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THE CONTRIBUTION OF P.W. JOYCE TO THE IRISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION

It is particularly fitting that the work of P. W. Joyce is commemorated by means of the Joyce Brothers School in their own region of South-East Limerick. The area in which he lived during his formative years made a profound impact on him and inspired him throughout his long and productive lifetime. Joyce, in *The Wonders of Ireland*, included a remarkably lyrical and evocative recollection of his local area and the joys of the youth growing up there (Mainchín Seoighe includes an extensive quotation in his excellent booklet on the Joyce brothers).¹ In Joyce's preface to *Ancient Irish Music* he wrote: "I spent all my early life in a part of the country where music and dancing were favourite amusements, and as I loved the graceful music of the people from my childhood, their songs, dance tunes, keens, and lullabies remained on my memory almost without any effort of my own".² Likewise, in his *Old Irish Music and Songs* he wrote that his knowledge of Irish music grew during his childhood and boyhood "to form part of my mind like my native language".³ Born in 1827, he grew up in the beautifully named locations of Ballyorgan and Glenosheen in the years prior to the Great Famine, when the Irish language and the Gaelic tradition generally were in thriving condition in this area. The glimpses he gives us of community life in pre-Famine Ireland, particularly in Chapter XI

of *English as we Speak it in Ireland*, evoke, like much of Carleton, an Ireland of great vitality, confidence and rich folk-life upon which the Famine was to cast dark clouds.⁴

Quite clearly Joyce grew up with a great sense of place and a great love of the landscape, language, music, tradition and people of his native locale and, by extension, of Ireland as a whole. Inspired by the influences imbibed from his local region during his formative years, he went on to write his massive range of publications on Irish history, place names, legends and music and so helped to foster an informed awareness of this great heritage among the Irish people generally. His work was a major contribution to the growth of cultural nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was conscious of this new mood as he remarked in his preface to the *Social History of Ancient Ireland* that he sees this publication as timely "more especially now when there is an awakening of interest in the Irish language, and in Irish lore of every kind, unprecedented in our history".⁵

The great achievements of Joyce in these scholarly fields have been, and will continue to be, discussed at other sessions of the Joyce School. On this occasion attention is focussed on his work as an educationist. Though this was his professional career for almost fifty years, from 1845 to 1893, it has tended to receive much less attention than his scholarly work in other areas. Yet, his career in teaching and his achievements within the formal education systems were very significant and he wielded great influence, particularly on Irish national education, in the second half of the nineteenth century. This article sets out to delineate the key features of his career, to discuss his work in the educational context of the time, and to analyse and evaluate his achievements.

JOYCE'S CAREER AS AN EDUCATOR

It may be helpful to give a general outline of the path of his educational career at the outset. He became a national teacher at the age of eighteen in 1845. He taught locally at Glenruea for a period. From 1848 to 1851, he taught in the Mechanics Institute at Clonmel. He was appointed to serve in the National Board's new District Model Schools of West Dublin at Inchicore where he taught until 1856. From 1854, it became clear that a new drive was afoot within the inspectorate to improve significantly the organisation and performance of national schools. Joyce was one of fifteen teachers specially selected to undergo a six-months training course in 1856-57 for a new category of personnel known as "Organisers". This was to be a special task force, trained under the tutelage of Mr. Patrick Keenan, then Head Inspector and the prime mover in this new drive for efficiency. The

training course finished in March 1857 and for the next four years Joyce moved around the country helping teachers to organise their schools along new lines. In 1860, he was appointed Headmaster of the Boys No. 1 Model School in Marlborough Street, Dublin, which was the most prestigious school under the National Board. Joyce also helped in the practical training of teacher trainees in this capacity. In February 1863, he had completed his magnum opus on schooling which was to prove enormously influential, the *Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching*.

Even at this stage Joyce showed himself to be an indefatigable worker: he had studied for, and was awarded, his B.A. degree by Trinity College in 1861, and received his M.A. degree in 1864. When the famous Powis Commission of Inquiry into National Education was sitting in 1868-1870 he presented written and oral evidence to it. In 1874, he was appointed Professor in the Board's Training College in Marlborough Street, and became Principal of the Female Training College there about 1889. These positions gave Joyce a major influential role in teacher training for twenty years.

Meanwhile, in 1869, he had published the first volume of his monumental *The Origins and History of Irish Names of Places*. In 1870, Trinity College honoured him with the degree of Doctor of Laws. This academic achievement and honour did not distract Joyce from concern for day-to-day issues in schooling. With the opening up of clerkship positions in the Civil Service after 1870, Joyce wrote *How to Prepare for Civil Service Competition* as a guide for aspirants to civil service occupations.

As a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, Joyce compiled *A Grammar of the Irish Language* in 1878. This was a most timely and useful publication coinciding with the new Intermediate Education Act of 1878 which included Celtic, or the Irish language, among the subjects for the new payment-by-results examinations of the Commission of Intermediate Education. It was also timely, for in the following year, owing largely to pressure from the preservation society, Irish for the first time was accepted as an extra subject for the payment-by-results system which had been introduced for primary schools in 1872. In 1879, Joyce published his *Old Celtic Romances*, which had a profound impact at home and abroad and greatly influenced the cultural revival movement.

As well as this prolific work in education, place names, Irish language and literature, Joyce also began publishing his works on Irish music and song. He had helped Petrie in his collections in the early fifties but now, in 1873, he himself published *Ancient Irish Music*, an annotated collection of 100 songs which he had collected. This was the first of his four collections of Irish music and song. Joyce made a great contribution to our heritage of song by preserving and putting into print over a thousand airs.

In the early eighties Joyce, as Professor of the Marlborough Street Training College, was very anxious to promote manual and practical instruction. He devised and implemented courses for student teachers and pupils in the model schools. He continued to promote this cause stating that "the education given in our schools is too exclusively intellectual, too bookish. It is too much an education in words, too little an education in things".⁶ In the 1880s he published *Handicraft for Handy People* and in 1892 *The Teaching of Manual Work in Schools*. He also gave evidence to the Commission on *Manual and Practical Instruction in National Schools, 1897-98*. He can be credited with influencing the changed thinking which led to a radically new curriculum for national schools in 1900. He resigned from the principalship of the Training College in March 1893. Relieved of his administrative responsibilities in the college, he devoted himself more fully to his many educational endeavours on the broader front. From the point of view of schools, one of his most significant works was his *Child's History of Ireland*. In writing it Joyce achieved what had never been accomplished before — a book dealing with the history of Ireland which could be used in national schools with the approbation of all parties. It was the first textbook in Irish history to be sanctioned by the National Board, sanction being accorded in May 1898. Among the other works of Joyce sanctioned by the National Board for use in schools by the turn of the century were:

A Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching
English composition for the use of schools
A Grammar of the Irish language
Irish local names explained
Outlines of the history of Ireland
A reading book in Irish history

As well as the larger works, Joyce was always concerned about the educational need for shorter and cheaper versions for the use of a wider public. Teachers, of course, could draw on a range of Joyce's other publications for their class teaching-works on music and song, topography, history and handicrafts manuals.

Even this brief survey of Joyce's career and involvement with the education system indicates that Joyce's contribution was remarkable and very influential through his work as teacher, as organiser of schools, as director of the model school, as professor and principal of the Central Training College, and as author of a range of publications which directly and indirectly had a very large shaping influence on Irish schooling in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is now desirable to retrace our steps and examine in more detail the seminal influences on his thinking, the philosophy and approach to schooling which he espoused and to evaluate the influence he exerted.

JOYCE'S EARLY VIEWS ON SCHOOLING

Joyce's own schooling took place in the hedge schools of his local region. In his *English As We Speak It in Ireland*, published when he was over eighty years of age, Joyce gives us very vivid recollections of his schooldays and the type of schooling involved. He retained warm memories of the teachers he encountered: "I remember with pleasure several of my old teachers; rough and unpolished men, many of them, but excellent and solid scholars and full of enthusiasm for learning — which enthusiasm they communicated to their pupils". Joyce admired these masters for their devotion to learning. He stated:

*There was extraordinary intellectual activity among the schoolmasters of those times, some of them indeed thought and dreamed and talked of nothing else but learning. . . . In their eyes learning was the main interest of the world.*⁸

Joyce drew a clear line of distinction between the higher class of hedge school, offering intermediate-type education, and those hedge schools of an elementary character. He attended four of the former type, and regarded that of John Landon of Mitchelstown as "one of the best schools in Munster". When describing his time at Simon Cox's school at Galbally he paints a delightful pen picture of his arriving early at school in the morning to play his fife for the marvellous dancing of the other pupils.

Joyce gave more detail on the general run of elementary hedge schools and because of the influence this experience had on him, as I believe, it is relevant to quote his description of them. He wrote of them:

*These schools were very primitive and rude. There was no attempt at classification (of pupils), and little or no class teaching, the children were taught individually. Each bought whatever Reading Book he or his parents pleased. . . . The pupils were called up one by one each to read his own lesson — whole or part for the master, and woe betide him if he stumbled at too many words.*⁹

Later in his *Handbook* Joyce was to remark of this system; "This, of course, was in most cases an enormous waste of the teacher's time and labour".¹⁰

Joyce also remarked on the sparsity of school equipment in the hedge schools:

There was hardly ever any school furniture — no desks of any kind — one or two ordinary forms placed at the walls; some chairs with sugaun seats, several little stools, and, perhaps a few big stones. In

*fine weather the scholars spent much of their time in the front yard in the open air, where they worked their sums or wrote their copies with the copybooks resting on their knees.*¹¹

Joyce further commented on the lack of system in the courses pursued:

*There were no fixed programmes and no Inspectors and each master taught just whatever he liked best (in addition to the ordinary elementary subjects) and lit up his own special tastes among his pupils.*¹²

In my view, while Joyce respected the schoolmasters for their devotion to learning and their enthusiasm, he deprecated the lack of organised system, sequential programmes, class teaching, school equipment and so on. When he himself became a teacher in the relatively new national school system in 1845, he observed a different approach at work and may have been converted to its advantages for mass schooling. Certainly, following the course with Keenan in 1856-57 he was an outright champion of "the system" approach. It could be said that the great crusade of his educational life was to promote the systematic and organised approach to classroom management and teaching method. He became a "systems man" *par excellence* and played a major role in the structuring of classroom life in Irish national schools for a number of generations.

The relationship between Keenan and Joyce is a fascinating and important one. Between them they exercised great influence on the development of Irish national schooling. They were almost contemporaneous in age, Keenan being one year older. They both came from the same social class background. They were both Catholics. They attended hedge schools. When they became employed in the national school system they entered at the assistant teacher level. They both rose in the ranks through their individual skills within the system. Keenan taught in the Model School, rose to become Head Inspector and from 1871 to 1894 presided as Resident Commissioner over the whole system. He was knighted for his services to education. As we have noted, Joyce was a key organiser for national schools, became Headmaster of the Central Model School and was a Professor and then Principal of the Central Teaching Training college until he resigned, the year before Keenan, in 1893. Through his *Handbook* in particular, he exercised a huge influence on teachers in training and on in-service teachers in the field. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Trinity for his scholarship.

Both men had availed of the ladder of meritocracy, which became a feature of life in the second half of the nineteenth century. Both men were attached to the values of meritocracy; they were committed to hard work and perseverance and were anxious to ensure that others who exhibited these qualities might be rewarded. They valued a com-

petitive climate. Keenan, in particular, was a public champion of the payment-by-results approach, which operated in national schools from 1872 to 1899 and in secondary schools from 1878 to 1924. This approach to schooling was part of a prevailing climate of accountability which dominated this era, coupled with a great public confidence on the value of examinations in education.¹³

Both Joyce and Keenan had an interest in the Irish language and its role in the Gaeltachtaí. They also shared an interest in manual crafts and their value in the education process. Above all, however, they shared a belief in the value of organised, systematic classroom management and teaching and this needs to be examined in some detail.

Keenan's general report as Head Inspector for 1856, which ran to over eighty tightly printed pages, includes an illuminating account of his strong conviction about the need for improved organisation in schools and describes the extraordinary detail of his approach to the training course for the fifteen teachers selected as the new "organisers". Keenan quite clearly set out to create a uniform system. He held that "a system comprises a myriad of parts which require attention"¹⁴ and in the course of his lectures he certainly gave detailed attention to such a myriad of issues. In Keenan's view "there are many ways of doing almost anything, but there is generally one way which is best".¹⁵ As far as Keenan was concerned, he had a fair idea of "the best way" and was determined that it should penetrate through to the classroom floors.

The organisers were expected to pay the closest of attention to his ideas:

I required the Organisers to take full notes of my lectures and to transcribe them afterwards at their leisure and submit them to me for perusal and correction".¹⁶

As well as the lectures, there were workshops, school visits under Keenan's supervision and exemplar work in Dublin and Belfast. Keenan was greatly influenced by the work ethic of the day and saw the ideal school day as one of constant employment:

The great principle which gives life and character to any sound system of organisation is that every child, at every moment of the day, ought to be actively employed . . . the spirit of the whole organisation would consist in the unflagging nature of the work from morning to evening.¹⁷

Joyce would seem to have been a very diligent student of Keenan's and became a great disciple of his views. Of the fifteen organisers it is Joyce's work which was featured in Keenan's report — Joyce's exemplar organising work in a Co. Antrim school. His preliminary

report, his final report and the subsequent report by the inspector on Joyce's work were all published. Keenan added a further comment praising the "effectiveness of the (Joyce's) organising system" and expressing satisfaction that "the machinery of the system is still working with such freshness".

Keenan, commenting on the Co. Antrim school, went on to state: "from being one of the worst schools which I had ever visited this, during the short stay of the Organiser, was changed into one of the best."¹⁸ This public approbation of Joyce by Keenan would do him no harm in his career path and over the years it would seem that both men, who were to occupy key positions in the education system, remained on close terms.

JOYCE'S HANDBOOK OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND METHODS OF TEACHING

In his report for 1856 Keenan had lamented the lack of a handbook, or manual on school management which would guide Irish teachers and student teachers. Perhaps it was Keenan who urged Joyce to undertake the task of writing such a handbook, which he had completed by February 1863.

In the preface to the *Handbook* Joyce paid generous acknowledgement to the influence of Keenan:

*This Handbook may be said to have originated in those (Keenan's) lectures. I have incorporated the most important of them, and they form a very considerable portion of the book. On my own part, I have given principal results of my experience, both as teacher and as organiser.*¹⁹

One finds many echoes of Keenan through the book including the almost verbatim expression of Keenan's "principle of perpetual employment" whereby "every child in the school should be engaged at some useful employment at every moment during the entire day".²⁰ At one stage in the book there is an extended quotation directly from Keenan's 1856 report on "Lesson Notes", which was retained through the later editions.

Nevertheless, while the inspiration and general approach may have been significantly influenced by Keenan, it is still Joyce's own work. What he found in Keenan was a concordance with and articulation of views which he held and endorsed himself. He took them further and developed new insights. His four years of practical experience as an Organiser and his many meetings with managers and teachers in the process, greatly enriched his understanding of on-the-ground issues in Irish schools. As Joyce remarked in the preface:

*There is not, I believe, a plan, opinion or suggestion in the whole book that has not been carried out successfully either by myself or by others under my immediate direction.*²¹

This first-hand experience and experiment in a variety of schools over a period of four years gave Joyce a very sure base on which to build his advice and recommendations.

Joyce was also at pains to emphasise that his *Handbook* was direct and practical in character: "While carefully avoiding all mere theory, I have endeavoured to render the instruction contained in it plain, useful and practical".²²

There may have been a touch of disingenuity about this in his wishing to allay a traditional prejudice against "theory" among his potential readers. Most of Joyce's writing is, in any case, of a very direct character, getting straight to the point without undue elaboration. However, there is a distinct educational theory expounded, in the book and there are ideological concerns underlying issues, whether Joyce was conscious of them or not.

Part I of the *Handbook* is taken up with what were aptly titled "Mechanical Arrangements". These chapters go into a great amount of specific detail on school building, furniture, organisation of pupils, timetables, discipline, order, cleanliness etc. They are largely contextually bound and relate closely to contemporary attitudes about such essential features of schools. A modern reader may find them rather dull and unduly specific, but they should be viewed in the context of their time, as regards the stage of development of Irish schools and schooling. School systems evolve, almost in an organic way, through stages of development. At an early stage of development there is a need for specific attention to many features which in a later, more advanced phase may not need to be approached in the same way. The guidelines in the *Handbook* would seem to have served a valuable need at the era for which it was written.

Part II of the *Handbook*, dealing with teaching methods, is less contextually restricted and has many interesting features on pedagogical techniques. In the opening paragraph Joyce enunciated an important principle with which he wished to underpin his approach. It is of perennial significance and is worth quoting at some length:

The best teaching is that which leads the child to think or work so as to acquire knowledge or conquer difficulties by his own effort. The best teacher is he who makes the child do most for himself. But this must be done, not by severity or coercion, but by gentle and persuasive management. In the process of teaching, the teacher should be the guide, and he should direct the child's mind in the process of discovery or self-learning, by encouragement, by questioning, by illustration and by sympathy.

*He should teach the child how to think, and should lead him to love work for the love of knowledge and for the pleasure of overcoming difficulties.*²³

Joyce referred to the root meaning of the verb "educare" as a leading or drawing forth. He also drew an important distinction between "Education" and "Instruction" (or "Information"). He remarked that:

*Instruction gives information, but there its function mostly ends. Education gives information also, but it does more — something more important — it calls forth power — power which will afterwards help the child to obtain information for himself.*²⁴

Joyce clarifies the difference between inductive and deductive teaching, and the role of each. Along the same lines he lays great emphasis on developing the art of questioning: "far more skill is required to put questions properly, and much of the efficiency of the teaching depends on them". In the various forms of questioning set forth, in line with his emphasis on education "he lays stress on the value of Socratic questioning".²⁵

Joyce laid most emphasis on the "3 Rs" with their subdivisions. He also dealt with Geography, and Mensuration and Euclid as exemplars of "Extra Subjects". The chapters on "Reading" and "Geography" are particularly interesting to a modern reader. "Reading, that is intelligent reading", he stated, "is far the most important of the elementary subjects". It was the key to many things; "this ability to read is a blessing to him (the pupil) for he can turn it to infinite use and enjoyment at every period of life".²⁶

Breaking from an older tradition, Joyce concurred with Keenan on the idea of dividing up the school day into short class periods, usually thirty minutes each. The timetable was to be given a very dominant role in dictating the pattern of the school day: "One lesson should not encroach even one minute on the time of another".²⁷

This inaugurated a rigidity in the organisation of teaching activities which was relaxed only a century later. Another feature championed by Keenan and Joyce which would not coincide with the current curricular policy in national schools was the tight demarcation of subjects into specific components, as distinct from an integrative, more holistic approach to the curriculum. Regular examinations of pupils in all subject areas was a further feature valued by them, and most strikingly manifested in the payment-by-results system for the last thirty years of the century. One key disadvantage of the operation of this system was that in practice it discouraged the type of teaching put forward as the basic guideline by Joyce, and quoted above. At the best of times well educated, trained and confident teachers are required to rise to the challenge of "Education" rather than "Instruction". At this

period of the nineteenth century circumstances did not generally favour this, and the nature of the examining that took place under payment by results tended to foster rote and mechanical learning rather than teaching for meaning or for pupil self-reliance.²⁸

Joyce, in his preface, had said: "This book has been written with special reference to the wants of Irish national schools". In view of the phenomenal success of the book it seems to have answered these "wants". The book went through twenty-five editions before his death and sold about 100,000 copies. Never before, or since, has such a work had such sales in Ireland. For generations of Irish teachers the *Handbook* was their central reference book. It occupied a pivotal role in the system, prescribed for student courses and for monitors' and teachers' examinations. Joyce was careful to adapt the material periodically for new editions to keep it as he said "fully abreast with the educational requirements of the present day".

In later editions he added new chapters taking account of Froebelian Kindergarten theory and adding a chapter on the "Human Mind in Relation to Education". By the 1890s some inspectors expressed criticism of the over-reliance on the Joyce's textbook on "Method" and called for a wider and deeper approach than that which dealt with pedagogy "merely as a craft".²⁹ Winds of change were blowing in educational thought and an era was clearly passing. New courses for training colleges were introduced in 1897 and a radically altered school programme was established in 1900, whereby new men sought new responses to the developing educational system. While Joyce's *Handbook* gradually fell out of fashion, it would be a mistake to consign Joyce's educational thought to a past era. As will be demonstrated later, in some ways he heralded in the new era and shared some of the curricular concerns which were being brought to birth. As regards the *Handbook* one could legitimately posit the case that no single text ever influenced Irish teachers and schooling as much as Joyce's pioneering effort of 1863.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULAR CONCERNS OF JOYCE

In any examination of Joyce's role in education the *Handbook* has to be a central consideration; but it still remains just one element. We are vouchsafed a remarkable insight into Joyce's running of a school in his written memorandum to the Powis Commission of Inquiry 1868-70. As might be expected, it emerges clearly that Joyce was putting his system into effective practice in the Central Model School. He went into great detail on the organisation of the pupils into nine divisions, the order of the school day, the strict punctuality and so on. The headmaster kept all things under this overall control. The monitors, pupil-teachers and teachers were all clearly accountable to him. The

headmaster was said to be: "constantly teaching and examining the drafts, and directing the whole machinery; so that any remissness or error of judgement is sure to be at once detected and remedied".

As well as his other duties, Joyce also taught the monitors and pupil-teachers, examined them in portions of the *Handbook* and went among the trainee teachers on teaching practice "correcting what is wrong and showing what is right" as well as examining the trainees' "Observation Notes".³⁰

One wonders whether the "system" was taken too far in the over-reliance on competition and regular examination for pupil promotion from draft to draft or from a lower to higher division. Joyce stated:

*Such is their general anxiety to succeed at the examinations, that you may sometimes see a boy, who from any cause has failed to pass, return to his class crying bitterly at the disappointment.*³¹

Perhaps a little of the carefree spirit Joyce remembered from his old hedge school in Galbally might not have gone amiss in his own regime in Marlborough Street.

Joyce always praised the virtues of hard work and application. The educational ladder was for him a tough climb; there was no royal road to learning and success. He held:

*A pupil must literally fight his way at every step of his upward progress through the school, and the boy who has in this manner reached the highest class has received a very important training in self-exertion and perseverance.*³²

Joyce no doubt wanted to impress the investigators who in all probability shared this credo of Mid-Victorian Britain. In any case, the investigators reported favourably on the school:

*The school is useful and well conducted and, considering the size of the room and frequent changes, the discipline is good.*³³

The report on the training college itself in Marlborough Street was very unfavourable in many respects, which no doubt was noted by officialdom. The report referred to Joyce as "the zealous and efficient headmaster" of the Model School. One of the major outcomes of the Powis Report was the adoption of the payment-by-results policy for Irish national schools, modelled on a blueprint submitted by Patrick Keenan. Keenan was appointed Resident Commissioner in 1871 and oversaw the introduction of the new policy in 1872. On the resignation of Professor Butler from the Training College in October 1874, Joyce was appointed to succeed him from December 1874. It is interesting to note that, according to the Minutes of the Board, Joyce's was the

only name which appeared before the Board and he was nominated directly by the Board to the position.³⁴ In the years immediately prior to this Joyce had published three very different kinds of book — a book on Irish place names, a book on ancient Irish music and a book on competing for Civil Service Examinations. This latter was very much a work of its period, answering to the great attention on public competitive examinations. Joyce's aim was to help young people to know:

*exactly what they were about while preparing for the struggle. To supply a guide to all such young persons, to demonstrate to them the necessity for hard and persevering work, to show them what to study and how to study.*³⁵

For many young people the way was opening for career paths in the civil service and no doubt Joyce's guide filled a need for them. It is a book limited to its use as an examination manual.

Joyce's *Handbook* reflected the curricular balance of the payment by results programme, with its heavy emphasis on the 3 Rs. However, there is much evidence that he was concerned that school programmes might be more culturally enriched. The Irish language had never formed part of the national school curriculum in the early decades and Irish history and other aspects of Irish culture and tradition were neglected. Keenan in the 1850s had put in an eloquent plea for Irish to be used in schools in Gaeltacht areas but the Commissioners ignored his suggestions. It was not until 1904 that the bilingual programme was established. Nevertheless, from the early seventies some significant changes were effected in relation to a greater orientation to things Irish. In the revision of the reading books (very central to the whole curriculum) which took place in the early 1870s a much greater emphasis was placed on the Irish dimension of things. As well as becoming more simplified in vocabulary the books were to contain lessons on Irish antiquities, Irish beauty places, Ireland's mineral resources and so on, and poems relating to Ireland. Keenan had earlier urged the inclusion of material such as Moore's melodies and, of course, by this time Joyce was focussing attention on Irish music and song. It is not possible to be precise about Joyce's specific input into the changed approach. One surmises that in view of his relationship with Keenan, it may have been fairly direct. What is certain is that his studies over the years on place names, music, antiquities, history and legend helped to create both a favourable climate and provide background material for lesson compilers.

As has been noted earlier, Joyce's *Grammar of the Irish Language* was produced at a very opportune time in 1878. In that year, the Board accepted the case of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language in breaking new ground and for the first time sanctioned the use of Irish in schools as an extra subject. In 1883, a further concession

was given in that Irish was allowed to be taught as an ordinary subject in schools provided that it did not interfere with the general work of the school. In 1878, also, Irish was accepted as a full examination subject by the new Intermediate Board and Joyce was to act as examiner for the Board. He was very conscious of the influence of the Preservation Society, acknowledging in his preface "that they have lately given a great impetus to Celtic Studies". He was a Council member of the Society himself and he acknowledged the help of Society members in preparing the grammar. He considered that there was a great need "of a very cheap and simple textbook in Irish grammar" and moved to respond to the need.^{35a}

Joyce was concerned that Irish history would be more widely known, understood and appreciated and he made great contributions to this end. His *Child's History of Ireland* was the first book on Irish history to be sanctioned by the Board for use in national schools. It was to be a huge success, selling over 86,000 copies, and it is still in use in some national schools. This engagingly written, well illustrated text was aimed at making "the history of Ireland interesting and attractive", and it succeeded admirably in this. The subject had been fraught with controversy and prejudice at the time, and in a country which is still deeply divided on the nature of its history it seems appropriate to quote from Joyce's *Preface*, indicating his approach:

*Above all I have tried to write soberly and moderately, avoiding exaggeration and bitterness, pointing out extenuating circumstances when it was just and right to do so, giving credit where credit is due, and showing fair play all round. A writer may accomplish all this while sympathising heartily, as I do, with Ireland and her people. Perhaps this book written as it is in such a broad and just spirit, may help to foster mutual feelings of respect and toleration among Irish people of different parties, and may teach them to love and admire what is good and noble in their history, no matter where found.*³⁶

Joyce's book incorporates a fascinating weave of social, cultural and political history, which was a triumph in his generation and opened the way for many to an enlightened appreciation of their cultural heritage. As was noted earlier a range of Joyce's other works in this general field was also sanctioned by the Board.

Joyce also firmly believed in the value of singing, music and drawing in education. These subjects formed part of the programmes in the Model School when he was headmaster there in the 1860s. He also promoted these subjects in the training college. From 1872 they existed in the national schools as extra subjects, taken by a minority of about 20-25 per cent of schools. Manual instruction or handicraft was another subject about which he became very enthusiastic. With the backing of

Keenan, Joyce introduced Handicraft into the training college in 1883. This was pioneering work, as he later remarked:

*In drawing up the programme I had only to fall back upon my own conception as an educationalist, and also on my experience as a fair general handicraftsman all round.*³⁷

In 1885, Handicraft was made an extra subject for senior pupils in national schools and, again, it was Joyce who drew up the two-year programme. It was not taken up widely but Joyce developed his own thinking on the subject and he published his booklet *The Teaching of Manual Work in Schools* in 1892. In his introduction he deprecated the effect of the over-intellectual, bookish schooling on offer and its tendency to foster "a sort of secret contempt of manual labour of all kinds", as being not respectable. He went on to emphasise unequivocally in heavy print:

*Manual instruction should be placed among the ordinary branches in the programme of every school, and all children, boys and girls, from infancy upwards, should be taught in school to use their hands at some sort of work.*³⁸

He argued for the educational value of introducing a variety of this work into the school day and set out his aim as follows:

*The aim of this manual instruction is not to teach trades, but to make children dexterous in using their hands at various simple kinds of work. It is an introduction to — and a preparation for — Industrial and Technical Education, but it is not Technical Education itself.*³⁹

When Archbishop Walsh of the Belmore Commission questioned Joyce rather tetchily on his earlier programme in handiwork, criticising him for not emphasising the educational aspect, Joyce accepted the criticism with good grace and justifiably pointed out that his earlier work had been pioneering. He pointed out with dignity that his later pamphlet might be taken "as an improved and revised version of my views".⁴⁰ Joyce had also argued in his pamphlet of 1892 that Drawing should be taught to all school children.

JOYCE AND A NEW DIRECTION FOR EDUCATION

Quite clearly Joyce was pushing for a new emphasis in national schooling and was a contributory to the climate of thought which gave rise to the setting up of the Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction

in National Schools (Belmore) in 1897. An examination of Joyce's evidence to the commission makes this even more clear. Though retired from a system to which he had contributed so much, what is most striking is his forthright appraisal of much of what had gone before and his unequivocal call for a new approach.

In the course of his evidence to the Belmore Commission Joyce argued strongly for the inclusion of Manual Instruction, Object Drawing and Object Lessons as compulsory subjects in the schools. These proposals were endorsed by the Commission in its report as part of their proposals for a wider, more varied child-centred school programme. Joyce's modification of Froebelian ideas, whereby Kindergarten would be taken as a subject from age three up to third class in association with other subjects, and then followed through as Manual Instruction in the senior classes and imbued with the same educational outlook, was a key recommendation adopted in the final report of the commission. However, it was Joyce's attitude to payment by results that was most striking. In a remarkably honest testimony we find Joyce condemning the system as a failure despite his earlier belief in it:

At that time when it was introduced we all expected great good from it. I was amongst those who had something to do with the drawing up of the Results programme, and we all welcomed it, and after it had been in operation for a little while it did produce great benefits. It improved the attendance in schools and pulled up the negligent teachers. . . . We find that after 25 years it has banished the power of thinking amongst the pupils, and completely banished education in that sense. For instance, in reading, children read over the lessons, the simplest lessons, and they do not know or care or want to know the meaning. . . . I am anxious to bring out the fact that the results system has rendered children incapable of thinking. . . . The effects of the results system pervade everything . . . arithmetic, grammar and geography.⁴¹

It emerges clearly that Joyce's disillusionment was that the operation of the system cut across the essential thrust of his emphasis on teaching method as set out in the *Handbook*. This had emphasised the value of teaching children to think, surmise and imagine for themselves. However, what had happened was a closing down, rather than an opening up, of children's minds and the emphasis Joyce had placed on good pedagogic questioning had been squeezed out of practice in the classrooms. As he remarked, "the teachers are bound down by the results programme". There is a nobility in the manner in which Joyce accepts partial culpability and now urges with all his force the abandonment of a system which he has come to realise as being uneducational:

*We were all at fault. We thought it would turn out a blessing, and it is very much the reverse; and I am of the opinion that no reformation can be made in the National system either literary or manual, until the results system is completely abolished and another system put in its place.*⁴²

He now saw it "as a baneful influence on the education of the country" and, as he colloquially put it, "payment by results should be swept off the face of the earth".

Such a call by a man of such experience and status must have been a significant influence on the Belmore Commission's recommendation that payment by results should be abolished for Irish national schools. This happened in the case of the ordinary curriculum with the introduction of the revised programme for national schools in 1900. This was a child-centred programme with a wide curriculum, and it promoted discovery learning by children, so dear to Joyce. The new century introduced a new era for national education, an era which was enabled to develop further from the structuring work which had been accomplished in earlier decades, and to which Joyce had greatly contributed.

CONCLUSION

P. W. Joyce had retired as principal of the teaching college in 1893 at the age of 66. He was to go on for a further twenty-one years contributing to Irish education and scholarship in a remarkably productive way. One greatly admires the freshness and vigour of his educational thinking, which could leave an old tradition behind and herald in a new era. One must admire also the extraordinary range of his writings and his involvements in academic societies up to his death. Among such roles he had been a council member of the Royal Irish Academy and President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. In a life, which stretched from before Catholic Emancipation in Glenosheen to the World War of 1914, when he died in Rathmines, he had contributed nobly to Irish society and culture, and left them greatly enriched by his achievements. His contribution as an educationalist was no small part of that achievement and legacy. I feel that he would be glad that it is being commemorated among his own people, in his own region.

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