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A BOOK REVIEW OF EDUCATION AFTER THE WAR

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Author: John Haden Badley

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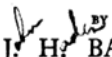
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EDUCATION AFTER THE WAR


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"That they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

Oxford
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ABSTRACT

Published in 1917, at the tail end of the First World War, John Haden Badley's *Education After the War* explores the war's impact on the British educational system. When dissected thoroughly and analyzed carefully, Badley demonstrated compelling, provocative, and legible argumentations that the war ultimately plunged the nation to the point of reconsidering its treatment of the education sector, which often lagged behind other politically backed priorities. In the book, he also promoted the belief that the optics of education should be redirected from being an arbiter of the individual's future subjecting an individual to a machine-like setup, to a more liberal, student-centered approach, which ultimately encourages inquisitiveness, strengthening of research abilities, and happiness, to a relative extent. While given marginal attention in the work, Badley has also included a promising yet critical evaluation of the issue of militarism and equality in terms of women's education. Furthermore, like any other referential work, the book has suffered from analytical deficiencies or interpretative shortcomings that relatively limited the presentation of its meritorious contents. In sum, despite being published in the early 20th century, Badley's work remains strikingly pertinent in the present, as the essence of its contents is still evident in the intellectual debate of the proper educational approach for the interests of the children.

Keywords: John Haden Badley, Bedales School, British Education, Education, First World War

I. INTRODUCTION

“The end of the war may see only the beginning rather than the end of the troubles of our civilization” (Ellwood 1919, 91). It is the prophetic and harrowing statement expressed by American sociologist Charles A. Ellwood in 1919. While the statement implied that there is a “clear, present, and imminent danger” faced by the “Western Civilization” caused by the relative, inherent, and progressive failure of the society rather than the ramifications of the war itself, it revealed the efficacy and vitality of education as the panacea for the root cause of the problem itself. After all, education is treated as “a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment” (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954).

While for the readers in the 21st-century eyes, Ellwood’s prophecy about civilizational downfall in relation to education might not seem like it, for the danger in such cases has matured and even metastasized to problems far beyond what Ellwood or other scholars of the time period have ever imagined, it is not beyond the responsibility of the book reviewer to concede that the seed of recognizing education as an important social driver was planted in the post-First World War world. After all, it is imperative to probe further into the imponderables pertinent to the existing educational system, which allows introspection into the baffling ideas and societal credo that permitted and permeated the wartime conditions. Henceforth, we have here a 1917 book authored by prominent English author and founder of the Bedales School, John Haden Badley, simply titled *Education After the War*. It is undisputable that the Badley, as a founder of an educational institution, in his work, attempted to critique the existing British educational system, which is decrepit and molding children to be a machine not as a man, and provide salubrious solutions to the raised issues for the betterment of the society.

II. SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS

It is befitting to commence recapitulating Badley’s appraisal on the nature of British education after the First World War, not with the introduction part, but in an unorthodox yet equally important segment, in that of his preface. Most (if not all) reviewers tend to dismiss the preface as a mere additive to the work, but it provides the criterion as to what will be the scope and rationale behind the work. For Badley, speaking of the extent and intent of his work, his dialectical account attempted to intimate the cause of “anyone who has formed convictions [about educational changes] is bound to contribute them to the discussion” (Badley 1917, p. v). Badley attempted to provide a work that would satiate the inadequacy of works underscoring the condition of the British education, which he claimed, for its part, “the dullest of subjects to write or read of” (Badley 1917, p. v).

In his introduction, confronted with the lessons and perils of the unknown after the end of the First World War, Badley shared the optimistic view that there will be gains that will become permanent and could force the readjustment of certain beliefs and traditions, whether towards a positive or negative end (Badley 1917, pp. 2-3). These “gains” are the byproducts of being liberated from the predominantly German educational approach, which allowed the British to exude any credo of nationalism by starting to thoroughly introspect and reconsider the “methods and aims” of *education* (Badley 1917, p. 5). Badley then defined *education* not merely as a statistical instrument used by politicians in their campaigns or a mere topic under the sessions of the parliament, but “it is the training of the individual child to enable him to take his full part in life” (Badley 1917, p. 7). Nevertheless, to ensure the stability of educational approaches and programs, at the very heart of it lies a proper gauging of the national and the individual aspects, which, when enjoined, will bring fruitful results for the individual and society.

To divine some logic to the barbell approach of Badley, in the immediate chapter, entitled “The National Aspect of Education,” he contends that the primary need of the post-First World War British society is “more education”. Fathoming the intent of Badley in his statement that the nation needed “more education,” he surmised that “the great mass of the people must be more fully educated if they are to realize the nature of these problems, and take an intelligent part in their practical solution” (Badley 1917, p. 12). In addition, Badley had demystified the real meaning of the determiner “more”. He reasoned out that to ensure that the citizens will take an intelligent part in providing solutions to the nagging societal problems, the British educational system must enforce a higher age of compulsory education, extension of educational institutions offering continuing education for technical or “elementary” graduates, permitting the admission of any individual regardless of sex, health conditions, and economic class, and establishing more technical (vocational) schools will see to it that the *national* aspect of education is sheltered and attained safely (Badley 1917, pp. 13-14).

In Chapter Three, Badley turned his sights on the *individual* aspect of education. Badley adheres to the belief that education is concerned with “[the] development of the whole human being, and with all sides of life, personal as well as social, and spiritual no less than material” (Badley 1917, pp. 64-65). After all, Badley realized that the individual and national education is neatly intertwined because the national level approach to education primed the grounds for a healthy harvest and decide the apt crops to be planted while the individual approach ensures that the selected harvested crops will bring fruitful results (Badley 1917, p. 66). However, the individualized approach to education is inclusive within the focus of making the individual as a person worthy of engaging in healthy discourses, not as a cog in a machinery, which became the hallmark of Edwardian education (the type of education prevailing in the pre-1914 British society). To advocate a sincere transfer of ideals to the next generation of students, Badley advocated for three essential requisites. The teacher must possess a: (1) a sound conception of the word “education”; (2) exuberate the ideals of intellectual and moral honesty; and (3) the realization of the national ideals (Badley 1917, pp. 68-71).

Moreover, as one reads through Badley's work, it reveals the subtle idleness of the research sector in the United Kingdom at the time, where the students faced a scholastic educational philosophy that did not allow them the liberty to outwit or dispute the teacher or instructor regarding specific grains of knowledge (Badley 1917, p. 84). In short, the "rule of reason" replaced the "rule of authority". The insistence on inquisitiveness, hence research, favors the training of the individual's judgement and, even if sometimes applied too generously, a means of encouragement to become better (Badley 1917, p. 84).

Also, Badley, in Chapter Four, seeks to address in what he sees as the "urgent problems" of British education: The citizenship of women and National Service. He stated that women, which as of this time has earned the societal right to declare themselves equal to their male counterparts, must also be recipients of the right to access educational opportunities to equate the "equality of training" needed of them, in all of their endeavors (Badley 1917, pp. 102, 104). Though, Badley admitted that the women's road to educational attainment is bound to face a danger, in that of expecting "the same results" to that of a man. Since, he frankly stressed on the dilemma faced by British women at the time, "equality does not necessarily mean identity of work or treatment" (Badley 1917, pp. 106-107).

Badley proceeded to lay down his arguments on the advantages and disadvantages of the compulsory military training, as mandated by the Military Service Act.² This service to the nation is a site of an interesting juxtaposition of the prevailing wartime British stance and that of the immediate postwar setting wherein Badley hoped that "war" shall not dominate in the thoughts of the children but the lessons learned must be fused in their minds to shape future institutions (Badley 1917, p. 109). Badley invoked a venerable hypothesis in terms of having a separate time for individuals to receive general physical training of the body, mind, and spirit wherein, when honed holistically, its intent is "implanting an ideal of national service, and giving it a practical direction, without encouraging a militarist spirit, or sacrificing civil to military requirements" (Badley 1917, p. 115).

Badley concludes with a conspectus of the main points he had stressed. Indubitably, it is clear in his summary that he challenges his readers to introspect on the present British educational system by providing a seemingly authoritative account of the "hows" and "whys" to render a proper remedy for the identified problems. Given the sparseness of related works, Badley's parting words about the future of British education still ring true or provide the necessary push to any individual imbued with a hopeful cause for education: "[...] there is much, very much, to be done. And though we cannot hope ourselves

² In 1916, the British Parliament enacted the Military Service Act, which obliged all able-bodied men of 18 to 41 years old to be conscripted for military service under the armed forces of the British Empire. The act also ensured that there were limitations on who actually got conscripted. Section 2 of the Act stated that the exemptions are as follows: men who were already serving under the Royal British Navy; a religious minister; those who are deemed detrimental to the national interest (such as those who are incarcerated or deemed delinquents by the government); men, when called up for war, that will experience pecuniary hardship owing to their exceptional financial obligations; men who were deemed and certified by the local government to be working or possess the quality of, on an endeavor of national importance; and those who are proven to be medically unfit for service. All of those who were classified as *exempted* must get a "certificate of exemption" to their respective local tribunal, though, the act granted the same tribunal to thoroughly review the issued certificate, which will cause grounds for revocation.

to do it all, we can set about the work in confidence if we realize the truth of those words [...]” (Badley 1917, p. 125).

III. ANALYSIS

As a reiteration, it has been established that John Haden Badley, the author of the book being reviewed, was the founder of the Bedales School which was founded in recognition of the need for educational or instructional institutions that sees children as “individual” not as “machineries” for determining the future path of the British society. While not explicitly expressed, the hallmarks of the Bedales School were the integration and promotion of equality and simplicity. In turn, it is conspicuous that these values exuded by the Bedales School are inherent and evident in Badley’s work that makes its primary strength.

The term *equality*, when stretched to its broadest definition possible, applies to Badley’s touching of a large swath of sensible points, at the time, in his work, which included but not limited to: the issue of women and educational opportunity, the cost of education, the demand of science and modern languages in lieu of the classics to perform modern responsibilities, the intersection of German educational philosophy with that of the British approach, and the meaningful role of compulsory military education to the honing of children. Though the assertion of equality might not be reflected in terms of how Badley discussed his arguments as there were segments of discourse that were expressed in a longer scale compared to others, but his mere discussion of such came at an opportune time. The presumption is that Badley’s timely discussion of the ailments of British educational system was even more telescoped by being written and published in an opportune, primed time period wherein the citizens are resorting to pleas, appeals, and even protests to the government for social changes.

On the other hand, Badley’s work also emanates *simplicity*. To carry out such intent, Badley has used simple, precise, and straightforward terminology, which facilitated a smoother transfer of ideas between the author and the reader. Badley also never exploited the need for educational reforms by utilizing overly persuasive or telling arguments, which could underhandedly point to bringing actionable confusion rather than conveying the solution.

The next strength of Badley’s work was his integration of the role of educators (teachers) in the present and trekking the road towards realizing improvements in the educational system. Many of the contemporaneous works tried to overlook the roles and responsibilities of educators or go their separate ways by adopting an excessive student-centric approach, which ultimately posed an insurmountable barrier between the student and the teacher. Adding and connecting the missing links not included in the conventional tale sheds light on the pivotal influence of the educators who have helped form the individuals to become who they are and what they could accomplish upon completion. To preserve the

mantle of “good education” of the past and, at the same time, secure the right of future generations to access quality education, Badley expressed that should the curriculum be amended to be deemed fit for the current times, the teacher also must be retrained accordingly (Badley 1917, p. 124).

By retraining, it does not translate only that the teacher will be mandated to attend series of sessions wherein the main agenda is to learn, if not master, the improvements made in the field he or she was teaching will be introduced so for them to emphasize it during class hours. But it also stressed the fact that there is a necessity of readjusting the pedagogical approach in the classroom. The contemporaneous setting was that the teacher was brimming with the authoritative authority to mete out discipline and order in the classroom or inspire their class with imposing ideals which may lead to unintended consequences. Thus, to see to it that there is indeed an improvement in the long run, Badley emphasize the need for leeway to promote inquisitiveness to the students’ proclivities. In short, for Bradley, ensuring learners’ autonomy towards individual discovery guarantees a successful education. The teachers are not roadblocks nor the warden of a prison rather they are to be seen as partners of the children in navigating their way towards maturation.

Having carefully considered and demonstrated the relevance of Badley’s pronouncements on the vitality of competent and liberal teachers not only to the *education* itself but in terms of what it truly meant if seen from a historical lens, it is befitting to also accede the fact that his pronouncements were not alone. In the landmark report published the same year as Badley’s work, the J. Herbert Lewis Report on Juvenile Education In Relation to Employment after War, or more popularly called as the “Lewis Report,” reinforces Badley’s pronouncement that the present British society is *anticipating* the difficulty of providing quality and competent teachers, due to the constraints brought upon by the war (“Juvenile Education In Relation to Employment after War”, 1917, p. 22).

At this juncture of the analysis part, it might not be iniquitous to provide meaningful but brief historical context on the contemporaneous condition of British educational system during John Haden Badley’s time, more specifically, by the time his work has been published. This book reviewer finds it as an opportune time to elucidate why Badley have expressed his arguments or why did he choose these topics as his discussion points, in order to bridge the century-old gap of understanding and appreciation to the eyes and minds of the 21st-century readers.

British education in the early decade of the 20th century is characterized as hierarchical and class-structured, resembling Edwardian society (Sherrington 1981, p. 1). What is even more convoluted is the promulgation of the Act of 1902, which created local education authorities over England and Wales. There is confusion regarding the management of boroughs and counties that are within a population-centric quota, wherein a large number of boroughs and urban districts in the United Kingdom were granted limited spending powers in higher education. At the same time, the proliferation of secondary schools within the country laid the foundation for the need for more teachers trained in formal

training colleges, which would result in obtaining a teacher's certificate. Even with that, improved status for teachers was not accompanied by a relative increase in pay, as their salary is categorized as within or below the "Edwardian-era middle class" (Sherrington 1981, p. 3).

It was during the presidency of J. A. Pease in the Board of Education, come the year 1911, that ushered in an era of "change through consultation". Despite his policies of scrapping the norm of multiplicity of external examinations if a child wanted to enter secondary education and afterwards higher education, and introducing more practical subjects into the curriculum, the policies did not gain much traction on the ground that was ultimately grounded by the repeated legislative, and even from influential people, attempts to discourage and dictate Pease to abandon his liberal educational policies (Sherrington 1981, p. 21). After all, by 1914, the majority seat-holders in the parliament, the Liberal Party, were seemingly lethargic on passing bills relating to claims of educational reform. Education was in competition for attention with other areas, particularly the land campaign of Lloyd George (Sherrington 1981, p. 37). The other competitors to the attention and interest of the legislators include problems in Ireland due to the promulgation of the Government of Ireland Act of 1914 or the "Home Rule Bill", suffrage issue, labor unrest within the country, and the diplomatic tension, which ultimately precipitated the First World War by November 1914.

Moving forward, if the strengths, in addition to the historical context, of Badley's work were well elucidated as much as he was zealous in advocating, then so too would exposing its weaknesses or shortcomings. It is a question of the veracity of historical facts presented and the resiliency of the author's interpretative analysis. In addition, to corroborate and adjudge the information and analysis provided based on the 21st-century understanding is to commit a grievous error on the part of the book reviewer. Thus, the analysis of the inherent weaknesses or factual shortcomings of Badley's account is bound by the information published or known at that time, or whether it was considered a perpetual fact or truth.

The first shortcoming of Badley's work, which is, in part, a conspicuous oversight on Badley's side, is that a necessary ingredient to any individual's educational formation is the role and responsibility of the "parents". Badley expressed a very vague responsibility to the parents. He expressed that the conditions of the children are dependent on their "parents," which is correct on one side (Badley 1917, p. 4). However, he had not included the fact that the parents are the first "teachers" of their children. They are not subjected to the prevailing educational approach or curriculum revisions; rather, they are informed either by their educational attainment, financial standing, or the educational materials in their possession.

Another shortcoming is the absence of statistical data in the form of matrices to further ground Badley's arguments. While in itself, the absence is not technically a sin. It simply means no more than Badley's direct intent to focus more on the persuasive arguments on the steps to be taken to reform the

current British educational system. It seemed to him that there was no need to use matrices or present statistical data to prove his point, for it was not the norm of his period. But when words are used precisely to realize Badley's intention, the addition of the statistical data minimizes the risk of his work being dismissed as propaganda or treated as "shallow," especially if the writer's intent is scaled to a nationwide level. It also engenders the corresponding risk of overgeneralization.

Another weakness of Badley's work was his insufficient attention to curriculum content. Badley allotted a sizeable portion of his work advocating for *how* the students should be taught in an educational facility, but not *what* the students should be taught. It is also indicative of Badley's contempt for the classics, as they represented the "old era", which for him needed a revamp. To his defense, he has included six compulsory subjects: Science, Mathematics, Literature and History, Handworks, Languages, and "special lines of study" (Badley 1917, pp. 57-59). But the issue raised here is *what* the students should learn to keep pace with the post-war setting. Given that the six subjects were deemed "appropriate" for the curriculum, *what exactly* will the instructor teach the student about the subject that will give the individual a realistic fighting chance to compete with the changing times? In addition, it is quite an irony to see that Badley had chosen subjects that will be taught in educational institutions, with the intent to bring the children's minds closer to facts and other people, but, at the same time, advocated for a more individualized approach to education, since "most will show marked preferences and disabilities" (Badley 1917, p. 59). That, at any rate, Badley's concept of liberal education is equated with the natural selection of subjects seemingly determined by the authorities for the children's future path.

The fourth weakness was his ambivalent treatment of religious teachings for the children. On the one hand, he strongly advocated for Bible education in the classroom, as it is the "book that one would sooner wish to have known and loved by all" (Badley 1917, p. 40). But he himself noted that if it were religious dogmas and other Christian tenets, it must be done in churches, for it was their main responsibility. To me, it is quite a misleading expression of opinion. Religious teaching constitutes the study of the sacred text (the Bible) *and* the doctrines and other dogmas, which further grounds the faith of its believers. There is no room for separation between the two. Thus, if Badley strongly advocated for the separation of the two in terms of venue of instruction, it is a grave mistake, as it subjects children to a fragmented and disjointed understanding of the religion into which they were baptized, if there were two different instructors covering the topics.

And lastly, albeit not strictly a weakness but rather something that can be construed as a loose statement, was Badley's equation of education with happiness. "Education must give all their chance," for it is important to have a barometer that will direct us towards our real object in life – and that is happiness (Badley 1917, p. 33). Admittedly, to a certain degree, Badley's equivalence of educational attainment with attainment of a demonstrable condition of elation holds ground. Education negotiates and eventually opens opportunities for an individual to pursue personal and professional advancements, with happiness as its ultimate objective. But what is wrong with Badley's expression is that it suggests

that education is the exclusive avenue for achieving happiness, but in reality, happiness derives from other sources. It is a question of perspective and philosophical viewpoint in life. The probability of achieving happiness through education is not a certainty.

IV. CONCLUSION

The eruption of the First World War gets underserved credit for its supposed influence over the course of the British educational system. The war intervened in the prevailing Edwardian-style education, and for some intellectuals, scholars, and people in authority, they saw it as an opportune moment to displace the existing educational approach. John Haden Badley, the author of the reviewed book and the founder of the Bedales School, was amongst the people who envisioned and advocated a more “liberalized” educational system to be implemented within the United Kingdom after the war concluded. As such, Badley opted to put in ink his vision, which eventually gave birth to the reviewed book titled *Education After the War*, published in 1917, a year before the First World War ended. As well-defined and succinctly argued in his book, Badley tested the waters that engulfed the wartime British society by decisively arguing that the people will have a clearer conception of the whole purpose with respect to educational reformation, which in turn will guarantee a more successful result.

In Badley’s eyes, three nested wars decisively shaped British society. The most fundamental war was the First World War, as previously mentioned. With the eruption of the war, it produced the appropriate stimulus to reassess the educational conditions within the society. It reignited the talks, as Badley underscored, of the existence of militaristic ideology creeping into the educational system as well as the mindset of the educational system as a preconditioning ground for “man as machine” in terms of the workplace. The second war was the brewing societal war. The societal war was primarily influenced by the rise of suffragettes, who advocated for a more equal treatment of women, not only in political affairs but also in economic and educational affairs. Badley himself acknowledged that the educational system must permit the admission of students regardless of sex. He, however, thought even if women were given the same educational privileges as men, they would reap lesser harvests than their male counterparts, simply because of their gender. The last, and indubitably the most transformative of the three wars, is the war within the individual. Badley emphasized the need for introspection to realize and assert that education can and *will* contribute to the flourishing of the life of an individual. As a firm believer of a “natural education philosophy,” Badley earnestly advocated for a liberalized education wherein the subjects to be taught are well-screened and, at the same time, perpetuate the child’s innate curiosity, which could lead to further discoveries. Along with that, the prevailing Edwardian education discourages pursuing such inquisitiveness.

On the other hand, insofar as Badley's treatment and arguments of the educational system are concerned, there are a number of shortcomings or analytical weaknesses that have been highlighted in this review. It is not surprising for a work with an overarching theme, in addition to a slightly slanted and polemical viewpoint, to beget such deficiencies. Even with that, its readers from the 21st-century must view his entire work not only as a product of their time period, but as a product of the mind of its writer. To speak on the negatives of his work is different from turning a blind eye to the overall merits of his work. These seemingly uncongenial remarks should not outweigh its overall message. Now, with all details and interpretations presented, this book is still a must-read for history or education majors, or any interested laymen, as it succeeded in bringing to the attention of its potential readers the dilemma British society faced in the early decades of the 20th century and its potential remedies.

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