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Personhood and the Ethics of Current Educational Policy

The economic agenda now exercises a strong influence on education at both second- and third-level. Providing a workforce which can ably contribute to economic growth, thereby increasing the material wealth of a nation, has become the major formative influence on policy *vis-a-vis* curricular development for both secondary schools and universities. I will first of all give a brief account of the nature of human personhood and, on this basis, I will then argue that a programme that is predominantly oriented by the economic values of money and power violates the essential dignity of the human person. As I develop my argument, I will draw upon the thought of Jurgen Habermas since his concern to cultivate critical reasoning among learners could serve, so I believe, both to protect and cultivate the dignity of each individual person and to promote healthier democracy.