

I have been studying for years, so my overview of education is inevitably the traditional one - that of school, University and now, The College of Law.

My bookshelves are a testimony to years of English Literature and History, French and Music, and several weighty Law volumes. However, it was Herbert Spencer who said, "Education has for its object the formation of character."

If this is so, education in its traditional form is merely a tool in the process of learning.

As educated 'characters' preoccupied with being an elite minority, we often overlook the education of life itself, which provides 'simpler' people with a common sense and native wisdom that I find enviable.

It is from amongst the uneducated that so much original thought derives. My socio-anthropological studies in Jurisprudence revealed this - with Eskimo and Red Indian peoples learning via generations of practical skills and having an affinity with nature. Now, I understand the reasoning behind Disraeli's words, "The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing. Printing has destroyed education ... The essence of education is the education of the body ... This is not a complete education but it is the higher education since the Greek."

I am a product of the 'Yuppie' generation, and often fear that the pace of my education and lifestyle is unnatural. I do not wish to live and breathe Law spending every available hour in the City; I do want to look beyond for I know there is still so much more I need to learn. There is a danger in letting an orthodox education take over my true self. The History of Art, International Affairs, Economics, Politics, Drama - all these things I long to know more about, and feel that though I am a lawyer I am not wholly equipped for life.

My education began at home, particularly with my mother's strong influence who, being a naturally clever woman, encouraged me to be competitive, with the words, "It's better to be a poor first, than a good second"!

So education began early with parents, Sunday School and music catching hold of me before I was five.

Being a shy and reserved child, I endured the malice of other children in the playground and found solace in the classroom where I fell upon work with a feverish appetite. I excelled at English and History - where my imagination could run wild, intrigued by lonely and mysterious characters like Emily Bronte and Mary, Queen of Scots.

During this period I developed an independence and distrust of many aspects of human nature.

My education in people had also begun.

Just as schoolwork gave me an opportunity to beat the crowd rather than join them, music and the piano provided an escape. Music has always been therapeutic for me - and in my original choice of books for the exhibition, I included some music, for music as much as anything has had the greatest influence in my life, with Grieg's haunting melodies bringing out the loner in me.

I have included a Law textbook for obvious reasons, and because the Law of Real Property has been a favourite topic of study. Although I cannot "learn men from books", a legal training has made me somewhat guarded, knowing how resourceful and cunning people can be.

As mentioned before, the Bronte family and Emily in particular have intrigued me with their lonely and intense life at Haworth. "Wuthering Heights" was an 'A' level book. Its dark, powerful melodrama and macabre imagery fascinated me. I read Mrs Gaskell and Margaret Lane's commentaries, secretly thrilled that three Victorian women with such a repressed lifestyle could find an escape in words.

Emile Zola also writes with fierce and dark feeling. "Germinal" was one of the most effective and disturbing books I read, for it is a strong sociological commentary on the working class poor in nineteenth-century industrial France. It helped me to view the present Third World situation reasonably. When people are poverty-stricken and helpless, the only enjoyment in life is what comes free. And with sex come children, and so the whole vicious pattern continues.

I continue to read Zola with his portrayals of the darker side to human nature.

I wanted to include an historical work. Twentieth century European history is enormously interesting, particularly the demise of the last royal courts. I share a love of history with my mother, and I bought "The Last Courts of Europe" for her. The isolated splendour of the Russian royal court in particular, and the last days of Nicholas and Alexandra are perhaps the most moving, together with photographs taken amidst chaotic pre-Revolution times.

The central 'book' in the portrait is "Vogue".

Perhaps my greatest passion is fashion, and fickle though this may sound, I relish the world of fashion where styles come and go so fast that one wonders how much further designers can go in their quest for the original. Appearance matters, and clothes have a language of their own. My preference lies in suits and classic styles, with quality rather than quantity being a decisive factor.

Perhaps one day I might achieve my wildest ambition - to be a Director, or perhaps even Editor of "Vogue"!

But I could not contemplate this ambition without an education.

So, in the meantime I will continue learning.