

**A Complex Web We Weave:  
Learning for Work – Working to Learn**

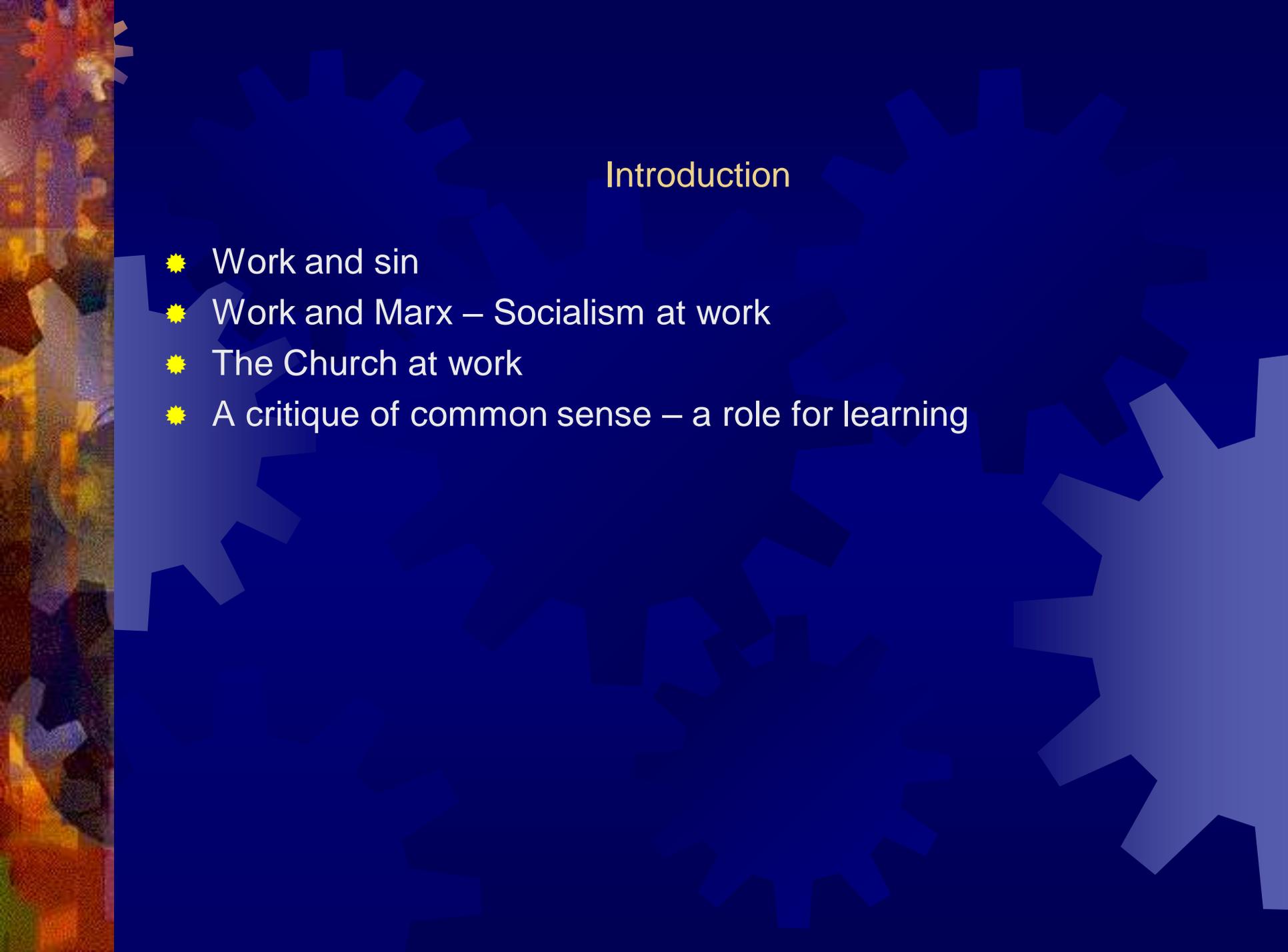
Dr. Ted Fleming

From Gilson to Google: The changing face of education in  
Ireland

The Laurence Gilson Summer School

Oldcastle,

May 26 2012

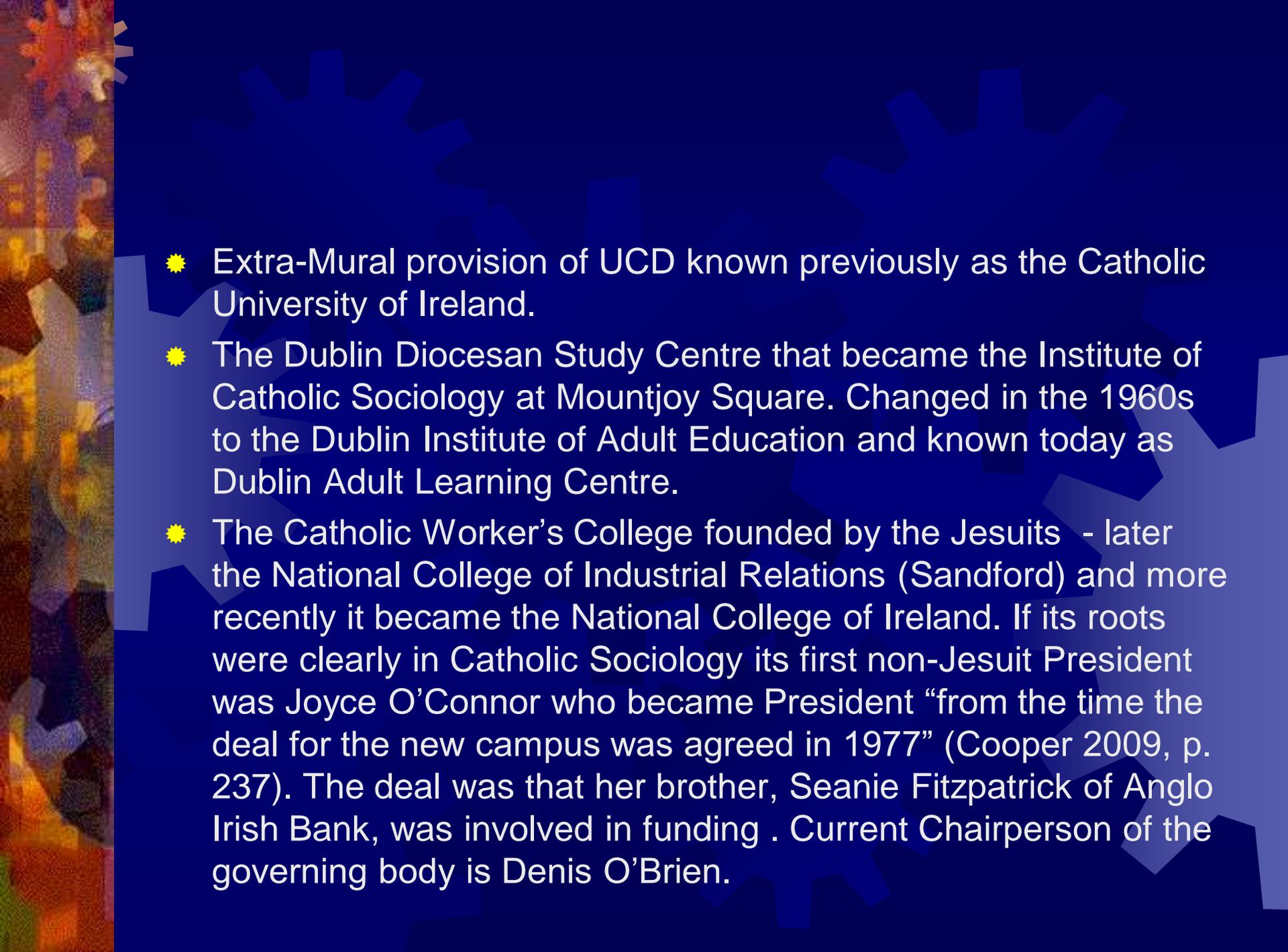


## Introduction

- ✿ Work and sin
- ✿ Work and Marx – Socialism at work
- ✿ The Church at work
- ✿ A critique of common sense – a role for learning

## If 'we are where we are', how did we get here?

- ✿ Vocational Education Act of 1930. VECs were given a mandate to provide adult education classes.
- ✿ This predated the Constitution of 1937, the Eucharistic congress of 1939 and Douglas Hyde was in the Áras. All this happened at an important time in our history as Ireland had in the 20<sup>th</sup> century already seen a World War, the Irish War of Independence, the Civil War and in the following decade Ireland was engaged in an Economic War with our nearest neighbour.
- ✿ Irish Constitution (Bunreacht, 1937);
- ✿ and fastened the role of the Catholic Church as the dominant social and political authority in Ireland. In support of that dominance there was the first Irish Censorship Act was enacted in 1929.

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- ✿ Extra-Mural provision of UCD known previously as the Catholic University of Ireland.
  - ✿ The Dublin Diocesan Study Centre that became the Institute of Catholic Sociology at Mountjoy Square. Changed in the 1960s to the Dublin Institute of Adult Education and known today as Dublin Adult Learning Centre.
  - ✿ The Catholic Worker's College founded by the Jesuits - later the National College of Industrial Relations (Sandford) and more recently it became the National College of Ireland. If its roots were clearly in Catholic Sociology its first non-Jesuit President was Joyce O'Connor who became President "from the time the deal for the new campus was agreed in 1977" (Cooper 2009, p. 237). The deal was that her brother, Seanie Fitzpatrick of Anglo Irish Bank, was involved in funding . Current Chairperson of the governing body is Denis O'Brien.

## It's the economy stupid: Or the stupid economy

- ✿ From Theo-centric to Econo-centric.
- ✿ How can ordinary people understand the scandals, the abuses, the corruptions and gambblings of financial institutions? How can anyone even contemplate a way forward? What do we need to know in order to raise our children well and in order to also contribute to the economic survival of this country? How can we learn such thing? Who will teach? Is there a task for an educational system here? Is the educational system also implicated? How can it not be? Who should be teaching about such things? And how? Who would prefer if we did not come to any understanding of these matters? Who will benefit from us not knowing?

## Education and *Hard Times* (Charles Dickens)

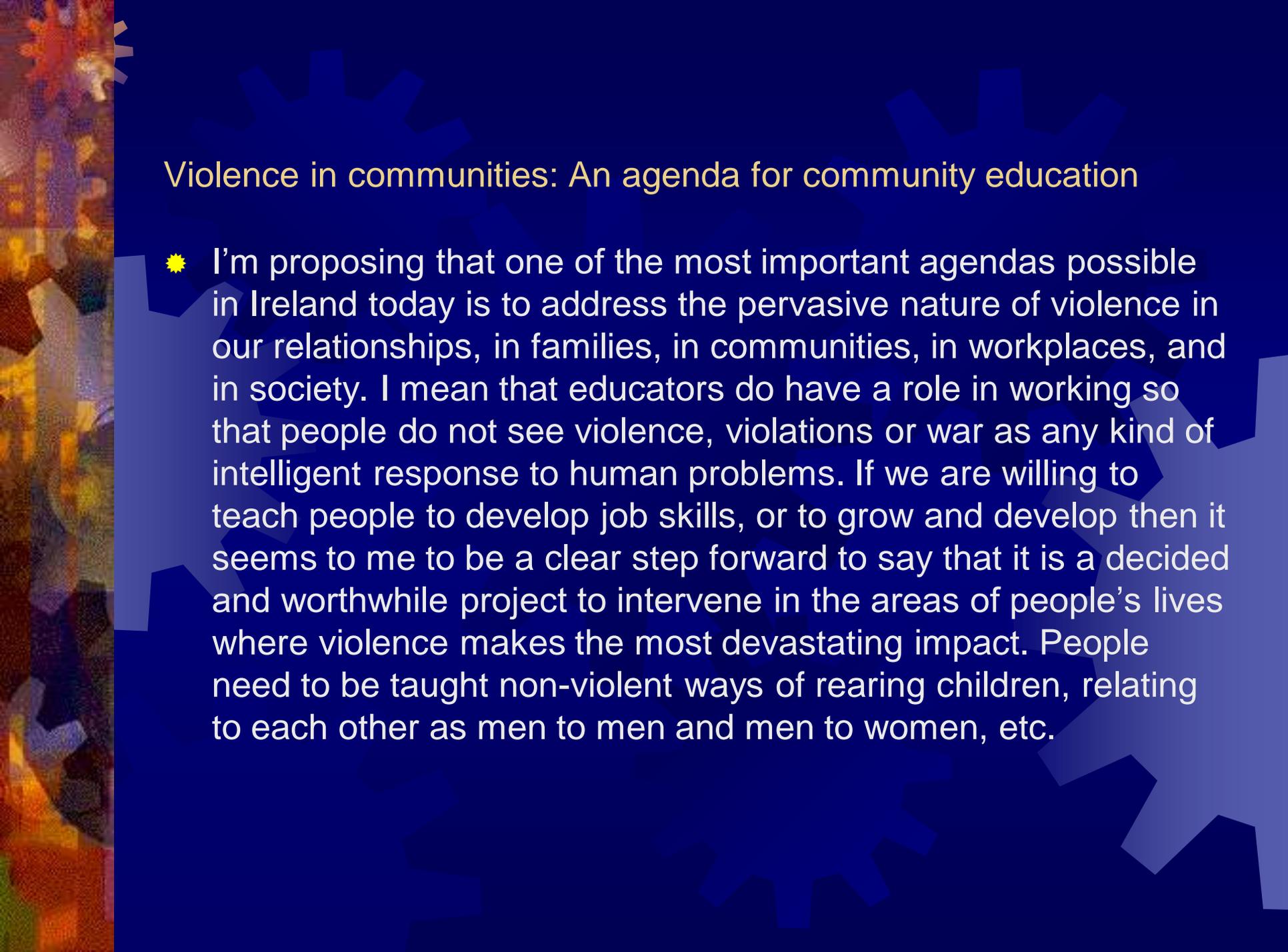
- ★ Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye teeth, and twelve incisors. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries sheds hoofs too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth...

(Dickens, 1995, p. 5)

- ★ what have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here!....you have never nurtured me....if I had been able to exercise my fancy I would have been a million times wiser, happier, loving, more contented...and human in all respects...

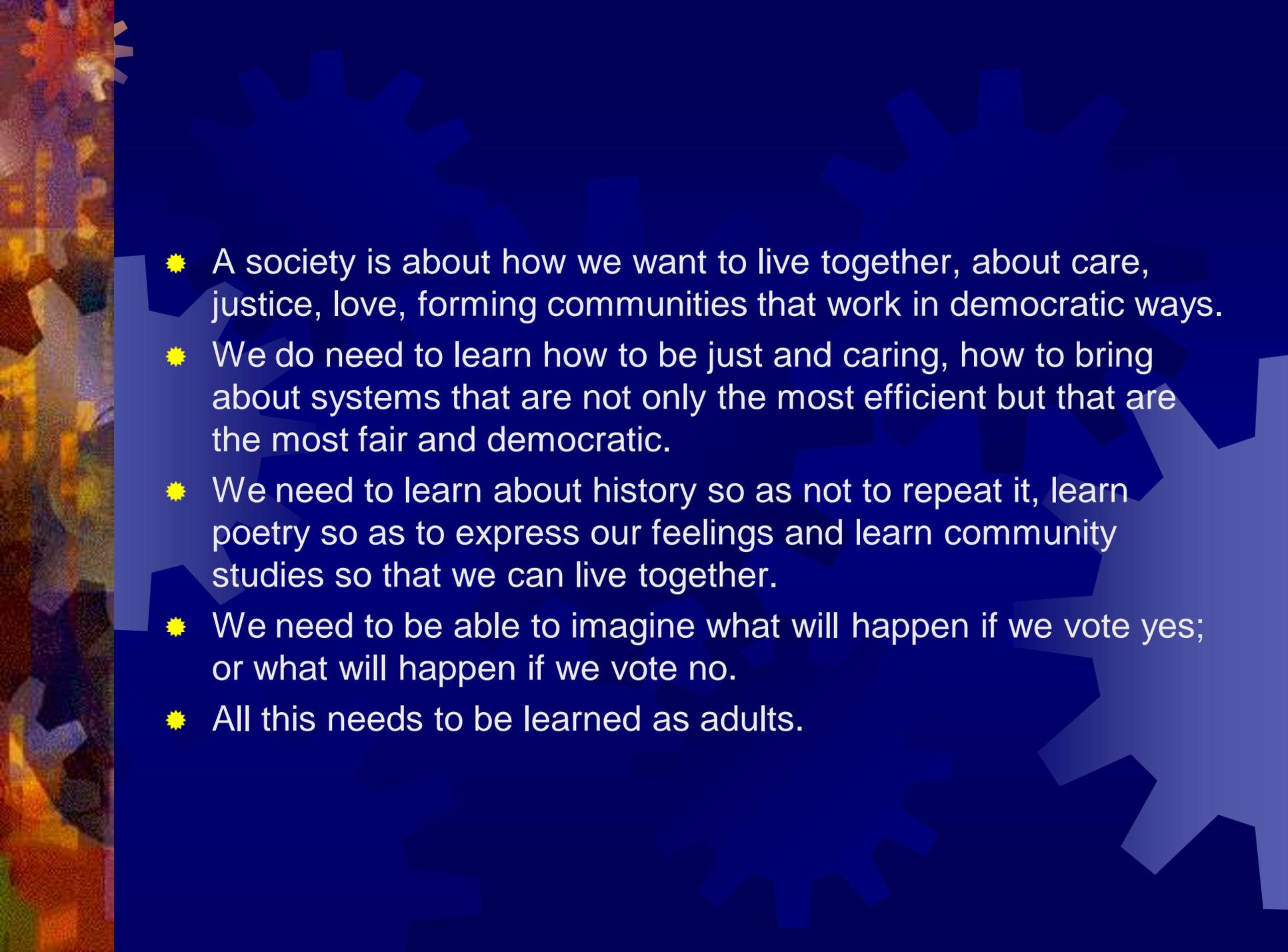
(Dickens, 1995, p. 169)

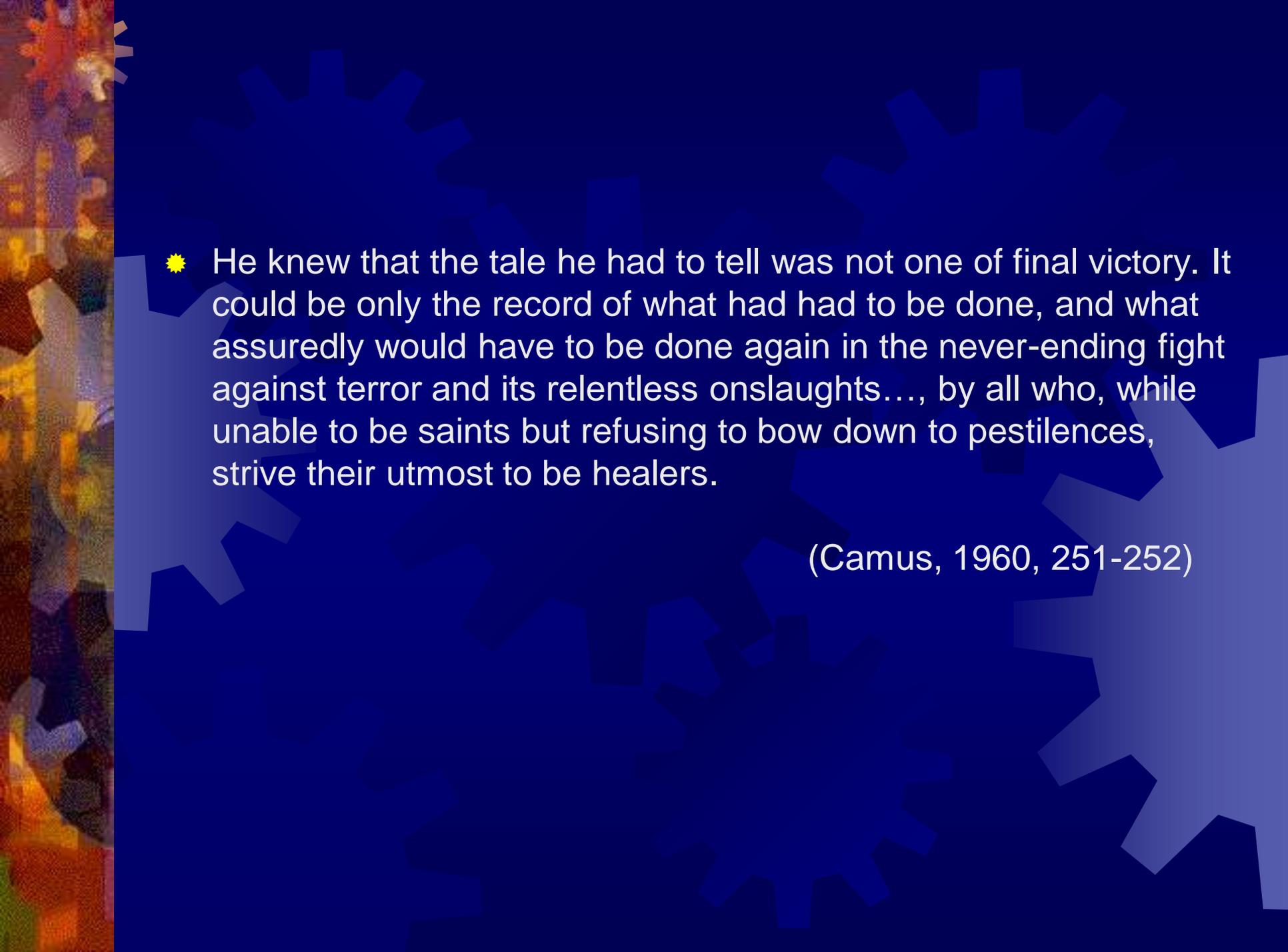
From Dickens we can say our crisis is a crisis of imagination



## Violence in communities: An agenda for community education

- ☀ I'm proposing that one of the most important agendas possible in Ireland today is to address the pervasive nature of violence in our relationships, in families, in communities, in workplaces, and in society. I mean that educators do have a role in working so that people do not see violence, violations or war as any kind of intelligent response to human problems. If we are willing to teach people to develop job skills, or to grow and develop then it seems to me to be a clear step forward to say that it is a decided and worthwhile project to intervene in the areas of people's lives where violence makes the most devastating impact. People need to be taught non-violent ways of rearing children, relating to each other as men to men and men to women, etc.

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- ✿ A society is about how we want to live together, about care, justice, love, forming communities that work in democratic ways.
  - ✿ We do need to learn how to be just and caring, how to bring about systems that are not only the most efficient but that are the most fair and democratic.
  - ✿ We need to learn about history so as not to repeat it, learn poetry so as to express our feelings and learn community studies so that we can live together.
  - ✿ We need to be able to imagine what will happen if we vote yes; or what will happen if we vote no.
  - ✿ All this needs to be learned as adults.

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- The background features a dark blue field with several large, semi-transparent gears of varying shades of blue. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, possibly representing a film strip or a collage of organic forms in shades of orange, yellow, and brown.
- ✦ He knew that the tale he had to tell was not one of final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never-ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts..., by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers.

(Camus, 1960, 251-252)