

THE SPECTATOR'S NOTES

Charles Moore

There is excitement that a foreigner could have been made Governor of the Bank of England. But the truth is that Canadians (and Australians and New Zealanders) are not really foreigners. The common history and kinship are so strong that there is pre-existing trust. (Mark Carney, indeed, is married to an Englishwoman.) This is an unusual thing in the history of the world. You cannot imagine any non-Frenchman governing the Banque de France, or any non-German (except an Austrian?) running the Bundesbank, or a British citizen running the Fed. You cannot even imagine a US citizen being the Governor of the Bank of England. When times are hard — money troubles, war, terrorism — the 'Old Empire' links always prove their strength.

David Cameron wants the Church of England to 'get with the programme'. When did Jesus ever follow such an injunction from the civil power? Would there be a religion in his name today if he had? The huge political pressure on the Church because its General Synod did not carry the vote for women bishops shows what will happen if gay marriage becomes law. The *Times*, in particular, is ordering the Church about with a passion not seen since Henry VIII. Whatever may currently be promised by politicians, if the Church refuses gay marriage, the courts, government departments, councils, charities, schools and so on will develop 'anti-discriminatory' policies and gradually exclude it from their activities. When the Queen dies, it will be argued that her successor should not be crowned according to the rites of a homophobic body. Along comes an unnecessary constitutional crisis, neatly manufactured.

Despite being a mainstream Catholic, and therefore an opponent of women's ordination, I do agree that the C of E is acting illogically. It decided nearly 20 years ago to ordain women as priests. If it thinks they can be priests, there is no ecclesiological reason why they cannot be bishops. To be fair to the rebels though (which nobody has been), the reason that the vote was not carried was that the traditionalists were unhappy with the safeguards made for those who



could not accept the change. Such provision has to be got right, because otherwise priests who faithfully followed the teaching of a male priesthood in which they were ordained would be compelled to act against conscience. The Synod voted according to its rules — rules which Parliament itself legislated for. It should not be treated as the EU treats referendums in member states — making the people vote again until they come up with the 'right' answer.

Recently, I went to shoot with friends. My host looked particularly healthy, happy and beautiful. She explained why: 'Earlier this year, I gave up the *Daily Mail*! My whole life has changed. The world looks a completely different place.' She was exactly like someone who has joined Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous. She had been addicted to the *Mail* for many years, she said, being susceptible to its ability to play on female self-loathing. Like a drunk, she finally hit 'rock bottom' — probably reading an article about how asylum seekers give you breast cancer, or why the value of your house will fall if you 'let yourself go' — and has not touched a page of the stuff since. Now, recently remarried, she has re-found her skills as an artist, and is at peace. We all went out to shoot, and she curled up with Saturday's *Daily Telegraph*.

Twenty years ago, Jon Connell was my deputy editor at the *Sunday Telegraph*. One day, he announced he wanted to leave to set up a magazine which would paraphrase the newspapers into digestible chunks for the busy, intelligent person. I told him it was a hopeless idea, but off he went. *The Week* was an instant success. More recently, while staying with us, Jon complained that his daughter was having a miserable time studying *The Tempest* for

A level. Some dismal textbook told her that it was all about colonialism. Our son, a *Tempest* fan, expatiated on the more interesting things the play might be about, and Jon conceived the idea of short books that set out such things clearly for interested students. The *Connell Guides*, recently launched, are the result. In about 120 pages of text, each deals with a famous work of literature — e.g. *Wuthering Heights*, *The Great Gatsby*, a particularly brilliant one on *Paradise Lost* (by my wife), and, of course, *The Tempest*. They are wonderfully clear, so I suppose most schools will ban them.

I am not a member of the Garrick Club — I am a bit young — but I gather that an article by Peter Jay in its latest newsletter has stirred strong feelings. Although honestly admitting that he is 75, Mr Jay is taken by many to be complaining that the members are too old. He worries that the club in 30 years' time will have tons of money (because of its huge legacy from the estate of A.A. Milne), but only 'a dozen members all 115 years old'. He wants members to scour the highways and byways for 'the cadres required to secure the future we desire' among 30- to 40-year-olds. I think he fails to notice that the ageing of the baby-boomers is producing an unprecedentedly large generation of vigorous old men. The Rolling Stones, for example, have just celebrated their Golden Jubilee concert to universal acclaim. Looking at the recent television documentary about them, I was struck by how much more interestingly transgressive than later rock musicians they were. The young are terribly conformist. Only septuagenarians can rejuvenate the club. I am sure that the Stones are waiting to be asked, and would look nice in the famous salmon-pink tie.

The generation gap, as overheard in the Bronze exhibition at the Royal Academy last week. An elegant old lady was being taken round in her wheelchair by a teenage girl, presumably her granddaughter. They stopped at some ancient bronzes from what is now Israel. Old lady: 'Now that's what I call a graven image.' Young woman: 'Yer what?'

understanding and consensus within a given social context but involve a critical analysis of how certain norms and conditions have come about. This is the nature of emancipatory learning."

This is certainly when I have found study guides working best for me. I have encouraged a much more critical approach from my pupils, prompting key questions such as: "Why does this study guide present this as important? Is this the right knowledge to be learning?"

I have asked my pupils to write their own study guides and compare them to published ones. I have also set up online study guides and asked pupils to add responses to my own thoughts. Overall, I have attempted to foster a much more evaluative approach.

The future of study guides

Journalist Jon Connell has published a set of study guides that have moved away from the narrow, exam-focused texts of the past. He explains how they came about: "I got the idea to publish some study guides after my daughter didn't get the predicted A in her English literature AS level. Having edited the magazine *The Week*, which aims to report the week's news in a lively and concise fashion, I had a go at putting together a study guide," he says.

"After doing some research about other study guides on the market, I realised that there was a real need for guides that were accessible and written by experts," he adds. "Using my design experience from *The Week*, I introduced an element of showbiz into the books. I didn't want po-faced essays and so I really encouraged my authors to let their hair down."

Connell says that teachers have responded well to the guides because they motivate pupils while encouraging them to think for themselves and further investigate sources that interest them.

The Connell Guides are a rarity because they straddle the middle ground between standard study guides and expert sources. They have the readability of a study guide and the scholarly emphasis of an academic article.

How to use them in the classroom

Before using a study guide, you must consider carefully whether it addresses the key learning objectives of your topic. Haring and Eaton's instructional hierarchy can help with planning. Many study guides are good at providing activities for the "maintenance" phase of learning, but are they able to deal with the other phases?

Checking that pupils have acquired the relevant skills is imperative. I have often found that getting them to interview each other in groups helps with this. Meanwhile, you can foster Haring and Eaton's higher-order skills of generalisation and adaptation by directing pupils to analyse a study guide on a topic you have covered in class.



Asking your pupils to draw up a chart of key criteria and then judge whether the study guide meets them can be illuminating. It might be even more fruitful to get pupils to compare study guides with textbooks and, if you dare, your own teaching of a topic. Following on from this, they could reflect on the ways these different approaches help them to learn.

A marvellous Assessment for Learning opportunity is to ask pupils to make a class study guide, assigning specific topic areas to individual pupils or groups. Then get them to present relevant sections of it to the class. In this way you can really see who knows what, especially if you set up a question-and-answer session with the presenters.

New technologies, new frontiers

Like many teachers, I have experimented with using the web to provide study guides. I have uploaded materials to *TES* resources, www.slideshare.net and www.scribd.com; I have videoed myself explaining topics and uploaded the videos to YouTube; I have had a go at doing podcasts; and I have set up WordPress blogs on key topics I study with my classes. The WordPress blogging websites are particularly good for collating all the material from the web.

I have had varying degrees of success, judging from the positive and negative comments I have received, but the journey has always been interesting. Used appropriately, study guides can be a powerful, emancipatory tool for learning – if they are not taken too seriously.

Francis Gilbert is a secondary school teacher in an outer-London comprehensive. Find out more at www.francisgilbert.co.uk

Write on

Teachers are possibly best placed to write their own study guides because they know what their target audience is like and they can trial the materials in the classroom. Here are my tips for creating a good study guide:

- Tailor it to a specific audience, such as pupils taking GCSEs, but bear in mind that syllabi change so choose topics that always come up.
- Check out the opposition. Getting pupils to evaluate existing study guides is a great classroom task.
- Base the structure of your guide around learning outcomes. Ask yourself: "What do pupils really need to learn for this topic?"
- Learn to condense your information into a readable form.
- Provide plenty of learning activities that can be self-assessed: quizzes and word searches work well.
- Try to set out information in different ways: spider diagrams, comparison charts, timelines, visual diagrams and concept cards can all add variety and illuminate difficult concepts.
- Set up a blog, post your guide on the *TES* website and listen to feedback. Think about refining it and publishing as an e-book.