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REPURPOSING LITERACY: THE USES OF RICHARD HOGGART
FOR CREATIVE EDUCATION

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CHAPTER FOR

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Abstract

After 50 years, what are the implications of *Uses of Literacy* for educational modernisation, in the light of subsequent changes from ‘read only’ literacy to ‘read-write’ uses of multimedia? This chapter argues that a broad extension of popular literacy via consumer-created digital content offers not only emancipationist potential in line with Hoggart’s own project, but also economic benefits via the dynamics of creative innovation. Multimedia ‘popular entertainments’ pose a challenge to formal education, but not in the way that Hoggart feared. Instead of producing ‘tamed helots,’ commercial culture may be outpacing formal schooling in promoting creative digital literacy via entrepreneurial and distributed learning. It may indeed be that those in need of a creative make-over are not teenagers but teachers.

PART ONE – THE USES OF MULTIMEDIA LITERACY

Introduction: multimedia literacy – print, media, critical, digital¹

If we do live in a commercial but humane democracy, as Richard Hoggart fervently hoped that we would, then the popular media are a chief means for interconnecting both the human and the democratic parts of the community, and for linking experts and specialists in government, business and the professions to the general population of ‘ordinary people.’ As is

well-known, Hoggart thought that the ‘commercial’ part was getting out of step with the ‘humane’ part (to say nothing of the ‘democratic’). Commercially-catered entertainments seemed to be propagating a new form of literacy – purposeless, consumptive, selfish – that was out of step with both the goals of formal schooling and the home and class culture of the industrialised working population. Hoggart was among the first to think about how commercial entertainment intersects with and extends formal literacy, and how that might affect culture and citizenship. In *The Uses of Literacy*, published in 1957, he wrote mostly about popular printed materials – he didn’t consider the ‘uses of television’ until 1960, when he published an interesting article in *Encounter* under that title (Hoggart 1960). Since then, it may be argued that popular media have evolved not once but twice, first through television (1950s to 1970s) and then via interactive and online media (since the Clinton Presidency). The latter have also been at the forefront of a rapid acceleration in information technology, consumerism and globalisation. Thus, half a century after *Uses of Literacy*, it seems timely for a new attempt to be made to understand these forces in relation to the *uses* to which both lay populations and expert elites put their ‘media literacy.’

One important change since Hoggart’s day is the extent to which media literacy itself has evolved from ‘read-only’ (broadcast, one-to-many) to ‘read and write’ (interactive, peer-to-peer). Early media theorists compared broadcasting to the pulpit or soap-box, where a single message was shouted from the perspective of some institutional vested interest. The role of the populace was to stand around passively and soak it up. However, in the last few years and at gathering pace, non-professionals have taken up these media as an autonomous means of

communication for themselves. 'Writing' is catching up with 'reading.' Here media literacy is merely following the historical pattern set by print literacy. In the early modern period the use of reading spread well before that of writing, and even if people could write, they tended not to have much use for that skill in everyday intercourse and commerce. Only when a significant proportion of people at large began to write as well as read (around two thirds of adults) did Western society produce journalism, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the novel, and democracy. It was at that point that the social activists and emancipationists of the day realised what a friend they had in literacy, and so began the long haul to invest in it sufficiently, via public schooling and private propagation, for everyone to be a participant, and for the skill to be put to useful ends. Ever since, 'universal' print literacy has been a measure of advanced status for any country wanting to compete in the modern world.

In contrast, when the electronic (broadcast) media got going during the first half of the twentieth century, the intelligentsia was under the influence of high modernism on the cultural side and the spectre of demagogic totalitarianism on the political side. It was in this mental environment that Richard Hoggart's authorial speaking voice and critical 'method' were forged. It was a climate in which few policy activists thought that a new 'literacy' was at hand, much less one that needed to be taught. Instead, they thought that ordinary people needed to be armed against the influence of such media, which were seen as a threat to print literacy and the rational and imaginative values it was said to promote. Just as no special training beyond native curiosity and scepticism was needed for people to appreciate stage

shows or listen to sermons, so the new world of entertainment and persuasion (both political and commercial) seemed to need no special literacy. If it was involved at all, it needed to be a 'critical literacy,' dedicated to counteracting rather than extending the reach and sway of what were thought to be powerful and unscrupulous forces acting upon the people. This is what was taught in schools: not how to make the most of the electronic media, but how to make the least of them. It did not occur to many commentators that the general run of humanity might use these new media as they used a pencil or their own voice to express their own identity, relationships and ideas. Those who did think about the emancipationist potential of radio and cinema, like Berthold Brecht (1979/80), Humphrey Jennings (1985) or Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1997), tended to think about media literacy in class terms rather than personal ones: the 'masses' could represent themselves via new media, but mainly *as* masses.

With the popularisation of online media in affluent economies, we need to extend the notion of 'media literacy' beyond the defensive notion of 'critical reading' and 'media literacy' as taught in schools, towards what ought to be called 'digital literacy' – a form of hands-on productive expression, taught by and within the milieu in which it is deployed, using multiplatform devices to 'write' as well as 'read' electronic media. As this capability edges towards the two-thirds level at which print literacy achieved its most dynamic cultural and political effects, there has been little call for the kind of investment in its propagation – not to mention its uses – that accompanied print literacy. Digital literacy is primarily taught on a 'peer to peer,' informal basis. The investment is almost all private, seeking to develop markets

rather than citizens. It is a 'demand-side' rather than a 'supply-side' model of literacy-propagation, and for that very reason it has attracted less attention than it warrants from educational and cultural thinkers, who tend to cluster around publisher/provider models and not to know enough about how digital literacy is learnt (by doing) in informal contexts, or how it is used among untutored populations.

Richard Hoggart thought that the popular uses of print literacy were largely purposeless, even wasteful – they amounted to 'abuses' – and he was even less enamoured of such self-taught 'media literacy' as he encountered; for example his famously dim view of youthful taste in popular (American) music. Now, digital literacy too is developing apace in a commercial environment, largely for non-instrumental purposes – self-expression, relationship-maintenance, communication, entertainment. Should it be taken up in formal public education more systematically than it has been? What might that contribute to a humane but commercial democracy? Or should we take a dim view of the whole shebang?

Modernising Education

Since at least Shakespeare, modern commercial entertainment has linked the top of society with the bottom, the gaps between different demographics – class, gender, region ethnicity etc. – being what it is that 'the media' mediate among audiences. Since broadcasting, the same media that carry entertainment serve to convey government, business and political information. Partly because of this linking of different sections of society and different types of knowledge and discourse, the media of entertainment are often held to offer (or inhibit)

emancipationist potential in commercial democracies. Walt Whitman said: 'to have great poets, there must be great audiences too' (1883: 324). How to connect the two; how to promote intellectual and creative as well as political emancipation, so as to achieve 'greatness' in demand as well as supply? Here is where Richard Hoggart came in – he 'theorised' the gap between modern expert literary and political elites (his professional peers including Whitman's 'great poets'), and the working class (his culture of origin and Whitman's 'great audience'). One of the ways that *Uses of Literacy* bridged that gap was that its own readership ranged from the 'top' of society to the 'bottom' (on the role of Penguin/Pelican books in this process, see Hartley 2003: 20-7).

What constitutes a 'great' audience and how can it be nurtured? How does popular literacy link as well as separate the diverse and even conflicted demographics from the top of society to the bottom? What is needed to provide a space in which the life of the imagination can be shared among the have-nots as well as the haves in a given community? The Hoggart I find 'useful' here is the one who combines an analysis of imaginative, non-instrumental literacy with a practical contribution to the shaping of education, both formal and informal.

Print Literacy

Hoggart's work is really about the uses of *print* literacy. After its invention and technical propagation throughout Europe and across the world – a process that took a mere century in a universe without paved roads – print literacy remained for a long time largely tied to instrumental purposes: religion (ideology); commerce; government (control). That gap

between elite and lay populations was marked by a difference between those who could and did read and write (for all purposes including personal expression) on the one hand and the larger population who were taught a 'read-only' version of print literacy. They could read but did not write (especially not for publication). At a societal level print-literacy was geared to the needs of closed expert systems; clerical, scientific, governmental, commercial. It was rarely used by 'ordinary' folk for leisure consumption (let alone production), personal expression, the maintenance of communities of interest, or for the life of the imagination ('literature'). One of the purposes of instrumental print-literacy was modernisation itself; to such an extent that influential commentators saw political democracy as a 'consequence' of literacy (Goody & Watt 1964).

At the same time, however, it was the popular media – not formal education – which began to fill the gap between elites and popular readerships with non-instrumental read-only literacy. The plain-folks got sensationalism (both radical and commercial) along with their science and sermons. In other words, and more accurately, a demand-led element was established in the economy of literacy, in addition to the existing supply-side provision. Hoggart was the first to notice that these demand-led uses of literacy were both quite different from expert or instrumental uses and also worthy of serious inquiry. Hoggart was interested in mass entertainment from the point of view of the popular readership. Famously he found it wanting, at odds with self-made working-class culture. That is why his work is associated with the valorisation of 'critical literacy,' which means astute readership. Critical

literacy was thought to be emancipationist, to allow for independent thought and active participation: 'critical' popular readers may turn into activists; or novelists.

In Hoggart's time – the era of one-way, broadcast communication and supply-side providers – there was little room for a popular uptake of publishing. The broadcast media failed completely to promote published writing among wide sections of their newly acquired mass readership. So the lag between reading and writing remained. People could enjoy stories, but not tell their own; right up to now. Popular self-publication can however now be contemplated, because the era of one-way 'read-only' media of mass and broadcast communication is transforming into the interactive era of 'read-write' multimedia. The shift from print, via broadcasting to multimedia raises the 'Hoggart question' for the era of the Internet: what are the cultural, non-instrumental uses of multimedia literacy?' That question underlies a fair bit of my work, which includes an attempt to think about the 'uses' of journalism and television in similar terms. Both *Popular Reality* and *Uses of Television* (Hartley 1996; 1999) are focused on the broadcast era; I argued that historically the media and journalism have performed an informal educational function, even while the formal sector was trying to use schooling to inoculate teenagers against popular culture. More recently I've become interested in the uses of interactive digital media by 'lay' populations, a development occurring largely outside of the formal education sector. However, the question of education remains pertinent. What investment – public, private and personal – is being made in multimedia literacy for digital communication, compared with the provision of schooling to produce universal print-literacy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? What attention

needs to be paid to non-instrumental and imaginative uses of multimedia literacy? What role should formal education play in bridging the remaining gap between producers and consumers? What are universities *for* in this era, and how may they need to adapt to survive?

Universities and the Expert Paradigm

Universities have proven themselves adaptable over the long term – they’re among the oldest surviving human organisations, along with the Catholic Church and the Isle of Man Parliament. That survival is based on fulfilling some fundamental human needs, like the puberty rite (which we now call teaching) and the need to establish pecking orders without violence (which we now call research). Now, we’re facing the knowledge economy; and universities must adapt again. How will barely post-medieval institutions cope with the accelerating tempo of technologically-driven change in the twenty-first century?

Closed expert process: In the past, universities were built around stored knowledge: the library; the lab. Following what Richard E. Lee (2007) calls the ‘long sixteenth century,’ *modernisation* meant abandoning the medieval library and switching from the preservation to the expansion of knowledge. The modern model of innovation, which can be glossed as the implementation of creative ideas, was borrowed from industrial manufacturing, ascendant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where knowledge was produced by a closed, linear process. Bright people with scientific expertise would be isolated (in labs) where they could be as creative as they liked, since individual flashes of brilliance were contained inside a corporate environment and goal-driven process. The fruits of their ideas (now called IP) were

codified, scaled and transmitted down a pipeline, preferably also controlled by the producer organization, to waiting consumers. This model of innovation as a closed production process based on expertise is shared by research labs, elite universities, the creative departments of companies, city planners etc.

Exclusion of consumers: In the closed expert system, the division of labour between producer and consumer has been extreme throughout the modern era. Production is the sphere of government, business, organisation, control. Lay people have been more or less excluded from formal knowledge *production* – it has been their job to learn how to be wise *consumers* (and disciplined workers). Consumers are reduced to passive, feminised *behaviour*, not action, manipulated by marketing which is subject to the controlling analysis of psychological expertise, so that the innovations prepared for them will be taken up and accepted, hopefully with euphoria and ‘irrational enthusiasm’ (in a phrase made famous by former Federal Reserve banker Alan Greenspan, who deplored the same emotion among stock traders, because while emotionalism is required among consumers it is no basis for rational economic decisions). Even if things never work out so neatly in practice, influencing behaviour nevertheless remains the ‘business plan’ of the marketing and PR sector. And so, along the consumer/producer divide, the interests of business, government, and expert elites on the one hand and consumers on the other were never fully aligned in the industrial era. In the middle, literally mediating between otherwise opposed elites and masses (Eco, 1986: pp. 81-5; 145-50), grew up the entertainment industry – the very phenomenon investigated in *The Uses of Literacy* (Hoggart 1958).

Open innovation networks: The closed expert-process system is breaking down; it is unsuited to the knowledge economy (Leadbeater 2002: 182). Expertise is migrating out of organisations along with technologies, and organisations are open to external sources of innovation including from their own users/consumers, through globalisation and increasing participation in tertiary education. Innovation is myriad-sourced. Knowledge is networked. Consumption is increasingly co-production; it is active not passive, making not taking, using not behaving. And while learning is a fundamental requirement of innovation it cannot be confined to the elite organisation or research centre. Learning becomes a porous, distributed system, and innovation becomes an open network.

The propagation of innovation throughout society has begun. Consumers are no longer passive recipients, they're participants. In the knowledge economy, consumers are sources of ideas, redefining products. Inventions are not complete until explored, extended or even reinvented by users. And as is well-known, the consumer and services sector of the economy is now much larger than primary industry or manufacturing, so the sheer scale of consumer activity drives innovation too.

In open models, innovation is democratic not technocratic; it needs the widest possible base of participation, not isolated expert elites, patented applications and controlled value chains. Knowledge requires 'flow' as well as 'base.' Unlike other properties, it increases when it is shared. Value is a web not a chain. Innovation is a true science/arts hybrid – it has a science-

engineering component but a *culture* of use in social networks. Innovation requires the promotion of diversity and interaction, as well as of expert research. Symbolic values and economic values have converged and integrated in convergence among telecommunications, computers and media.

The Uses of Innovation

Here is where we may discern an answer to the question of what universities may be 'for' in the digital era of open innovation and distributed learning. It is not simply a matter of universities making use of digital technologies. More fundamentally, they can be part of the push towards developing (or unleashing) creative innovation as an agent of change and growth in the knowledge-based economy; a prospect that raises these matters to the level of national policy in any country concerned with national competitiveness in a global environment. The research agenda of the humanities and creative arts needs to be brought into intimate contact with R&D in the business, economics and policy fields, focusing on arts/technology convergence, theory-practice integration, and creativity for enterprise-formation. In that spirit, I've been working on the development of the new field of Creative Industries (Hartley 2005): first in a process of educational renewal and modernisation by re-purposing the Arts, resulting in a Creative Industries Faculty and Precinct at QUT; more recently by putting some research grant into the concept itself, resulting in ARC funding for a Federation Fellowship and *Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation* (the CCI: www.cci.edu.au).

The key word in this process is *innovation*. In current business, economic and policy discourse, innovation and especially creative innovation is the general-purpose or enabling process that will maintain international competitiveness for advanced countries (and firms), and accelerate developing countries' progress towards prosperity. The rhetoric that is used in these contexts to describe the innovative entrepreneur is exactly that which has been used throughout modernity to describe the creative artist. Artists have long been habituated to working with risk, intuition, and constant change. The cultural sector has been 'constantly innovative, anticipating and responding to the market through an intuitive immersion into the field, willing to break the rules, going beyond the 9-5, thriving on risk and failure, mixing work and life, meaning and money – this was a cutting edge sector which the others could look to as a model' (O'Connor & Gu 2006: 273-4). In other words, *artists* became the template for *entrepreneurs*, and creative enterprise the model for the new economy. Culture shifts from its position as a sphere of opposition to the modernising fury of commercial enterprise, to become a vital component in a country's competitiveness. Suddenly, it seems, people at the humanities end of the academic spectrum may prove to be directly useful in the wealth-creating forums of business and government. And so, the wider question now is: if enterprise needs the creativity of the artist, and if innovation needs the 'literacy' of both the intellectual and an astute reading public (the Whitman proposition), how widely among the general or ordinary population can such capabilities be distributed? As for educational institutions, what role might they play in promoting the use of digital technologies for intellectual and creative emancipation among whole populations? How may they assist in scaling up that usage to benefit the innovation system? Or should that be done by the private sector, with just-in-time

(sink or swim) 'training' for creative entrepreneurs and commercial pay-as-you-learn for the creative citizen? If the situation is left to develop haphazardly and commercially as it has already begun to unfold, the question of what universities are for will become more insistent and uncomfortable as distributed learning takes hold outside of formal education institutions.

At the conclusion of *Uses of Literacy* Richard Hoggart remarks that 'it seems unlikely' that 'a majority of any class will have strongly intellectual pursuits.' Recognising this, his recipe for action is not to try to turn people into intellectuals – getting workers to read *The Times* rather than the tabloids. As he wisely points out: 'there are other ways of being in the truth' (Hoggart 1958: 281). His objection to popular entertainments is not that they fail to recruit workers to the intelligentsia, but that they 'make it harder for people without an intellectual bent to become wise in their own way.' If that is the goal, is it still true that the popular media make it harder, in the era of YouTube, MySpace, Flickr and the Wikipedia?

If innovation and creativity are the hope of commercial democracies, then it may be necessary to ask even more ambitious questions than those posed by the desire to educate a critically literate population. Indeed, these are the contemporary 'uses of Richard Hoggart': to investigate what *ought to be hoped for* in the currently unfolding phase of audio-visual literacy. Do contemporary interactive media constitute just such another way of 'being in the truth,' and would massive public, private and personal investment in developing creative imaginative talents within a reformed educational infrastructure make a contribution not only to the inner life of individuals but also to the wealth of nations? This is the basic

proposition of the Creative Industries initiative (both as an educational initiative and as an intellectual or conceptual problem) and of my current research program. The questions I'm strewing behind me here are those that preoccupy us at the CCI.

Re-purposing Education for Innovation

This detour around the expert system to arrive at innovation may be just the right route for re-purposing universities. The work I'm 'reporting' on here has only just begun. It has proven necessary at the outset to engage in some conceptual ground-clearing to clarify and simplify the economic argument about the growth of knowledge, as well as the educational imperative to train more creative entrepreneurs and artists (which amounts to the same thing) while broadening access to digital technologies for the citizenry at large. Underlying these economic and educational arguments is a commitment to the inner life of individual imagination – it is the source of creativity and of knowledge. In the not-very-elegant guise of 'creative human capital' it is also the royal road to economic improvement.

This means that economic policy based on existing structures (the market) or institutions (like the firm) is not enough; it simply re-invents the past. Innovation policy requires that we enable agents to think for themselves about what they want to do. Economic policy needs to focus on 'another way of being in the truth' – namely that individuals drive innovation through the spread and increase of knowledge. The individual remains the 'unit' of creativity, no matter what scale is achieved in distribution or sales, and notwithstanding that individual creativity rarely gets very far on its own (it needs to work in teams).

If we buy the argument that contemporary economies are complex adaptive innovation networks driven by myriad individual agents – rather than closed expert systems that can be controlled by elite institutions or leaderships – then the question arises of how to encourage individual imagination within a complex network. One answer is to focus on the figure who will take the system into the future as both agent and object of structural change; ‘the teenager.’ This is the very group that Richard Hoggart encountered in milk-bars, to his own dismay. His teens were objects: ‘the directionless and tamed helots of a machine-minding class’ (1958: 205). He missed the opportunity to value these denizens of the milk bars as agents: for the R&D they were all too visibly pursuing as he watched, via juke box, clothes, dance movements, looks, Americanisms, in order to burst forth in due course as entrepreneurs of creative innovation and consumer affluence, not to mention the counterculture, in 1960s pop culture. Given Hoggart’s preference for existing structure (self-made working-class culture) over dynamic change (American pop culture), then what’s needed is not a simple application of ‘Hoggart’ to current phenomena, but an argument for contemporary Hoggartians not to make the same mistake again, and to recognise that there are indeed ‘other ways of being in the truth.’ What looks like aimless daydreaming and mischief to the institutionalized expert should also be seen (or at least investigated) as an ‘incubator’ in which future possibilities are growing.

The gap between home, work and school where young people in particular can think about identity, mix with peers, express their own thoughts and escape some of the structures of

social control, also underlies popular entertainment, live and mediated, driving the imaginative content of the most important of the creative industries. Music, media and games are the 'industrial,' scaled-up form taken by adolescent daydreaming (wish-fulfilment) and peer-group mischief (play or conflict). The popular media have grown up in the gap between elite systems (of government and business) and general populations, giving highly capitalised expression to people's desires and fears, wishes and conflicts, plots and games. Normally government is devoted only to controlling or at least minimising such tendencies. But teenagers seem opposed to parental or institutional control only because the latter are 'maps of the past' while the teenager is intuitively oriented to the future. Policy needs to think of the daydreaming mischievous teenager as an opportunity not a threat, even though actual manifestations of teenage-led creative innovation may not always present such a pretty sight.

As Hoggart put it:

The hedonistic but passive barbarian who rides a fifty-horse-power bus for threepence to see a five-million-dollar film for one-and-eightpence, is not simply a social oddity; he is a portent. (Hoggart, 1958: 205).

Portents are harbingers of change – teenagers are the agents of and demand drivers for innovation. Hoggart disliked the extent to which young people's dreams were being dreamed for them by the entertainment industry (although he didn't mind if it were done by Auden or Lawrence). That is still an issue, as it has been since at least Shakespeare, despite the massive increase in youthful self-expression made possible via consumer-generated content. However, even when facilitated by entertainment producers or 'killer apps' designed by adults, the

teenager is still the ‘unit’ of demand for and expression of change, just as the individual is the ‘unit’ for creative innovation. It was exactly this that worried Hoggart about teenagers; his purpose being to describe what he wanted to call ‘an ugly change’ (Owen 2005: 171) that threatened the ‘order of existence’ (Hoggart 1958: 69) that he valued. For a later reappraisal of his ‘method,’ perhaps it is sufficient to notice that he exercises detailed observational acuity in identifying cultural change and showing how the tension between order and change is keenly felt and culturally productive in its own right. It may indeed be necessary *not* to follow Hoggart’s own particular evaluations, which seem to value working-class family disputes and even household suicides (67-9) higher than milk-bar décor and ‘juke-box boys’ (203-4). Such preferences get in the way of recognising that the *cultural* tension between order and change, personified in the ‘juke-box boys’ themselves, is not a choice (when pushed, Hoggart chose order) but is itself a driver and generator of creative innovation. He recognises this in the implicit contrast between ‘tamed helots’ and creative imagination. How can a country avoid the former and encourage the latter?

The Uses of Multimedia

My Federation Fellowship program, ‘The Uses of Multimedia,’ combines an in-depth analysis of the existing and potential uses of multimedia ‘literacy’ among ordinary populations – revisiting *Uses of Literacy* after 50 years – with some practical implementation work to extend participation in digital ‘read-write’ media. As far as the practical possibilities go, they take two forms. First, it is as important to think about ‘writing’ (publishing) in the context of interactive multimedia as it is to think about reading. So the encouragement of individual

creative talent needs to be about 'doing' as well as 'consuming'; about finding fit-for-purpose mechanisms to enable myriad individual expressions of personal and imaginative creativity, using workshops to stimulate self-made media for online social networks. A vehicle we're using at the CCI to experiment with this is 'digital storytelling' (Lambert 2006). Second, scaling up individual talent and growing knowledge in an open, adaptive innovation network requires something very different from education as we know it. What's needed in fact might not be an institutional, library-based university at all, but a broadband/ broadcast hybrid network that links cultural institutions, online archives, commercial sites and channels with the 'creative citizen' who is source as well as destination, producer as well as consumer, writer as well as reader, teacher as well as learner. The form of such a network is of course already being explored intensively 'out there' in both interactive and broadcast media (although not as much in the commercial TV sector as one might hope); e.g. Current TV (USA), the BBC (UK) and SBS-TV's Freeload initiative (Australia). Such initiatives are not directly educational, preferring a self-educating ethic. How that works, and what may need to be added to make explicit the tacit knowledge required for the propagation of creative wisdom across a wide population in order to 'have great audiences,' is a major question for both cultural analysis and public policy.

Universities will ignore the lesson of consumer-led, distributive, iterative and multi-sourced learning at their peril, as will broadcasters and publishers. These 'other ways of being in the truth' are perhaps the best hope yet that the 'truly concrete and personal' expression that underlies Hoggart's vision for 'the quality of life, the kind of response, the rootedness in

wisdom and maturity' within 'popular art' can be achieved by a wide section of an international creative citizenry, with the surprising innovation that such expression is itself the R&D component of a creative economy, contributing to the growth of knowledge and progress of society.

PART TWO – EDUCATING TEACHERS

Can this effort to modernise and repurpose higher education extend to schooling too? This is quite a tricky issue, since one part of schooling is dedicated to 'taming' the 'helots'; it is therefore the very environment from which many teenagers wish to escape, using their own untutored multimedia literacy to enjoy their own imaginative universe, where their private daydreams can be elaborated with the aid of stories of wish-fulfilment, their fears expressed in songs of angst and romance, and their own stratagems for mischief and peer-bonding advanced by means of various mobile devices from Nikes to phones. This disconnect – perhaps amounting to a structural contradiction – between formal schooling and informal acculturation has given rise, in turn, to public anxiety about what teens are up to. Just to give a typical case in point, the *Australian Financial Review* (Australia's version of the *FT*) ran a long feature called 'The Secret Life of Teens.' It suggested that what happens on the other side of the bedroom door in the family home today, where 14-year-olds hold electronic court via mobile, modem and media, is literally a closed world to parents and other grown-ups:

Australian teenagers today are the most electronically savvy, the most educated and the most globally aware generation ever. They have money, they are pragmatic about studying hard and getting a job and they are optimistic. They are the 'click and go' generation, they live in democratised families, they negotiate and they feel entitled to privacy. ('The Secret Life of Teens.' *Australian Financial Review*, Feb. 14 2004: 20)

Teens are perennially fascinating objects of speculation in the serious as well as the popular media, because their 'secret life' represents in concrete form the potential shape of the future for everyone. Their lives may not be such a secret after all, but the realities of the world they are facing – *their* futures – may indeed remain hidden from the sight and imagination of some of those whose job it is to worry about them, including parents, journalists, educators, policymakers and elected representatives. If today's teens do live in a world that is barely recognizable to some of those professionals, it is important to share the secret. However, it may not be easy to share the secret *in school*. Teenagers are used to teachers seeking to control, minimise and render 'useful' their digital literacy. They don't necessarily think that's what school is for. So it is not a simple matter of deciding to teach digital literacy in schools as we currently know them. To make a worthwhile contribution to the further development of digital literacy, schools will need to change themselves just as much as they seek to change teenagers. The main thing that needs to change in schools is ... teachers.

Creative Workforce

In seeking to identify the driver of social and economic advancement during the present century, John Howkins argues that IT alone is no longer enough. He suggests that the 'information society' is already beginning to give way to something much more challenging:

If I was a bit of data I would be proud of living in an information society. But as a thinking, emotional, creative being - on a good day, anyway - I want something better. We need information. But we also need to be active, clever, and persistent in challenging this information. We need to be original, sceptical, argumentative, often bloody-minded and occasionally downright negative – in one word, creative. (Howkins 2002)

The sociologist of occupations Richard Florida has identified what he sees as a new economic class – the 'creative class' – that he argues will dominate economic and cultural life in the century to come, just as the working class predominated in the earlier decades of the twentieth century and the service class has since then. While the creative class is smaller than the service class, it is nevertheless the dynamo of growth and change for services and thence the economy as a whole, and incidentally for the temper of the times too – it's a cultural and social force as well as an economic one. 'Classes' have migrated, as it were, from blue-collar and white-collar environments to the 'no-collar' workplace:

Artists, musicians, professors and scientists have always set their own hours, dressed in relaxed and casual clothes and worked in stimulating environments. They could never be forced to work, yet they were never truly

not at work. With the rise of the Creative Class, this way of working has moved from the margins to the economic mainstream. (Florida 2002: 12-13)

Florida describes how the no-collar workplace 'replaces traditional hierarchical systems of control with new forms of self-management, peer-recognition and pressure and intrinsic forms of motivation', which he calls '*soft control*'. Thus:

In this setting, we strive to work more independently and find it much harder to cope with incompetent managers and bullying bosses. We trade job security for autonomy. In addition to being fairly compensated for the work we do and the skills we bring, we want the ability to learn and grow, shape the content of our work, control our own schedules and express our identities through work. (Florida 2002: 13)

Creative Educators?

The industrial organization of workforces with strong unionization leads to standardization of work experience. When the employer is a command bureaucracy, as are many education authorities, then control, predictability and due process will always prevail over innovation, risk and customization. Even their own organisations recognise that teachers are trained for something other than 'fostering creativity':

To date, the fostering of creativity and of innovation in school students has not itself been a major focus of [teachers'] professional learning activity. ... These are very substantial challenges. (MCEETYA 2003: 163-4)

Sir Ken Robinson, senior education advisor to the Getty Trust, makes the connection between economic and educational imperatives:

The economic circumstances in which we all live, and in which our children will have to make their way, are utterly different from those of 20 or even 10 years ago. For these we need different styles of education and different priorities. We cannot meet the challenges of the 21st century with the educational ideologies of the 19th. Our own times are being swept along on an avalanche of innovations in science, technology, and social thought. To keep pace with these changes, or to get ahead of them, we will need our wits about us – literally. We must learn to be creative. (Robinson 2001: 200-3)

David Hargreaves says ‘the time is ripe for exploring new ways in which to increase teachers’ professional knowledge and skill’. He argues the need for ‘deep change’ that will *transform* rather than simply *improve* schools. That need is driven by:

The growing recognition that in a knowledge-based economy more people need to be more creative and this in itself will require new approaches to teaching. Without reducing the importance of the basics, we must now aspire to nurture through education the qualities of creativity, innovativeness and enterprise.’ (Hargreaves 2003: 3-4)

For themselves as professionals and for their students, teachers need to:

- nurture the individual talent that will win employment;
- develop in students the skills to manage a portfolio career – self-employed, freelance, casual or part-time, not with a single employer or even industry;
- learn project management and entrepreneurship as core skills;
- encourage project-based work in teams with multiple partners who change over time;
- connect to an international environment where continuing education is normal;
- increasingly prioritize life-design as well as employment skills;
- learn – for themselves as well as for their students – how to navigate from entry-level workforce jobs to wealth-creating destinations – which may include giving up employment and working independently.

All these objectives require major changes in disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and the experience of education for both educators and students. Each of them is a 'life' skill rather than 'literacy,' digital or otherwise. But all of them are required if digital literacy is to flourish across a wide population.

Learning as a Distributed System

The starting point for renewing the public sector must be a renewal of its relationship with the society it serves. Ministers should be held accountable for solving problems which electors want solved, not running government departments. (Leadbeater 1999: 207, 215)

Charles Leadbeater's strong warning about the perils of business-as-usual management, rather than tackling emergent problems, applies directly to the challenges facing those who promote

learning within a knowledge society. Public education systems (including the independent schools sector) are not necessarily best placed to respond to the challenge of the new knowledge economy and the need for innovative, creative, adaptive and curious consumer-citizens to make it prosper.

Twentieth-century educational modernization, based first on massively expanding formal institutions and more recently on increasing their productivity with centrally regulated performance targets, has certainly strengthened the education *system* of schools, universities and government departments. But inadvertently it has had a negative effect both on the kind of knowledge imparted and on the wider social desire to learn, because it has snuck the industrial-era ‘closed expert system’ into the education ‘industry’ at exactly the moment when ‘industry’ itself is evolving towards a market-based open innovation network:

This approach to modernization also reinforces a deeply conservative approach to education, as a body of knowledge imparted by organizations with strong hierarchies and demarcated professional disciplines. ... Two traditions are reflected in this culture: the monasteries, which were closed repositories for knowledge in the form of precious manuscripts, and Taylor’s factory, which encouraged standardized, easily replicated knowledge. The result is a system that is a curious hybrid of factory, sanctuary, library and prison. (Leadbeater 1999: 110)

Instead of *providing* disciplinary knowledge in a controlled environment, Leadbeater argues that education should tip over to the demand side; it needs to inspire the *desire to learn*:

The point of education should not be to inculcate a body of knowledge, but to develop capabilities: the basic ones of literacy and numeracy as well as the capability to act responsibly towards others, to take initiative and to work creatively and collaboratively. The most important capability, and one which traditional education is worst at creating, is the ability and yearning to carry on learning. Too much schooling kills off the desire to learn. (111)

Merely expanding the formal education system is not the direction to take for creating a society characterized by 'yearning for learning': 'We need hybrid public and private institutions and funding structures. Schools and universities should become more like hubs of learning, within the community, capable of extending into the community' (Leadbeater 1999: 111-2). Individuals and families can and will take more responsibility for their own knowledge needs. Learning services will be provided by private as well as public institutions, for purposes determined by the needs of the learners themselves rather than for formal accreditation and certification. In short, *learning will become a distributed system*, dedicated to creativity, innovation, customized needs and networked across many sites from the family kitchen to the business breakfast as well as the classroom and workplace. Educational practices in the various systems need to open up, to become more permeable and responsive to changing economic and social factors. The model for distributed learning for an open innovation network has already been promulgated in the shape of online and mobile media.

The shift from teaching as *transmission* of knowledge to learning as *production* of knowledge means that an important responsibility for the system will be helping people learn to learn, and to become motivated to learn. In this scenario, teachers become *learning entrepreneurs*, managers or producers, and teaching gives way to the design of learning programs. This is not just a shift in the lexicon, but a transformation of practice. If the purpose of education systems is to prepare young people in appropriate ways for the challenges and responsibilities they will face throughout their lives, and if society is changing, 'so should the way in which we introduce young people to it'. (Bentley 1998: 38)

Learning entrepreneurs: 'other ways of being in the truth'

Richard Hoggart was evidently not persuaded that the university as he knew it was adapted to the task of analysing, let alone promoting, desirable uses of literacy by working consumers. So when he went to Birmingham it was to set up something quite novel among the universities of the day, the *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*. He continued to work through non-canonical educational institutions like the WEA, UNESCO and Goldsmiths, and to intervene in educational aspects of commercial culture; e.g. the *Chatterley* trial and the Pilkington Report. His example may still be instructive, and not only at the level of tertiary education. Hoggart was a learning entrepreneur, seeking to develop the uses of literacy among the industrial workforce and popular consumers; to make them 'critical' – by which he meant 'creative' and 'innovative' as well as independent-minded, although the lexicon of the times differed. His important innovation – made against the grain of his own left-Leavisite

and somewhat anti-American cultural prejudices – was to understand that popular literacy is not only a matter of formal education; it is also a matter of culture, and that such a culture was decisively shaped by commercial media that young people enjoyed in their ‘free’ time. A distributed, entertainment-hungry ‘reading public’ was already an important component of ‘commercial democracies’ in the 1950s. With the subsequent acceleration of celebrity culture, the ‘economy of attention’ (Lanham 2006) and peer-to-peer or DIY creative content-creation using digital technologies, the horizons of that public have been radically expanded: now, at least in principle, every reader-consumer can also be a publisher, a journalist and a ‘creative.’ Hoggart wanted ordinary people and non-intellectual populations to be able to make the best of their literacy; to ‘become wise in their own way.’ I see Hoggart as a ‘theorist’ of literacy and moderniser of the ‘idea of the university’ (Newman 1907), as well as a founder of cultural studies (which was but the vehicle for this deeper purpose: Hoggart, 1992: 26). He was an emancipationist of the imagination and of the intellect; and that explains the continuing ‘uses of Richard Hoggart.’ The question that faces his successors is whether it is schools and teachers rather than popular media that pose the greater threat to the realisation of those ‘other ways of being in the truth’ that he valued.

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