedagogical practice. An example of such an attempt is offered by a small pamphlet published by an independent anarchist publishing house, entitled *Design Your Own Utopia* (Bufe and Neotopia 2002). Although there is little if any reference in the writings of anarchist theorists as to how specific educational methods and programmes could be employed to implement anarchist ideas in an educational context, I believe this proposal could serve as a model for political education both within and beyond the nation state.

The programme suggested in this pamphlet offers a model for a classroom discussion in the context of political education, based around a question-posing pattern, whereby each question answered (by the group, or individually) leads, by way of a consideration of various options and implications, to further questions. Posing and answering the questions along the way demands a rigorous and honest treatment of normative commitments and values and a thought experiment whereby one is forced to confront the possible practical implications of one's values.

The pattern is to start not from the current institutions of the liberal state, but from an open-ended discussion, in the course of which values are articulated and principles considered, along with a critical examination of the implications of and justification for the principles under discussion. Of course, such an educational approach requires a certain degree of sophistication and would probably be more suited to older children who have already got some grasp of basic social and political concepts. It could, however, be creatively incorporated into a political education programme involving familiarization with political concepts alongside imaginative utopian thought.

The programme starts with the question of scope: students are asked, as a first step, to consider whether their utopia would be a global utopia, a nation state, a village, a city, a bio-region or some other type of international community (ibid.: 3) before going on to ask questions about the goals of their utopia. This question in itself already opens up the discussion to accommodate theoretical ideas far broader than those usually covered in political education or citizenship courses. The recent QCA recommendations on teaching citizenship in schools, for example, the nearest thing in the British curriculum to political education, centre around the idea of fostering the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for 'the development of pupils into active citizens' (QCA 1998: 2). Although it is hard to find fault with this idea as a general educational aim, the perspective from which it is formulated is clearly one of understanding and reinforcing the current political system rather than radically questioning it. This is not to suggest that the programme is narrowly focused on the state – for it specifically recommends 'an awareness of world affairs and

global issues' (ibid.: 22) alongside an 'understanding of democratic practices and institutions' (ibid.). However, the playful element of utopian thought experiments suggested by the anarchist perspective could, I believe, enrich this process of 'understanding' and 'developing skills and knowledge'.

In the anarchist utopian experiment, students are asked to speculate on the feasibility of political structures other than the state and their relationship to each other, not as an informative exercise but as an imaginative one. Of course, the QCA document, as well as several writers on citizenship education (see, e.g. Fogelman 1991) emphasize the need for an active, participatory role on the part of future citizens and attach considerable importance to 'student empowerment' (Lynch and Smalley 1991: 171). However, utopian thought experiments add a valuable dimension to the idea of empowering students through 'experiments in active democracy' (ibid.), in that simply considering the types of questions proposed here can 'help us to understand that the present social, political and economic systems are human inventions, and that we, collectively, have the power to change them' (Bufe and Neotopia 2002: 1).

The anarchist programme outlined in the pamphlet goes on to ask 'What would be the fundamental values of your utopia?' and, interestingly, 'Would individuals choose their own goals and values or would their goals and values be those of your utopian ideology?' – a question which paves the way for a discussion of the liberal ideal, the ideas of community and individual freedom, and other connected issues.

Further on in the course of the exercise, students are presented with questions about the specific content of their utopia, and encouraged to think through their implications. For example, 'What would the rights and duties of members of the utopia be?', 'Would the number of children per parent be limited?', 'What would your decision-making process be?', 'How would production and distribution be organized?' and 'Would the roles of men and women vary?'

I believe that such an educational approach could constitute an attractive, stimulating alternative – or at least a supplement – to conventional teaching of political and moral issues that, as many writers on utopia have noted (see Chapter 8), encourages creative and critical thinking about our social and political reality. A political education programme along these lines would clearly have to be thought out in further detail and with a great deal of caution. As mentioned, social anarchist theorists themselves failed to provide any such systematic account. However, I believe this kind of approach encapsulates an important aspect of the anarchist educational stance and is valuable in its own right even within a state education system.

Moral education – the missing link

In conclusion, the anarchist idea of integral education may, on the surface, seem very much like notions such as Winch's 'liberal vocationalism', which both challenges the common liberal/vocational distinction and broadens our

understanding of productive work and its connection to individual well-being. However, I have argued that what makes the anarchist perspective distinct from the liberal one is first its radical political vision – a vision which hinges on a faith in the possibility of a society organized in stateless, self-governing, equitable communities – and, connectedly, the understanding that while the precise form of such communities is indeterminate, the moral values which underpin them have both descriptive and normative validity and need to be reinforced by the educational process.

It has to be said, at this stage, that this argument for the centrality of some kind of moral education is largely a reconstruction of often indirect and unsystematic writings from a variety of anarchist sources. Although the salience of notions like solidarity, fraternity and mutual aid pervades all social-anarchist work on education, it is hard to find any systematic account of how these notions are to be built into a coherent programme for moral education. Indeed, references to pedagogy and to concrete educational programmes are few and far between in anarchist literature, largely due to the belief that such programmes would and should be determined by individual teachers and students according to the specific needs of the community. The following account by Bakunin (in Dolgoff 1973: 373–375) is one of the few attempts to lay down such a programme, based on what Bakunin regarded as three essential stages in education:³

Stage 1 (5–12 years): At this stage, the emphasis should be on the development of the physical faculties, in the course of which 'the culture of the mind' will be developed 'spontaneously'. There will be no formal instruction as such, only 'personal observation, practical experience, conversations between children, or with persons charged with teaching'.

Stage 2 (age 12–16): Here the child will be introduced to 'the various divisions of human knowledge', and will also undergo practical training in a craft or trade. This stage involves more methodological and systematic teaching, along with communal reading and discussion, one effect of which would be to reduce the weight attached to the individual teacher. This stage in essence is the beginning of the child's apprenticeship in a profession, and Bakunin specifies that, from the early stages, visits to factories and so on must form a part of the curriculum, leading to the child's eventual choice of a trade for specialization, alongside theoretical studies.

Bakunin's second stage is remarkably similar to Winch's idea of liberal vocationalism, with his talk of the 'branches of knowledge' clearly referring to something very like the liberal idea of initiation into the disciplines.

However, as stated, this educational programme has to be understood in the context of a political vision far more radical in its scope than the liberal one, and a faith – perhaps, as Ritter suggests, a 'leap of faith' – that this vision can be brought a little closer by the very organization and day-to-day running of the educational process in such a manner as to embody the moral values

underpinning this vision. Precisely how these values are to be built into the educational process, beyond the informal means of pupil-teacher relationships, decentralized school management, non-coercive classroom practices and constant experimentation (all of which are evident in the anarchist schools discussed in Chapter 6) is, as mentioned, unclear from the literature. Given the anarchist understanding of human nature and the consequent acknowledgement that some form of moral education will be necessary, even in the post-revolutionary society, to ensure the flourishing of the social virtues, I believe that the lack of clarity on this subject is, perhaps, the central weakness of the anarchist position on education. Constructing a systematic account of moral education is, thus, a key task for the anarchist educator. The anarchist idea of the school as a microcosm of the ideal society, and the emphasis on direct encounters and on 'learning by doing', alongside the clear acknowledgement of the educational role of social institutions and practices, suggest that such an account could be broadly Aristotelian in its conception. Unfortunately, however, the task of constructing such an account is beyond the scope of this book.