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Creating Patriotic Citizens for an Imperial Country? Value Inculcation in the Elementary Schools of Birmingham and Worcestershire, 1880–1902

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how, at a time of imperial growth, values of patriotic citizenship were taught to and learned by pupils in the elementary schools of Birmingham and Worcestershire. It argues that, although teaching in schools within the two areas was often very different, both nonetheless provided educational environments and curricula that encouraged the learning of moral, patriotic and imperial values through formal teaching and everyday school activities. This process was facilitated by frequent elision and conflation of morality with patriotic and imperial values. The reception of values is framed within research into children's agency. A variety of techniques and materials are utilised to locate the hidden voice of schoolchildren, helping to illuminate their agentic ability to accept or refute the values taught.

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Introduction

Edmund Holmes, HMI and later Chief Inspector of Schools, wrote, in the first year of the South African War, that:

> [The school's] work is national, not to say imperial . . . Its business is to turn out youthful citizens rather than hedgers and ditchers; . . . preparing children for the battle of life; a battle which will be fought in all parts of the British Empire.[1]

The importance of the role of schools and their importance to the British Empire is clearly apparent here: children, as future citizens of an imperial country, should be prepared for service to that country, including to its empire. This article explores whether and how children in the schools of Birmingham and Worcestershire between 1880 and 1902 were taught the moral, patriotic and imperial values deemed appropriate for such a role. This has been a much discussed and contested area. Based on the author's doctoral research, the study provides a new contribution, showing how elementary schools in two very different areas brought such values into their curriculum. Uniquely, it goes on to

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question whether the children who were taught these values actually learned, accepted and embraced them, so providing insight into the agency of children in the period.

The concept of values has been variously defined. Clyde Kluckhohn stated that "a value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the . . . means, and ends of action."[2] Recently criticised as overly prescriptive, it nonetheless identifies values as "a conception of the desirable," which is central to this study. For Milton Rokeach they were "enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct."[3] This acknowledges the relationship between values and beliefs, and indicates that values give meaning to action. Values relating to the "enduring beliefs" of, for example, government ministers, educationists and school inspectors are examined in this article. Values also indicate how children were expected to behave, and, often, to believe. They are, however, not static but subject to change, elision and conflation, which, as is discovered, occurred within the teaching of moral, patriotic and imperial values in late nineteenth-century elementary education. For clarity, in this article, "moral" values relate to what were considered to be appropriate standards of behaviour and belief, for example, obedience, kindness, respect and duty. "Patriotic" values indicate a love of one's country, whilst "imperial" values denote a favourable view of the British Empire. "Imperialist" values, however, indicate a more overtly expansionist view, favouring policies whereby one country forcibly rules others through land acquisition, and economic and social control.

John MacKenzie, arguing in the 1980s for the suffusion of imperial values in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British society and culture, identified schools as key areas for value transmission.[4] Bernard Porter in 2004 took issue with this, claiming that such values were, in fact, much less visible than MacKenzie suggested; that patriotism was "never taught" in elementary schools; and that imperialist teaching was virtually non-existent until the early twentieth century.[5] He argued that propagating such values to the working classes was discouraged, despite pressure from imperialist organisations such as the Navy League and the Lads Drill Association since, he contended, working-class children needed only to know their place in, and obligations to, society, making moral and behavioural values more important for the working classes than patriotic or imperial ones.[6] Andrew Thompson, whilst agreeing with Porter on the complexity of both the British Empire itself and its diverse meanings for different groups and individuals, identified that, in the later Victorian era, there was a shift in government priority away from its earlier preoccupation with morals, to a more "imperialised curriculum."[7] However, the requirements of a packed curriculum in a short school day, and the realities of classroom life such as the need to maintain discipline, left little time or space for such teaching.[8] Instead, argued Thompson, childhood contact with imperial values depended on circumstances, a view supported by Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose's assertion that a child's experience of imperialism could range from taking part in expressions of overt national and imperial pride, such as jubilees and coronations, to personal experience of a family member fighting in South Africa.[9] For Michael Billig, common school materials and events, such as maps, reading books and the teaching of drill, could increase the likelihood of nationalist and imperialist values becoming embedded in pupils' minds as a taken-for-granted part of life.[10]

Focusing upon primary sources from a sample of elementary schools across Birmingham and Worcestershire, this article identifies opportunities within the

curriculum for values to be taught, and considers how they were received. It does not attempt to validate one area of debate against another. Instead, it looks to illuminate the processes whereby very different educational philosophies and practices played a part in the transmission of values to children.

Teaching does not always equate to learning. Studies of agentic potential have suggested that children were capable of expressing agency in many ways, dependent upon their own life-experience and circumstance.[11] Agency is a complex concept, particularly where children are concerned. David Lancy has pointed out that scholarship has lacked criticality, with social and cultural rebellion by children lauded as agentic, without considering that agency may also be expressed by compliance.[12] Furthermore, identifying the extent of childhood agency has frequently been linked to locating and interrogating the child's "voice," which may be problematic in terms of what it can communicate.[13] Very little documentation from the 1880–1902 period emanates from children themselves. Information *about* them derives mainly from adults and authorities such as parents and teachers, school inspectors, and sometimes adults reflecting upon their own childhoods.[14] The child's literal voice is hard to find.[15] Recent work, however, suggests that this is not necessary.[16] Methodologies such as reading against the grain and empathic inference have been used to capture the voices of hitherto silent groups, including those of children, and are suggested as alternative ways of identifying agency amongst them.[17] Application of these methodologies suggests that children did have potential capacity for agency in their behaviour and also in their learning.

A four-tier curricular model, adapted from David Labaree, provides a basis for research into the school curriculum. The outer level or "rhetorical curriculum" represents the influence of national government; the "formal curriculum" depicts that of local authorities such as church management committees or school boards; the "curriculum-in-use" is what is taught to the children in the classroom; and the innermost layer, or "received curriculum," is what the child actually learns.[18] In this article, however, the curriculum is visualised, not as a top-down process, but as four concentric circles, or layers, with the child at the centre. This acknowledges the capacity for children to form their own judgements about what they were taught. Unwrapping these curricular layers facilitates a mapping of the elementary school curriculum, and at the same time can show how moral, patriotic and imperial values taught to children were subject to both elision and conflation, particularly when moral values elided with those of patriotism, which in turn could sometime become conflated with imperial values.

The Role of Government

Schools were expected, in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, to be a "civilising influence" upon children, delivering moral values to improve matters such as thrift and sobriety within communities as a whole.[19] This is exemplified by the evidence of a Mr Birley to the 1888 Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts. Previously chairman of the Manchester School Board, and speaking here of a local parish, he stated that

> Probably nowhere could the influence of the religious and moral teaching upon the character of children be so readily tested as in a parish like ours, because the school here

> is the only civilising influence. Their parents are very poor and generally very ignorant. There are no well-to-do residents to set good examples, and children are often left to follow their own sweet will, so that any change in their habits must be due in a great measure to the influence of the school.[20]

Importance was placed, at national level, upon children developing moral values as part of their character. Obedience and duty, for instance, were emphasised in all Education Department Codes of Regulation from 1875:

> The managers and teachers will be expected to satisfy the inspector that all reasonable care is taken, in the ordinary management of the school … to impress upon the children the importance of cheerful obedience to duty, of consideration and respect for others, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act.[21]

This clause expressed a perceived need not only for obedience, but also for active consent of children to willingly do their duty. Adherence to duty was, according to F. W. Hackwood in his teachers' guide on moral lessons, a "noble trait" which should be rendered "cheerfully and diligently … no matter to whom it was held."[22] Thus conceived, "cheerful obedience to duty" could apply to patriotic and imperial as well as moral values. Furthermore, the 1878 "Instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors" specifically identified the importance of patriotism and empire, suggesting that schools should, through everyday activities, ensure that such values would be instilled:

> Their attention should be specially directed to the interesting stories of history, to the lives of noble characters, and to incidents which tend to create a patriotic feeling of regard for their country and its position in the world.[23]

This attention to imperial matters paid by successive governments in the period reflects the growing importance of the still-expanding British Empire which, from 1870, was not only established in the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, but also India, with Queen Victoria taking the title "Empress of India" in 1876. Although at this point there was little *specific* teaching about the Empire, the syllabus "British Colonies and Dependencies" was offered in the 1882 Code of Regulations, and, by 1892, elementary schools were expected to address

> English Colonies and their productions, government, and resources, and to those climatic and other conditions which render our distant possessions suitable fields for emigration and for honourable enterprise.[24]

The British Empire became more prominent within the curriculum during the 1880s and early 1890s. It was present in the "Life and Duties of the Citizen" part of the Evening Continuation syllabus from 1883 and mentioned for the first time within both the History and Geography sections of the Day School Code of 1895.[25]

Despite these prompts from above, the short school day (around five hours) would have made it difficult to deliver anything extra to the required subjects which brought in the necessary funding from central government. This meant that timing was precise, so that any teaching of values would have to take place *within* funded subjects. Priority was always given to ensuring that children passed the yearly HMI inspection, upon which, along with attendance totals, rested the amount of grant paid to the school.[26] Funded subjects were reading, writing, arithmetic, needlework for girls, drawing for boys, physical education and singing. Poor performance at inspection meant that a school

could be barred from offering anything extra to these basic subjects, as happened in Belbroughton Fairfield, a very small school in North Worcestershire in the early 1880s.[27] Extra funding could be gained by offering specific subjects such as history and geography, which needed to be agreed by HMIs. Bible-reading took place in all schools, but outside the school day. Voluntary-funded schools, usually Church of England, Nonconformist or Roman Catholic, were allowed to teach religious instruction according to their denominational catechism. In secular rate-funded board schools, managed by an elected school board, non-denominational religious instruction was not a requirement, but could be taught, again outside the school day, and most Worcestershire board schools did this. Schools coming under the Birmingham School Board (BSB) taught instead "secular moral instruction," introduced in 1879 by the Chairman of the Board, George Dixon.[28]

Local Authority Context

Birmingham, granted city status in 1889, was a new and expanding urban and industrial centre with a strong Liberal Nonconformist tradition. It was a leader in the movement for rate-financed and compulsory state education. Worcester, in contrast, was an old, Anglican-dominated, politically Conservative city, surrounded by a largely rural county.[29] Birmingham's schools were mainly rate-funded board schools, under the management of the BSB, set up in 1870. The Worcester School Board (WSB), set up in 1871 with an Anglican majority, had charge of only two schools in the city, and the majority of provision was managed and delivered, in both city and county, by the Anglican church. In rural areas these schools were often very small, with precarious finances and little spare money. In contrast, the BSB was for 27 years controlled by the Liberals and from 1876 to 1896 was under the chairmanship of George Dixon. Dixon, an Anglican Liberal, was committed to providing routes of progression from board to higher-level schools in Birmingham, including Bridge Street and Waverley Street, both seventh-grade schools run by the BSB and, through scholarships given to the best performing pupils, to the King Edward Grammar Schools and Edgbaston High School for Girls, which Dixon had been instrumental in setting up.[30]

The WSB was controlled throughout its entire life by Anglicans. Although nominally secular, it was accused by minority Nonconformists of being pro-Anglican, favouring voluntary over secular provision wherever possible.[31] A Nonconformist member of the WSB remarked at the final Board meeting in 1903 that the WSB had made no provision for the growing needs of the city, preferring instead to keep its education "pretty much in the hands of the Church."[32] This was not, in itself, unusual. Whilst required under the 1870 Act to be secular bodies, many School Boards were Anglican-dominated, and many rural boards, struggling to recruit members, were effectively run by the Anglican Church.[33]

The curriculum in Birmingham and Worcestershire, whilst including the same elementary subjects, was often delivered very differently. Despite this, both Birmingham and Worcestershire local authorities placed considerable emphasis on the development of moral and patriotic values. Patriotism, whilst encouraged by both boards, featured more overtly in Worcester than in Birmingham. For example, in 1899, early in the South African war, the WSB agreed a request from the Navy League, an imperialist organisation set up in 1894 to promote the building of a strong Navy, to give a lecture and present

a national flag to the Board. The flag was to be displayed in the schools in order to "foster a patriotic spirit amongst scholars."[34] Whilst there is no record of such a presentation in Birmingham, a similar request to the London School Board by the imperialist Lord Meath in 1892 was declined, following a campaign by local trade unions who spoke out against the proposal.[35] A further example from 1901 shows how the use of dummy rifles to supplement drill in WSB schools was defended by the then Chairman, Albert Webb, who stated that it would "place in the hands of everyone in the country the means of defending the great empire to which they belonged."[36]

In Birmingham, there was evidence from the end of the period showing that both patriotic and imperial values were specifically taught through moral instruction lessons. In 1900, such a lesson was observed by staff from the *Birmingham Daily Post*.[37] Taking place soon after the relief of Mafeking, this was particularly topical and, according to the article, had been specially arranged for the reporters to view. The lesson shows the use of leading questions from the teacher to encourage the children to reach an appropriate conclusion – an approach used by the Birmingham author of guides for teachers, F. W. Hackwood, head teacher of Dudley Road Board School.[38] The report explained how the teacher's skilful questioning led the children to reach the desired conclusion that the Empire was a positive thing, constructed in a moral and beneficial fashion, with respect for the people already living in what became the colonies. Patriotic values were embedded into the lesson content, in this case with the "correct" answers being coaxed from the children, thus making the emphasis not overtly imperialist, but nonetheless reinforcing the importance of patriotism and the positive benefits of the Empire being taught to the child. These examples show that both areas, even "progressive" Birmingham, were nonetheless complying with government guidance in encouraging development of these values.

Schools and the Taught Curriculum in Worcestershire and Birmingham

All state-funded schools were required to keep a logbook. Written daily from 1862, and weekly from 1871, the instructions given to teachers were that

> The principal teacher must daily make in the Log-book the briefest entry which will suffice to specify either ordinary progress, or whatever other fact concerning the school or its teachers, such as the dates of withdrawals, commencements of duty, cautions, illness, &c., may require to be referred to at a future time, or may otherwise deserve to be recorded.[39]

Logbooks were regularly inspected by officers of the school board or management committee and by HMIs. Christopher Bischof has described them as "a space for teachers to muse about educational policies, record the emotional toll of teaching, and, most of all, to offer a textured portrait of local culture and on-the-ground conditions."[40] They were the source of much school-related information, not least because they were able to depict changes over time. Whilst headteachers were instructed to avoid opinion, it was not infrequently given, as was information about teachers, curriculum and children. Logbooks are used widely within this research, with other contemporaneous sources such as newspaper articles, formal minutes and HMI reports to aid validity of findings.

Andrew Thompson argued that, in order to understand the realities of education, it should be examined from the point of view of those experiencing it, rather than from

formal curricula or HMI reports.[41] With this in mind, it is helpful to identify, as far as is possible, how the meaning of terms such as "empire," and "patriotism" were presented to, and understood by, the children in the classroom. Logbooks show that, despite differences in educational practice and ethos, there were, in both Birmingham and Worcestershire, opportunities for value inculcation via the teaching of funded subjects, including history and geography, both of which have been identified as most likely to contain imperial content.[42] History, as a subject in its own right, was before 1900 rarely taught, being deemed by both HMIs and schools as being unsuitable for children's study as its breadth tended to reduce it to mere lists of dates and events.[43] Most schools, however, taught it through reading-books, following a Committee of Council regulation change in 1882 which required one in three readers for Standard III and above to be history books.[44] The use of readers has been identified by both Peter Yeandle and Stephen Heathorn to be of considerable importance in children developing commitment to the Empire.[45] History readers were cheap to buy, readily available, and told stories with positive imperial content featuring characters with whom children could themselves identify; this encouraged what Yeandle termed "enlightened patriotism," as children developed positive views of empire without it being taught in a propagandised way.[46] The Macmillan series of readers, taught in Evesham National School, included stories about "Richard the Lionheart" and "With Clive in India," the latter containing considerable imperialist content and presented in ways appealing to children.[47] A new history syllabus, "The Reign of Queen Victoria," was introduced in 1897 and taught in Evesham National School and Belbroughton Fairfield School, both in Worcestershire.[48] Topics included the biographies of two heroes of the British Empire: General Havelock, who died at Lucknow during the Indian Rebellion in 1857, and General Gordon, famed for the controversy surrounding his death in Khartoum in 1885, showing considerable potential for fostering imperial values.

Geography also provided many opportunities for value transmission. It is, however, important to remain aware that, as observed by Teresa Ploszajska, while there was "an imperialist perspective (that) was never entirely absent" from Geography teaching, this was not necessarily clear to the child.[49] However, being unaware of this imperialist perspective does not mean that the content, particularly the terminology, had no effect upon children's values. For example, the term "British Possessions" as the title of a syllabus gave the message that Britain was a powerful and conquering nation which owned a large part of the world. Whilst this may appear obvious, words such as these, if frequently heard and read during the school day, could, as suggested by Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, play a role in inculcation and internalisation of values through their repetition and normality.[50]

In this period, many HMIs and educationists became convinced that visual stimulation, particularly in subjects like geography, was likely to be a more effective aid to learning than a mere recital of facts.[51] A number of examples can be identified where striking visual messages for children projected imperialist views. The "massed areas of red on the world map," portraying the British Empire, were identified as such by the socialist writer Robert Roberts.[52] The process of "colour-blocking," on the Imperial Federation map, made the territory of the British Empire seem larger by merging it together, deliberately situating Great Britain "arbitrarily but not accidentally" near the centre of the world.[53] Maps were given freely to schools by the Navy League, at a time

when many European countries, including Britain, were experiencing unease about the growing power of new imperial rivals, believing that a strong Royal Navy was essential for an imperial country to retain its territory.[54] With geography being the most popular specific subject taught in both Birmingham and Worcestershire, many schools were likely to have had such a map, either on the wall or in a textbook, representing literally "an empire on which the sun never sets."[55]

Examples of visual representations of the proposed benefits of the British Empire can be found in a geography textbook, written by the influential HMI for Worcestershire, Rev. Mark James Barrington-Ward. This used pictures to contrast the difference between a "civilised" white family, and "savages" who are depicted as black-skinned, half-naked bodies fighting ferociously.[56] The accompanying instructions for teachers state that the benefits of the British Empire for the indigenous peoples should be stressed:

> Let [the children] see . . . the constant plunder and warfare; the total disregard of human life; the debased forms of religion; . . . tell them of the high degree of civilisation attained by the nations of Europe . . . their skilful agriculture; their abundance of books; their colleges and schools; their hospitals and charities; . . . their worship of the one true God.[57]

Here, a justification of British imperial expansion is shown through its portrayed civilising effect on the "savage" and "barbarous" populations of the colonies, for which they should be grateful.[58] Barrington-Ward was a respected and influential HMI and a man of the established Church. His book was likely to carry considerable authority, especially within Worcestershire.

Fairy tales and adventure stories were also present in many geography readers with the intention of making them more appealing to young people.[59] Such readers often allocated both verbal and pictorial racial stereotypes of indigenous people in their physical environment, frequently portraying them as grateful to gain the benefits afforded to them through the British, perhaps, as suggested by Patrick Brantlinger, engendering a feeling of pride in the Empire as a civilising force, as well as contributing to the embodiment of it within the everyday world of the book's readers.[60] As illustration, the autobiography of Rose Golding (published after her death by her son), born in Birmingham in 1889 and pupil at Greet Board School in the city from 1894 to 1901, describes the pain of having her ears pierced with a red-hot needle: the pain "must have been trivial when you imagine what pain the natives in the jungle must have endured when bones were pushed through their ears and noses."[61] It seems entirely possible that the very visual and empathic image created by Golding was derived from what she had learned at school, perhaps via a picture. Even if she did not take geography as a specific subject, she would almost certainly have been exposed to geographical readers, which, like history readers, have been shown to be instrumental in transmitting patriotic values, possibly intending to draw an empathic response from children, and well-placed to do so.[62]

An aspect of difference between Birmingham and Worcestershire schools was the teaching of drill, which was linked to values of obedience, duty and patriotism, and which carried the financial incentive of increased grant payment. Drill was in many schools the main physical exercise.[63] HMI reports and logbooks suggest that schools in Worcestershire were more likely to focus their physical education on the teaching of drill than those in Birmingham. This was particularly noticeable in board

schools. All of the Worcestershire board schools mentioned drill in their logbooks, contrasting with only 33% in Birmingham.[64] In BSB schools, although drill *was* taught, team games and athletics played an increasingly large part of physical education, very much in keeping with Dixon's philosophy of improvement, both moral and physical.[65] Whilst drill has been identified as encouraging the values of obedience necessary for lower military ranks, team games, played in prestigious public schools, have been associated with values for leadership, such as the ability to lead a team, handle uncertain outcomes, and act together for a common purpose.[66] These variations of approach, priority and philosophy between Liberal Nonconformist Birmingham and Conservative Anglican Worcestershire also show the diversity of method, indicating that overall generalisations regarding taught values should be avoided.

Concepts connected with patriotism and empire were taught formally in Birmingham schools from 1879 as part of the delivery of secular moral training. Susannah Wright has identified that F. W. Hackwood's *Notes of Lessons on Moral Subjects* was likely to have been used to teach these lessons.[67] "Patriotism," along with "Loyalty," featured as topics. Hackwood identified loyalty as a duty: "faithfulness and willingness in serving the Queen."[68] Patriotism, however, was a sentiment: the "love of our country," which "may become a duty in time of public danger."[69] This clearly indicates that the duty of patriotic citizens was to fight willingly for their country if called upon to do so. *Notes of Lessons* makes the point that "pressed men make poor sailors, and conscripts poor soldiers."[70] There is resonance here with the emphasis for schools to inculcate amongst their pupils the value of "*cheerful* obedience to duty" (italics added), rather than obedience by compulsion or fear.[71] The British Empire, whilst not a named chapter in Hackwood's book, is very much taken for granted within it. The topic of patriotism, for example, includes "a defence of the soil" and "colonial loyalty."[72] Hackwood's method for teachers was to ask the pupils a series of leading questions, and to guide them through these towards the "right" answer.[73] This practice is shown in action through the previously mentioned report in the *Birmingham Daily Post* as the teacher guided the children to an acceptable answer through leading questions.

Outside of taught subjects, there were many national events during the period which contained displays of patriotic or imperial values, in which children were frequently encouraged to take part, often with school closures for the day, Again, however, the response of schools was varied, with some logbooks showing considerable enthusiasm, and others none at all. The logbook of Evesham National School in Worcestershire tells of the pupil participation in the town's celebrations to mark the Queen's 1887 Golden Jubilee:

> The girls to the number of 135 met in the school where they were each presented with a medal. Flags were distributed, [and] accompanied by the boys and infants they marched to the market place where the other schools were assembled. The Old Hundredth was sung by the 1400 children who next marched along High Street and Bridge Street to the Pleasure Gardens where an excellent tea was awaiting them.[74]

Evesham was a town which had, since the civil wars of the seventeenth century, been strongly royalist in nature. As is clear from the logbook entry, all the schools in the town took part. This type of event was not the case for most of the schools studied here. This

shows the importance of context; and similarly, the response of Birmingham to the celebrations of "Mafeking Night" in May 1900 was enthusiastic, as shown by the extract from the autobiography of Rose Golding, a child of eleven at the time:

> Every school gave the children at least half a day off for the celebration. Bonfires were lit in the horse roads, and dancing and singing went on until the early hours. I think a lot of people thought the war was over.[75]

These local celebrations took place in the context of popular Birmingham politics, in particular the city's support for Joseph Chamberlain, local MP, formerly mayor, and now a committed imperialist. His popularity in Birmingham was immense, and Birmingham was, as a city, favourably inclined towards the war.

The differences shown here resonate with Thompson's point that imperial popularity varied according to context and conditions.[76] Also, personal experience played a part. Rose Golding described in her memoirs how her two soldier brothers came home from the South African War "to a hero's welcome."[77] Yet Rose's memories were of tragedy: both brothers had been seriously wounded. For Rose, then aged thirteen, this was, to her, much more important than celebrating the peace, which suggests that, however much children were surrounded by imperial messages, it was individual experiences and losses which affected their views and memories of this imperialist war.[78]

Reception of Taught Values: The Agency of the Child

Whilst values of a moral, patriotic and imperial nature were indeed taught in the schools of Birmingham and Worcestershire, this, of course, does not mean that such values were learned or internalised by children. To judge how messages were received, it is important to explore the extent to which children of the period were able to express agency.[79]

Early to mid-twentieth-century modernist views frequently conceptualised children as being in the liminal process of becoming adults, rather than as individuals in their own right.[80] The mid-century structuralist sociologist Talcott Parsons did not perceive children as independently motivated, but as being automatically socialised into the societal structures making up their lives. Additionally, the developmental psychologist Jean Piaget saw them as strictly bound by fixed age-related developmental stages.[81] In both cases, children were "works in progress," with relatively little opportunity for making a difference to either their own or others' lives. From the late 1970s, however, the social constructivist approach of L. S. Vygotsky, who proposed that children were capable of actively participating in their own and others' learning, paved the way for a characterisation of children as able to construct their own meanings of situations as they developed.[82] Children, therefore, began to be conceptualised as social actors in their own right, with capacity to accept, resist, reject, or change the social structures that made up their lives – in other words, an agentic capability, summarised by Albert Bandura:

> People are partly the products of their environments, but by selecting, creating, and transforming their environmental circumstances they are producers of environments as well. This agentic capability enables them to influence the course of events and to take a hand in shaping their lives.[83]

As identified previously, the lack of documentation emanating directly from children of the period makes it hard to find a literal voice. Most of the material available to historians comes from adults: either from the adult that the child became or from professional adults such as teachers and doctors who wrote about children. However, Sarah White and Shyamol Chaudhury argue, along with Michael Wyness, that children's agency is often best represented through their actions and ability to actively participate in, and sometimes to change, their own and others' lives.[84] Mona Gleason further suggests that, even when material comes from adults, the interpretive technique of empathic inference allows historians to focus on children's age and circumstances, so that their agentic potential can be recognised in a relational and contextual way.[85] The following exploration of material from Birmingham and Worcestershire adds to the growing body of scholarship within the area of child agency by examining the diversity of agentic action, and the many ways in which it can be displayed.

Schools were institutions which sought through rules, repetition and punishment to impose their vision and purpose upon pupils, encouraging them to fit the accepted ideal.[86] Yet, although children seemed relatively powerless within the adult hegemony of the elementary school, there were, even here, opportunities for agency to arise. Anthony Giddens's concept of structuration, Michel de Certeau's theory of the "power of the weak over the strong" and Alcinda Honwana's "tactical interstitial agency" all suggest that even the relatively weak pupils, through their intimate knowledge of the classroom, could, intentionally or not, find ways to resist or even reverse the wishes or rules of the relatively powerful teacher or institution, so displaying agency.[87] Finding this agency involves identifying the voice of those lacking in power, even if it appears to be absent, thus constructing a view of the child as an active participant within the school environment and, as such, able to influence events.[88]

Evidence from Birmingham and Worcestershire suggests that children were, in certain circumstances and despite the constraints surrounding them, able to find opportunities within the structures of the school to take agentic action. This could originate from the children themselves, or sometimes with parents supporting, colluding or even encouraging it. HMI reports from both areas indicate that inspectors were aware that children and parents had degrees of power. In his report of 1881, the Worcestershire HMI Barrington-Ward told how parents acted in collusion with their children by keeping them from school to contribute a much-needed family wage, knowing that local magistrates, themselves landowners and employers, would rarely prosecute them.[89] This parental support resonates with Bandura's concepts of collective and proxy agency – when individuals work together or act for others to achieve commonly desired outcomes.[90] E. H. Brodie, the HMI for Worcester city, attributed to boys considerable agentic power: they were, he wrote, "elastic and slippery, keen to dodge school if they can with intuitive aptitude and conscious triumph."[91] This identifies truancy as consciously initiated by the children themselves. Brodie went on to state that these would-be miscreants were to be "trapped and netted" by the local authorities in Worcester, implying a likeness to wild animals needing restraint.[92] These comments suggest that Brodie viewed urban boys in particular as very capable of taking part in damaging oppositional action with forceful treatment, required to bring them into line. Infants, he continued, needed to be "broken in" to instil good habits through "Singing, Physical Training, and Musical Drill."[93] This resonates with the commonly held view of schools as moralising

and civilising institutions, with teachers responsible for instilling the required behaviour and attitudes.

Logbooks suggest that truancy, disruptive or hostile behaviour, and lack of effort in work, were common areas where pupils could negatively affect the working of the school. Persistent absenteeism directly affected the grant that the school could claim, and lack of effort in work could do the same by reducing the number of pupils who passed the HMI inspection. Hostile behaviour could disrupt the school and cause teacher absence or resignation as well as attracting further negative attention of the HMI. It is, of course, important to state that not all of these behavioural issues were examples of agency, but they do, nonetheless, indicate the extent of power implicitly held by children.

Oppositional or hostile behaviour was not necessarily premeditated, nor deliberately intended to harm the school, but could still indicate the children's ability to bring about change.[94] In Evesham National School Girls Department between 1883 and 1886, serious behavioural issues led to the resignation of four mistresses in a three-year period, leading the children to be described in the logbook as "disobedient, disorderly, and rebellious" – the last word clearly indicating a perceived intention to disrupt.[95] This suggests that at least some of the power within the school at this time was wielded by pupils, despite the punishments they received for their actions. The situation was eventually resolved when a mistress was appointed who replaced the cycle of punishment at the school with a different way of creating order: the new mistress stopped using corporal punishment, instead ringing the school bell if any disturbance happened, stopping lessons and making the girls sit still until the disturbance ended. She also tried to impress upon the children the necessity of good behaviour.[96] This example supports de Certeau's and Honwana's separate contentions that children *were* able to exploit weaknesses within the workings of powerful institutions (interstitial agency) to express their voice, even if this was more a reaction to an issue (such as extensive punishment) than a deliberate intention to bring about change.[97] In this case, eventually, the children's "voices" *were* heard, and change *did* occur. It is also interesting that in the school strikes of 1890, corporal punishment was one of the identifiable pupil grievances, which were high fees, long days, and excessive use of the cane.[98]

Other examples from Worcestershire involved children resisting punishment, taking part in individual or collective truancy, and refusing to do their lessons. The logbook of Crabbs Cross Board School in Redditch, details that

> [an] act of insubordination [took place] by 12 boys across standards 3–7 who had previously arranged to run away; after playtime, instead of falling in for drill they ran off over the fields … Boys were reprimanded in front of the whole school then taken to the classroom, but refused to hold out their hands for punishment.[99]

This, a pre-arranged event, suggests a degree of organisation, and, although the reason for the truancy is not known, the refusal of the boys to willingly accept punishment further indicates purposive action. In Birmingham a different type of agency was commented upon by HMI Osmond Airy:

> Teachers have often told me in sorrow that children who are irreproachable in school often appear to leave their good manners behind them when they go into the streets … one of my sub-inspectors heard a child in a tramcar addressing the guard in the most vile and violent language. His head teacher happened to be there also, unbeknown to the child, and he

> informed my sub inspector that the child in question was his very best scholar and that if he had not heard what had passed, he could not have believed it possible.[100]

This shows an ability to identify which behaviours were required for school and which outside, and to change behaviour accordingly – identified by Jonathan Rose as the capacity to "self-edit" what was taught in school in terms of the realities and expectations within children's own lives.[101]

Whilst children's agency may be visible in matters pertaining to behavioural and moral values in or out of school, it is harder to establish in terms of values of a patriotic and imperial nature. Logbook entries suggest that children enjoyed the treats, the holidays and the souvenirs of books, cards and medals which accompanied major events such as jubilees, royal weddings and the celebrations of the end of the South African war in 1902, but this does not mean that the patriotic and imperialist values encompassed by them were internalised. In this case, therefore, autobiographical writings are useful in piecing together the probable reception of patriotic and imperialist messages. Finding such material relating to the specific dates and locations of the study is difficult: work by Walter Southgate covers the correct period, but focuses on London; Kathleen Dayus's autobiography focuses on Birmingham, but she was not born until 1904.[102] The following discussion therefore centres on the memoirs of Rose Golding, published by her son after her death.[103]

Rose was born in Birmingham in 1889. Her family was poor, and her father, who was frequently ill, worked in the "Umbrella Works." Her mother, working in a lamp factory, had the responsibility of caring for the family, to which job Rose was expected to contribute. Drawing upon Gleason's interpretive method of empathic inference, the memoirs suggest that Rose saw her family's poverty as normal, and willingly carried out the running of errands and doing jobs both before and after school.[104] Rose speaks briefly of her schooldays, identifying her dislike of arithmetic, enjoyment of singing and the kindness of teachers, especially when her father was ill.[105] Despite this brevity, however, the curriculum required in BSB schools suggests that Rose would also have been taught, through the compulsory secular moral instruction, the value of duty, which for girls related to their future role as wives and mothers. The relevant lesson in Hackwood's guide states that "Home and Mother are inseparable," that it was a girl's place as a future homemaker, to "grow up with wisdom and virtue in their fingertips," and that "Home is the NUCLEUS OF NATIONAL CHARACTER" (original capitalisation).[106] Susannah Wright and Sheila Rowbotham both see this as a form of moral patriotism, with girls taught to fulfil their "civic and imperial duty" as wives and mothers.[107]

Rose's later memories of national events are seen by her through the prism of what they meant for her family. She was a teenager at the end of the South African war, expected to help care for her two seriously wounded soldier brothers on their return. By 1914, when the First World War began, she was a young mother, with a husband who volunteered early in the war. Throughout her account of wartime, she focuses on her domestic responsibilities: raising their three children, whilst also doing her own war work.[108] She coped alone with the accidental drowning of her eldest child in a canal in 1915; she describes this as a time of "agony." Her husband, fighting in France, was refused leave to attend

the funeral. Yet, her own hardships she regarded as insignificant in comparison to those fighting abroad: "The mothers' hardship on the home front ... (was) insignificant to what our soldiers, sailors and airmen endured."[109] The tone of Rose's memoirs is largely pragmatic and shows unquestioning acceptance that it was her duty to be, on the home front, the supporter of her husband who was doing *his* duty by fighting for his country.

Rose's memories reflect the complexity of agency. Whilst the First World War is by no means the only indication of the degree to which children in general, and Rose in particular, had learned and internalised patriotic and imperial values, it is, as an imperialist war, a useful indicator. For Rose, the pragmatism of her circumstances, rather than patriotism, was at the forefront of her life at that time, which is very much in keeping with the findings of Adrian Gregory's study of the 1914–18 period.[110] Yet, for both Rose and her husband, duty to country directed their actions, and duty, as discussed earlier, was a moral value closely linked to patriotism.[111] Rose's memoirs show in particular the ways in which values, whether learned in school, or stemming from her own childhood experiences, affected her thoughts and actions. The acceptance of her duty to manage, protect and maintain the home in an uncomplaining manner during her husband's absence (and afterwards as he recovered his health), demonstrates the behaviour expected of citizens in general, and women in particular, as Rowbotham puts it, to "maintain the family circle ... to accept cheerfully the burden of sacrifice entailed by involvement in Empire."[112]

Conclusions

Knowledge of the considerable diversity of elementary education in England between 1880 and 1902 is essential to understand the varied ways in which patriotic and imperial values were transmitted to pupils. Whilst requirements for schools were, at the level of the state, generic, the differences in local management as well as in methods of delivering values mirrors this diversity. Delivery was more overt in Worcestershire schools, but similar values were identified in Birmingham, especially within secular moral instruction, which was required teaching from 1879 in all schools under the management of the BSB. This study has shown that, despite differences of educational philosophy, governance, religious denomination and method, patriotic and imperial values were embedded within curriculum and the everyday life of both areas.

The question of child agency is undoubtedly complex. The literal voice of the child is hard to find, and identifying the degree to which values became embedded into the character of youthful future citizens is challenging. Using interpretive methods such as empathic inference and reading against the grain can lead to the identification of children's agency through the discourses of adults around them, such as logbooks and HMI reports. These demonstrate that, despite the relative powerlessness of pupils within the hegemonic institution of the school, their agency was evident through actions which brought, or had the potential to bring about, change.

Although the reception of patriotic and imperial values is more difficult to identify, close reading of Rose Golding's autobiography indicates that, through her interpretation

of family circumstances in wartime, they become visible. Although primarily family-focussed, her values, especially that of duty, relate to not only her family, but through this to country and, albeit indirectly, to the British Empire.

Notes

1. Board of Education, *Cmnd p 3*, 254–5.
2. Kluckhohn, "Values and Value-Orientations," 395.
3. Rokeach, *Nature of Human Values*, 5.
4. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 2, 7, 175, 179, 253, 258.
5. Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialists*, 120, 133, 181.
6. Ibid., 119–20.
7. Thompson, *Empire Strikes Back?* 112–15.
8. Ibid., 115–16.
9. Ibid., 116–22; Hall and Rose, *At Home with the Empire*, 2.
10. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 93–109.
11. Rose, *Intellectual Life*, 332–7; Felstead, "Teaching Cheerful Obedience," 201–2.
12. Lancy, "Unmasking Children's Agency," sections 3 and 7.
13. Spyrou, "Limits of Children's Voices."
14. See Roberts, *Classic Slum*; Southgate, *That's the Way It Was.*
15. Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society*, 2–3.
16. Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 446–59; Wyness, *Childhood*, 10–11.
17. Felstead, "Teaching Cheerful Obedience," 177–8; Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 446–59; White and Chaudhury, "Politics of Child Participation," 529–50.
18. Labaree, "Failure of Curriculum Reform," 42.
19. Davin, *Growing up Poor*, 141–2; Wright, "Citizenship, Moral Education and the English Elementary School," 25.
20. H. M. Government, *Final Report of the Commissioners*, 303–5.
21. Committee of Council on Education, *New Code of Regulations*, 6.
22. Hackwood, *Lessons on Moral Subjects*, 70–2.
23. Committee of Council on Education, "Circular of General Instructions," 335.
24. Education Department, *Minute of March 6th, 1882*, 27; Education Department, *Revised Instructions to. Inspectors*, 12.
25. Education Department, *Code of Regulations for Evening Continuation Schools*, 12–13; Education Department, *Code of Regulation for Day Schools*, 46, 47.
26. Garrison Lane School, "Log-Book," January 30, 1887; North Malvern Church of England School, "Log-Book," April 17, 1896.
27. Belbroughton Fairfield School, "Log-Book," April 4, 1881; April 25, 1881; February 3, 1991; HMI Report, March 1883, in the same book.
28. Dixon, *Lecture on Elementary Education*, 21–3; see also Dixon, *Out of Birmingham*, 190–1. James Dixon is the grandson and biographer of George Dixon.
29. Ward, *City, State and Nation*, 67; Upton, *History of Birmingham*; see also Court, *Rise of Midlands Industries*; Gaut, *History of Worcestershire.*
30. Dixon, *Out of Birmingham*, 176.
31. See "Berrow's Worcestershire Journal," February 27, 1892; Cherry Orchard Board School, "Log-book," August 31, 1893; October 3, 1893.
32. *Worcestershire Chronicle*, November 4, 1899; March 30, 1901; February 28, 1902.
33. See Smith, "Enemy Within?"
34. Worcestershire Chronicle, November 4, 1899, 7
35. Betts, *Powerful and Splendid*, 552–6.
36. Worcestershire Chronicle, March 30, 1901, 6
37. *Birmingham Post*, June 30, 1900; Horn, "English Elementary Education," 40.
38. Hackwood, *Notes of Lessons*, 167–75.

39. Committee of Council on Education, *Minute Confirming the Regulations of the Revised Code*, 10.
40. Bischof, *Teaching Britain*, 161–2.
41. Thompson, *Empire Strikes Back?* 116.
42. See Chancellor, *History for Their Masters*; Marsden, *School Textbook*.
43. Smith, "No Subject . . . More Neglected," 143–6.
44. Education Department, *Minute of March 6th, 1882*, 26.
45. Yeandle, *Citizenship, Nation, Empire*, 39–42; Heathorn, *For Home, Country and Race*, 8–12.
46. Yeandle, *Citizenship, Nation, Empire*, 118–41.
47. Felstead, "Teaching Cheerful Obedience," 95–6.
48. Evesham National School, "Log-Book," 242–6, 268–9; Hogarth, "Fairfield School," 22.
49. Ploszajska, *Geographical Education, Empire and Citizenship*, 282–3.
50. Corrigan and Sayer, *Great Arch*, 2–3.
51. Ploszajska, *Geographical Education, Empire and Citizenship*, 137–9; Committee of Council on Education, *Report, 1880–81*, 299; Barrington-Ward, *Child's Geography*, 8.
52. Roberts, *Classic Slum*, 142.
53. Colley, "This Small Island," 171–2.
54. Hamilton, "New Navalism," 37.
55. Ploszajska, *Geographical Education, Empire and Citizenship*, 142.
56. Barrington-Ward, *Child's Geography*, 44. See Ploszajska, *Geographical Education, Empire and Citizenship*, 146–7, for a detailed account of these depictions.
57. Barrington-Ward, *Child's Geography*, 44–5.
58. Ibid.
59. Ploszajska, *Geographical Education, Empire and Citizenship*, 81–3.
60. Brantlinger, "Imperialism."
61. Golding, *Ninety-Six Years a Brummie*, 11.
62. Heathorn, *For Home, Country and Race*, 48–54, 210–12; Yeandle, *Citizenship, Nation, Empire*, 20, 171–2.
63. Committee of Council on Education, *New Code of Regulations*, 7; Penn, *Targeting Schools*, 29.
64. Felstead, "Teaching Cheerful Obedience," 100.
65. Dixon, *Lecture on Elementary Education*, 16–22.
66. Dischon, "Games of Character," 364–80.
67. Wright, *Morality and Citizenship*, 77, n. 55.
68. Hackwood, *Notes of Lessons*, 168.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., 169.
71. Committee of Council on Education, "Instructions to Inspectors," 160.
72. Ibid., 171.
73. *Birmingham Post*, June 30, 1900.
74. Evesham School, "Log-Book," June 22, 1887.
75. Golding, *Ninety-Six Years a Brummie*, 9.
76. Thompson, *Empire Strikes Back?* 4–5.
77. Golding, *Ninety-Six Years a Brummie*, 9.
78. Ibid.
79. Gittens, *Child in Question*, 46–8; Murris, "Epistemic Challenge," 245–59; Haring, Sorin, and Caltabiano, "Reflecting on Childhood," 2–6.
80. Lee, *Childhood and Society*, 7; James, "Agency," 34–5; Wyness, *Childhood*, 7.
81. Parsons, *Essays in Social Structure*; Piaget, *Origins of Intelligence*.
82. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*; James, "Agency", 35–41; Leonard, *Sociology of Children*, 31.
83. Bandura, "Exercise of Human Agency," 75.
84. White and Chaudhury, "Politics of Child Participation," 547; Wyness, *Childhood*, 10–11.
85. Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 446–59.

86. James and James, *Constructing Childhood*, 21; Oswell, *Agency of Children*, 55.
87. de Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 37–40; Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 1–15; Honwana, "Innocent and Guilty," 49–50; Oswell, *Agency of Children*, 58–62.
88. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*; Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 17–53.
89. Committee of Council on Education, *Report 1881*, 190–2.
90. Bandura, "Exercise of Human Agency," 75.
91. Ibid., 217.
92. Ibid., 219.
93. Ibid.
94. See Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 6–11.
95. Evesham National School "Log-Book," January 26, 1883; March 22, 1883.
96. Evesham National School "Log-Book," September 1, 1886; October 1, 1886.
97. Honwana, "Innocent and Guilty," 49–50; de Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 37–40.
98. Gooderson, *Gangs of Birmingham*, 194.
99. Crabbs Cross School, "Log-Book," November 27, 1896; April 12, 1896.
100. Board of Education, *Cmnd p 3*, 179.
101. Rose, *Intellectual Life*, 322.
102. See Dayus, *Her People*; Southgate, *That's the Way It Was*.
103. Golding, *Ninety-Six Years a Brummie*.
104. Ibid., 2–6.
105. See Wright, "Work of Teachers and Others," 729–46.
106. Hackwood, *Notes of Lessons*, 30–3.
107. Wright, "Citizenship, Moral Education and the English Elementary School," 33; Rowbotham, *Good Girls Make Good Wives*, 190.
108. Golding, *Ninety-Six Years a Brummie*, 55–9.
109. Ibid., 57.
110. Gregory, *Last Great War*, 5–7, 278–82.
111. Hackwood, *Notes of Lessons*, 168.
112. Rowbotham, *Good Girls Make Good Wives*, 190.

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