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Kultura Pedagogiczna

Pedagogical Culture

WYDAWNICTWA UNIWERSYTETU WARSZAWSKIEGO
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Ethical Orientations in Educational Action

Edited by Rafał Godoń and Pádraig Hogan

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I am very happy to introduce this inaugural issue of *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture* with an invited collection of research papers on the theme of ethics and education. The papers have been written by leading Polish and international scholars and were first presented at a conference jointly organised by the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Warsaw. I will comment further below on the significance of this collection of papers, but first I would like to make a few remarks on the new journal, including its aims, its scope and its audience.

The title *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture* calls attention from the outset to the point that education is never merely a technical matter; it is never merely a transmission of skills, knowledge and values. All educational action takes place within social and historical circumstances where cultural forces are already alive and influential. It is difficult, even humanly impossible, to make all these influences transparent by assembling them and subjecting them to critical scrutiny. But it is nevertheless necessary, as far as possible, to identify and investigate such influences. In the research and scholarship associated with any profession, it is important not only to discover new knowledge that informs the expertise of that profession's practitioners and leaders. It is equally important to investigate the professional cultures which affect how that expertise is exercised in practice: how well, for whose benefit, with what kinds of tacit preferences, and so on. Where the expertise in question is itself pedagogical, as distinct for instance from the kinds of expertise required in professions like engineering, accountancy or indeed medicine, cultural factors reach to the very heart of the expertise itself. This often happens, however, in ways that are overlooked, or taken for granted. That is to say that in-built biases may not be so noticeable

because they have become deeply embedded in an inherited professional ethos; also perhaps because preoccupation with securing effectiveness and value for money tends to concentrate attentions on other matters. Such biases may be political, religious, socio-economic, gendered, or other in origin. They include, moreover, the widest range of human beliefs and attitudes about the good life and what ought to be done to pursue it. In this intricate context the effort to illuminate pathways of learning that are both promising and defensible, remains one of the most important of educational challenges.

Accordingly this new journal seeks to invite research perspectives which shed a critical light on the professional cultures of teaching, and of educational practice more widely. It hopes to provide an open forum for research-informed debate on pedagogical questions among educational researchers, scholars in humanities and social sciences, educational practitioners, including teachers and those in management and leadership positions, and not least, educational policy-makers. Too often professionals in such areas move in separate circles, with their own professional cultures cultivating a sense professional insulation and isolation from each other. There is a pressing need for a forum which removes walls that are rarely deliberately built but that nevertheless grow in such a way as to contain educational discourse in separate enclosures.

To facilitate this aim of providing a forum that is open to the widest range of interested parties, the journal will be an open-access one, also an on-line one. The open-access policy means that membership of one or other specialist group within the arena of education will not be necessary to read any of the articles. As an on-line journal its contents will be instantly available to readers and instantly available for reference purposes. The journal's not-for-profit strategy means that its publication must be funded through sources other than subscriptions from readers or through funds received from a scholarly society to which readers are subscribed. This can give rise to particular difficulties that must be overcome in the early issues of the journal if it is to survive and thrive in the longer term.

The journal has a Polish home, being published by the University of Warsaw, but it will have an international research scope. This means it will accept articles in Polish and in English. There is not a definite policy of 50:50 here. For the reasons mentioned at the close of the previous paragraph there may in fact be more papers in English during the first two years. In order to establish strong

research credentials for the journal, many of the articles published in the early issues will be invited ones by leading scholars from Poland and abroad.

In line with the editorial strategy for a new open-access journal explained above, the inaugural issue of *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture* is a special issue, jointly edited by my Irish colleague Pádraig Hogan and myself. Its theme, ethics and education, is particularly appropriate to the new journal's title. It contains a collection of papers by philosophers of education from Poland, United Kingdom, Belgium and Ireland. All of the papers began as contributions to an international conference in Warsaw in November 2011, jointly organised by the Institute of Philosophy and the Faculty of Education of the University of Warsaw. The presenters were from quite different backgrounds, both within philosophy and philosophy of education, though all were experienced scholars with a shared interest in educational questions. Some knew each other through membership of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain but the experience of a conference on ethics and education through the medium of English in Poland was new to all. The conference schedule was designed to provide extensive opportunities for debate, which was vibrant, inclusive and sustained over two days in Warsaw. In previous eras approaches to ethics and education were frequently required to follow the orientations provided by churches, political parties or other dominant groups in society. By contrast, the explorations pursued in the contributions in the following pages seek to explore ethical questions in education while taking due account of what Hannah Arendt called the plurality of the human condition.

Finally, in preparing the first issue of *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture*, I would like as Editor to express my appreciation for the support, both editorial and financial, received from the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain. In particular I would like to record my thanks to Professor Richard Smith, outgoing Chair of the Society.

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R.S. PETERS' COMPREHENSIVE THEORY OF MORAL EDUCATION

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Abstract. This article presents R.S. Peters' theory of moral education embedded in his broad conception of morality. The author examines Peters' views against the background of Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development; hence, the positions of both thinkers are interwoven throughout the discussion. It addresses some central issues relevant to moral education such as, for example: cognitive and affective aspects of morality, and the acquisition of virtues. In the article the author argues that Peters' account of moral development and moral education provides supplementation for the somewhat narrow theory developed by Kohlberg, thus establishing a broader framework relevant to moral education.

1. Introduction

R.S. Peters is best known for his work on the analysis and the justification of education. But he also had a deep interest in a third, fundamental question that any serious philosophy of education should try to address: How do we adequately conceive of moral development and moral education?

Peters elaborates his approach to moral education in a critical dialectic with Laurence Kohlberg's cognitive theory of moral development. He accepts Kohlberg's view that the ultimate goal of moral education is the acquisition of a rational, principled morality, be it in a suitably supplemented form. In this paper, I show how Peters supplements Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental psychology in order to construct a comprehensive theory of moral education that covers the form as well as the content of morality. Because '… a determinate notion of "morality" is an essential precondition for any serious approach to moral education' (Peters, 1974a, p. 541), I start with an outline of Peters' moral view.

2. The form and content of morality

To do justice to the phenomenological complexity of moral life Peters operates with a very broad conception of morality. Phenomenologically astute, Peters (1970, pp. 69-70; 1973, pp. 16-17) distinguishes between five aspects of our moral life. In describing them he uses different vocabularies in different contexts. Sometimes he uses the vocabulary of principles, rules and duties, at other times that of character-traits or virtues (and vices) and motives. Given that character-traits and motives are internalized or personalized principles and rules, there is no harm in using these vocabularies interchangeably.

There are, first, the principles and rules which govern the conduct between members of a democratic society. Two types of virtues are important in this interpersonal realm. On the one hand, we have the highly specific virtues, such as honesty, punctuality, tidiness and politeness, on the other we have the more 'artificial' virtues, such as justice, fairness, the impartial consideration of interests and respect for people. To this sphere of morality also belong basic rules, 'e.g. concerning contracts, [non-injury,] property and the care of the young, which any rational man can see to be necessary to any continuing of social life, man being what he is and the conditions of life on earth being what they are' (Peters, 1970, p. 65; also 1973, p. 13; 1974a, p. 546; 1978, p. 124).

There are, secondly, motives which personalize purposes, or even goals of life, that are based on appraisals of a situation. This facet of our moral life includes, among others, the virtues of benevolence, compassion and gratitude, the vices of ambition, envy and greed. These 'natural' virtues contain within themselves reasons for action, whereas the 'artificial' and highly specific virtues just mentioned lack built-in reasons for action. The exercise of such action-related virtues typically arouse feelings and emotions. Motives and emotions are more at home in the sphere of personal relationships than in the public sphere of civic virtues.

There are, thirdly, qualities of the will 'that are both content-free and which do not, like motives, introduce teleological considerations. … They are of a higher order and relate to the ways in which rules are followed or purposes pursued' (Peters, 1971, p. 247). To this element of our moral life pertain virtues such as determination, persistence, courage, consistency, integrity and autonomy. It is essential to these so-called virtues of 'self-control' that counter inclinations must be present when such virtues are exercised. One needs only to exercise self-control in a situation when one threatens to be overcome by inclinations that go against one's will.

Peters casts his moral net very wide. Not only principles and rules, motives and volitional qualities are morally relevant, but also, fourthly, worthwhile activities are included in the moral sphere. These 'good' or 'desirable' activities are deemed to be so valuable that children ought to be initiated into them. To this range of activities belong, among others, science, history, poetry and engineering, and possibly also a variety of games and pastimes. These activities, on the basis of which individuals can make something of themselves if they freely engage in them, supply not only for their occupations and professional lives but also for their vocations and ideals of life.

Finally, there are particular role-responsibilities – a person's station and its duties. These are specific obligations that go together with occupying a social role in society. Role-responsibilities involve what is socially required of a person as, for example, a husband, father, citizen, and member of an occupation or profession.

How does Peters combine this ethical pluralism with his emphasis on a classical principled morality? Such a principled morality gradually emerged in Western civilisation. It took a long time, until the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, before a rational, universalistic type of morality became distinct from religion, law and customary codes of conduct. The hallmark of such a morality is its appeal to fundamental principles, which are presupposed in all practical reasoning in a democratic society, to adjudicate on particular codes and their conflicts.

To bring these two elements of his moral theory – pluralism and principlism – together Peters makes the important distinction between the form and the content of moral consciousness. He describes the structure of consciousness by making use of Michael Oakeshott's 'experience and its modes' terminology (Oakeshott, 1933). 'Experience' functions as a wide and generic term. It also includes knowledge and understanding, and it is further qualified in different specific 'modes' of experience such as the historical, scientific, practical or moral. So, moral consciousness is in this terminology called 'the moral mode of experience'.

The emergence of a principled morality in Western civilisation amounts then to the emergence of a rational form of the moral mode of experience. A principled morality is a universalistic type of morality constituted by fundamental principles that are presupposed in the exercise of practical reason. These higher-order principles of a procedural kind – impartiality, the consideration of interests, freedom, respect for persons – supply a rational form for the moral mode of experience.

They provide a form of thought that structures the more culture-bound and concrete content of the moral mode of experience. Henceforward, I abbreviate the phrase 'the moral mode of experience' just by the term 'morality'.

Against the backdrop of this form-content distinction, Peters is able to distinguish between the more procedural and the more substantive elements of morality: principles, basic rules and the qualities of will belong to the form of morality, whereas highly specific rules, worthwhile activities and the role-responsibilities belong to morality's content. Certain 'universalistic' motives, such as benevolence, also might be taken to concern the form of morality. So, Peters' ethical pluralism can be rationally reconstructed by distinguishing between the form and the content of morality. Yet, although both moral form and content are integral parts of his moral theory, he is first and foremost interested in its form, or what he calls 'rational morality' (Peters, 1973, p. 15).

3. Comprehensive moral education

With Peters' pluralistic conception of morality and his emphasis on a rational morality in place, we can turn to his approach to moral development and moral education. Given that a moral theory is an essential preliminary for such an approach, Peters' ethical pluralism precludes any simple-minded or one-dimensional view of moral education.

According to Peters (ibid., pp. 23; 46), the gradual emergence of a rational morality in Western history is paralleled by the gradual emergence of an autonomous stage in the moral development of children. The 'ontogenetic' emergence of such a stage parallels the 'phylogenetic' emergence of a principled morality in the West. Whatever one thinks about this sweeping hypothesis, the cognitive-developmental psychology of Jean Piaget (1932) and Laurence Kohlberg (1981) is undeniably the point of reference from which Peters builds up his own view of moral education.[1] He articulates his approach in a critical dialectic with this so-called 'constructivist' theory.

In line with his ethical pluralism Peters does not interpret social-learning theory (or behaviourism) and constructionism as competing theories between which an exclusive choice has to be made. Although Peters takes the constructivist

[1] For a general philosophical treatment of the Piaget-Kohlberg theory, see Flanagan, 1991, chap. 5.

view as his point of reference, he repeatedly emphasizes that the Piaget-Kohlberg theory needs supplementation with other theories of moral education, among which even Skinnerian behaviourism. Moreover, the cognitive-developmental psychology is, according to Peters, too one-dimensional in its narrow focus on the cognitive aspect of moral education. It needs, therefore, to be supplemented by an account of the affective aspect of moral development.

So, the overall picture that comes to light is that Peters offers us, not another competing theory, but an original comprehensive theory of moral education that tries to do justice to the several facets of our moral life. I commence the exploration of this comprehensive picture with a brief outline of Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental psychology.

4. Kohlberg's stage theory

What is, according to Kohlberg, moral development? He takes over from Piaget, who adopts a Kantian framework, the constructivist conception of intellectual and moral development. Constructivists claim that parallel to the biological development of the body there exists a psychological development of the mind through time. The mind is conceived as a system of mental structures (or schemata) that changes from infancy through childhood and adolescence to adulthood. The mind receives and operates on experiential input; it transforms the experiential input into behavioural output by making use of (hidden) mental structures. These structures are neither copied from the outside nor programmed by the inside, but constructed in the dialectical relation between the child and its environment. Mental structures change through time in an orderly pattern, which is conceptualized in terms of stage succession and progression. The mind develops intellectually as well as morally through such temporally and hierarchically ordered stages.

From his experimental research, Kohlberg identified a sequence of six stages of moral development proceeding through three levels:

A. Preconventional or Egocentric;

B. Conventional or Heteronomous; and

C. Postconventional (Principled) or Autonomous.

He claims this sequence to be invariant and universal, that is to say, all (biologically normal) children go through all the stages successively without

stage-skipping and all the stages are found in all cultures. This claim is not implausible because Kohlberg explicitly makes the distinction between the form and the content of moral development, and the cultural invariant claim only pertains to the form (or structure) of moral development. Although there can be considerable differences between cultures as to the content of moral rules, the development of their form is culturally invariant. Obviously, Kohlberg's form-content distinction as to moral development mirrors that of Peters as to moral life. It is precisely because Kohlberg's stage theory is so greatly significant for the development of a rational or principled morality in childhood that this theory functions as the point of reference in Peters' approach to moral education. Kohlberg is not interested in the teaching and learning of variable moral codes or specific moral rules, which he derides as 'a bag of virtues' approach. They are context-dependent and instable character-traits, whereas fundamental principles, especially the principle of justice, which constitute a rational morality, are stable and cross-culturally uniform.

Kohlberg's stage theory as a theory about the development of a rational morality in childhood is, therefore, a theory about the development of children's way of grasping principles. Corresponding to the changes children's form of thought concerning rules undergo, their moral judgement at each stage has a specific character. Children, Kohlberg claims,

> start by seeing rules as dependent upon power and external compulsion; they then see them as instrumental to rewards and to the satisfaction of their needs [in the egocentric stage]; then as ways of obtaining social approval and esteem; then as upholding some ideal order [in the heteronomous stage]; and finally as articulations of social principles necessary to living together with others – especially justice [in the autonomous stage]. (Peters, 1971, pp. 238-39)

The way in which rules can be conceived is analogous to the style in which beliefs can be held. One can, for example, 'egocentrically' believe in the existence of God because it fulfils one's need for comfort. But one can also 'heterogeneously' hold this belief on the authority of a priest, whom one trusts. Alternatively, one can 'autonomously' believe in God's existence on the basis of rational proofs for the existence of God. In the case of empirical beliefs one can justifiably hold them on sufficiently supporting evidence. This rational style of believing is comparable to the critically reflective way in which one conceives rules and principles in the autonomous stage.

5. Peters' supplementation of Kohlberg

According to Kohlberg, the culturally invariant sequence in levels of conceiving moral rules – from egocentric through heteronomous to autonomous – is constitutive of moral development (Peters, 1973, p. 24). The process of moral development involves, however, according to Peters, more than Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental psychology covers. An adequate theory of moral development and moral education needs to cover not only the form but also the content of morality. Moreover, Kohlberg's restriction of the form of morality to the cognitive aspect is too limited. Against the background of his ethical pluralism, Peters supplements Kohlberg's stage theory with three fundamental elements, which are, in addition, constitutive of moral development and/or moral education.

First, against Kohlberg's dismissive attitude towards instilling 'a bag of virtues', Peters argues for the central importance of the content of morality in moral teaching. As a corollary, he defends the view that not only reason but also habit is crucial in moral education. Secondly, the development of moral competence essentially comprises an affective aspect in addition to a cognitive aspect. Besides reason we also need compassion in educated people, and even reason cannot function on its own without rational passions. Thirdly, and this is an important preliminary point, Kohlberg's very narrow conception of teaching (conceived primarily as direct instruction) should be supplanted by a more broad one to make plausible the claim that moral development essentially involves some process of teaching. I elaborate upon these supplementations in the reverse order.

6. Can virtue be taught?

Kohlberg's answer to this Socratic classical question is, surprisingly at first sight for a constructivist, negative. If moral development is constituted by the development of a rational form of morality through stages, then the transitions between the stages cannot be an effect of teaching. Concrete content can be learned by instruction and other explicit teaching methods, as well as by example-imitation or identification. Yet, changes in the way in which rules are conceived do not depend upon teaching, but upon the interaction between the child and its social environment, aided by what Kohlberg calls 'cognitive stimulation'. Moral stage progression is neither the product of socialization nor of maturation, but the effect of the child's experience of moral conflicts and active thought about

moral dilemmas (e.g. the famous 'Heinz dilemma') motivated by the desire to take the most 'reversible' or universal perspective. Although the child itself has the experiences and has to actively think for itself, the social environment can stimulate such experience and active thought. Parents, teachers and other educators can confront the child with problematic moral situations and provide feed-back that confirms or disconfirms its current moral problem-solving. So, virtue can be cognitively stimulated, but not taught. In this sense, Kohlberg's stage theory is only a theory about moral development and not about moral education at all.

However, in opposing cognitive stimulation so starkly to teaching, Kohlberg runs the risk of diminishing the contributory cause of the educational environment in moral development to almost zero. As Peters (1974a, p. 548) critically observes: 'But in contrasting the interaction with the environment, which stimulates the development of a rational form of morality [cognitive stimulation], with "teaching", which he thinks is singularly ineffective in this sphere, he makes it look too much as if the child, as it were, does it himself.' Cognitive stimulation only seems to trigger the stage transitions but does add neither content nor form to the child's internally developing moral competence. If external influences do not, or only minimally contribute to moral development, then the rational form of morality is not co-constructed in the child-environment interaction but self-constructed by the child alone. Kohlberg's stage theory is, as a consequence, in danger of collapsing into a kind of maturation theory, either biological nativism or a somewhat mysterious Rousseauian (or Deweyean) type of self-discovery theory.

Since constructivism subscribes to the contributory causal impact of the social environment, it has to defend the claim that moral development involves partially but essentially some process of teaching. That is the reason why Peters corrects Kohlberg's sharp contrast between cognitive stimulation and teaching by making a crucial distinction between teaching in the restricted and teaching in the unrestricted sense (Peters, 1971, pp. 243-45; 1973, pp. 37-38). In making his contrast, Kohlberg unduly restricts the concept of teaching to the specific notion of teaching as direct instruction. So restricted, the concept of teaching has indeed no application in the case of learning to grasp (moral) principles and to conceive of (moral) rules in an adequate way. Explicit instruction is appropriate in cases of information transfer and training skills but not in the case of learning principles, rules and the adequate attitudes towards them.[2] Learning a principle

[2] Here I skip over the ambiguity between learning principles and learning the adequate attitudes towards them. Peters writes: 'If one takes … the forms of conception that are features

does not come down to learning an explicit content. Although the teacher has to exhibit a number of concrete items to the learner, the unifying principle under which these items are organized is itself not a further item for direct instruction. In bringing a child to an adequate grasp of a principle, all the teacher can do is present instances and draw attention to their common features until hopefully, 'the penny drops' – until, that is, the learner catches on to the principle that is being instantiated. Therefore, on Kohlberg's restricted notion of specific teaching, (moral) principles cannot be taught.

However, the unrestricted or 'normal' concept of teaching is also applicable in the case of learning principles and rules. In accordance with this concept, central cases of teaching activities have to fulfil three necessary conditions:

(i) they must be conducted with the intention of bringing about learning,
(ii) they must indicate or exhibit what is to be learnt,
(iii) they must do this in a way which is intelligible to, and within the capacities of, the learners. (Peters and Hirst, 1970, p. 81)

Even if Socrates was not explicitly telling Meno's slave that the resultant square is twice the size of the original square, he taught him this ratio all the same by appropriate exemplifications and questions. Teaching methods depend upon the nature of what has to be learnt. Direct instruction is suitable in the case of the acquisition of information and skills, whereas indirect indication is suitable in the case of learning principles, as it is in the case of, for example, learning the grammatical rules of a language. In the latter case, a principle or rule is indicated by way of presenting several of its concrete instances. Even if one did not accept such an indirect case as a central case of teaching, it still would be a case of teaching in the derivative sense, because '[i]t is … possible that there are cases of "teaching" that disregard any one or even two of these [necessary] conditions, and yet are understood derivatively as cases of "teaching"' (Peters and Hirst, 1970, p. 81). So, given the unrestricted concept of teaching, Kohlberg's method of cognitive stimulation is a bona fide teaching method, and in accord

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of the different developmental stages, it is not obvious what can be done about these – for example, coming to see a rule as connected with approval rather than with rewards.' (Peters, 1971, p. 244). This is actually not about two types of principles, but about the difference between a principle itself and a cognitive attitude towards a principle. See also Peters, 1978, p. 117.

with this concept there is no problem for a constructivist to claim that teaching essentially contributes to moral development.[3]

7. The passions

Kohlberg's stage theory is exclusively a theory about the development of children's form of thought concerning the principles of a rational morality, especially the principle of justice. However, besides the development of this cognitive aspect there is, according to Peters, the equally important development of the affective aspect, about which Kohlberg's cognitivism is silent. The formal principle of justice – no distinctions or exceptions should be made without relevant differences or grounds – will readily lead to the more material principle of the impartial consideration of people's interests, but not in and of itself to caring about the interests of others. Concern for others in Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental psychology only functions as a rational principle, but is not based on feeling concern for them.

Yet, although young children are not capable of adequately grasping such a principle, empirically speaking they seem capable of such a sentiment, perhaps deriving from innate sympathy, very early on (Peters, 1973, p. 42). As a matter of fact, empathically caring about others appears to come much earlier in child development than grasping other-directed principles. Parallel to the development of children's form of thought concerning the principles of a rational morality apparently runs the development of their form of feeling concerning such principles, from a particularistic through to a more universalistic sentiment to what David Hume (1777) called, 'the sentiment for humanity'. In line with his proposal to include certain universalistic motives, such as benevolence, in the form of morality as well, Peters argues for the supplementation of Kohlberg's stage theory with an ontogenetic account of affective concern for others. As a way of conceptualizing this affective supplement in a way consistent with Kohlberg's cognitivism, he suggests a combination of Martin Hoffman's development theory of altruism with Peevers' and Secord's theory of personal understanding (Peters, 1978, pp. 119-21).

[3] There are, of course, other contributory factors. Both internal conditions, psychological as well as biological, and external social conditions have a marked influence on moral development. See Peters, 1973, pp. 38-41.

According to Peters, moral education comprises the education both of reason and compassion, rational principles as well as the moral sentiments:

> … moral education is centrally concerned with the development of certain types of motives, especially what I have called the rational passions. When looked at in a justificatory context, some of these, e.g. benevolence, respect for persons and the sense of justice, function as fundamental principles. But if such principles are to be operative in a person's conduct, they must become *his* principles. That means that they must come to function as motives, as considerations of a far-ranging sort that actually move him to act. (Peters, 1970, p. 75)

Without a sense of justice, the principle of justice stays inert. Without benevolence, the principle of the impartial consideration of interest remains external. To get children 'inside' the form of morality, we need the moral motivation of, what Peters calls, 'the rational passions'. By themselves principles and rules – 'artificial' and highly specific virtues – are inert or external in that they lack built-in reasons for action, whereas motives – 'natural' virtues – have reasons for action built into them and, accordingly, they lead a person all the way to action. In their connection to motives, moral principles are not affectively neutral and, thus connected, provide the moral motivation for authentic action.

8. Morality's content and habituation

Kohlberg's stage theory is first and foremost a psychological theory about the form of morality, not about its content and, correspondingly, a theory about moral development, not about moral learning and teaching. Kohlberg does not occupy himself with the teaching and learning of 'a bag of virtues', but with the ontogenetic development of a principled morality. Peters admits that 'the level of conception [of principles and rules]', especially the conventional or postconventional level, 'determines both the type of content that can be assimilated and the aids which are available for this assimilation' (Peters, 1973, p. 35). However, as against Kohlberg, Peters argues for the strong claim that the learning by habituation of morality's content – a code-encased morality – is logically and practically necessary for the development of morality's form.[4] Although habituation is, thus, necessary, it is not sufficient for moral development.

[4] Peters also argues separately for the weak claim that the interactionistic development of the form of morality is compatible with the behaviouristic learning of the content of morality by means of habit-formation. For an evaluation of this claim, see Cuypers, 2009.

Before I start expounding this claim, it is important to see why Peters defends it. This can be understood against the backdrop of Peters' general view on the concept of education. On his account, education is an initiation into different modes of experience and knowledge, among which worthwhile activities and modes of conduct (Peters, 1963, p. 102-10). This amounts to an initiation into a shared inheritance and public traditions (Peters, 1974b, p. 423-24). Of vital importance in the educational transmission are the impersonal content and procedures which are enshrined in this traditional heritage. In the light of Peters' ethical pluralism, initiation into concrete worthwhile activities and specific codes of conduct is part and parcel of moral education: 'In this more specific sense of education, …, all education is, therefore, moral education, …' (Peters, 1970, p. 73). Initiating children into morality's content is, therefore, essential for their moral education. They cannot simply develop the form of morality and work out its content for themselves. Educating children into the form of morality without its content is empty.

The way in which children conceive of moral rules determines without a doubt what they can assimilate of the moral life and how they can assimilate it. There are crucial differences between the (Kohlbergian) conventional and post-conventional levels as to the place of learning morality's content and the role of teaching methods at each level. I already commented on Kohlberg's claims that virtue cannot be taught, though it can be cognitively stimulated and that learning a principle is not the same as learning an explicit content. These claims are primarily made in the light of the postconventional or autonomous level of moral development. At the conventional or heteronomous level, children's conception of moral rules is, however, conformity-based and authority-based. Such a conventional form of thought correlates not only with the initiation into a code-encased morality but also with the fact that its specific content is learned by imitation and identification as well as by a behaviouristic process of operant conditioning, primarily by positive and negative reinforcement. At this level of 'good boy' or 'nice girl' morality, concrete moral content and specific moral codes are instilled in children by means of habit-formation or habituation.[5]

[5] Since Peters holds that the instilment of morality's content in the conventional stages is essential for the moral life and, as a matter of historical and social fact, moral development beyond these stages is rather an exceptional phenomenon, his supplementation of Kohlberg's

As against Kohlberg's neglect of the importance of inculcating highly specific virtues and role-responsibilities in children, Peters makes the strong claim that the learning of morality's content – a code-encased morality – is logically and practically necessary for the development of morality's form. Given that children at the conventional level cannot adequately grasp moral rules, the learning of a moral code cannot proceed by means of instruction and explanation. Since young children cannot see the rationale of moral principles, they are impervious to concept-clarification and reason-giving. If, at the conventional level, cognitive moral learning is impossible, then only behavioural moral learning or moral habit-formation seems to be possible as a path to post-conventional moral understanding. At the conventional level, educators have to resort to habit-training by means of behaviouristic reinforcement. Peters loosely connects the Aristotelian idea of moral education by habituation with the Skinnerian idea of moral training by operant conditioning. Although Peters is not a Skinnerian, and even criticizes behaviourism, he recognizes the value of the behaviouristic insight that there is no other way to meaningfully implant moral rules in young children except as backed up by reward or punishment, praise or blame (Peters, 1978, p. 125). Consequently, the educational environment in the moral development of children functions, according to Peters, not only as a contributory cause, in line with Kohlberg's constructivism, but also as a constitutive cause, in accord with social-learning theory.

Why is learning a code of conduct by habituation so important? (Peters, 1973, pp. 58-60; 1974a pp. 560-61; 1978, pp. 123-24). Learning morality's content is logically necessary for the development of morality's form for two reasons. First, without such learning a direct development from the egocentric attitude towards moral rules at the preconventional level to the autonomous attitude towards them at the postconventional level would be impossible. The postconventional, rationally reflective attitude towards rules presupposes the normative conception of a rule as based on conformity and authority. Children acquire this necessary basis to reflect on the validity of rules by picking up and internalizing specific rules of a code-encased morality. How could a child come to follow a rule autonomously, if it had not learnt – in, what Piaget calls, the 'transcendental' stage of moral realism – what it is to follow a rule as a rule? The child needs to conceive

stage theory faces the charges of 'second-handedness' and indoctrination. For an account of Peters' response to this criticism, see again Cuypers, 2009.

of a rule as something authoritative and not just as something one egocentrically complies with in order to avoid punishment or to get rewards.

Secondly, the exertion of morality's form by applying moral principles would be inconceivable without morality's content. Abstract principles could not function without concrete content. What moral principles such as justice and the consideration of interests mean is only intelligible in relation to highly specific virtues (like that of honesty), role-responsibilities (like those of being a parent) and other specific normative notions (like that of need). In other words, Kohlberg's thinking about principles is top-down, whereas Peters' is bottom-up. This bottom-up approach to principles allows for the immanent presence of them in social practices and roles. Moral principles only come explicitly into play when the justification or criticism of some determinate moral content at the lower-level is in order; they are only appealed to in cases of moral conflict and uncertainty at the ground floor of the moral life.

Moreover, learning morality's content is practically (or instrumentally) necessary for the development of morality's form for two reasons. First, peaceful social life would degenerate to the state of nature where 'the life of man, [is] solitary, poore, nasty, brutisch, and short' (Hobbes, 1651, part I, chap. 13), if children as well as adults were not to observe a basic code of conduct. Given that only a very small minority of the population reaches the autonomous level of principled morality, it is vital that the vast majority follows the basic moral rules such as contract-keeping and property-preserving.

Secondly, the moral life would be psychologically exhausting if on all occasions we had to rationally reflect upon the validity of moral principles and rules before making decisions and acting accordingly. In order to avoid moral paralysis, it is essential that we can rely on the direct operation of a fair stock of moral habits, among which highly specific virtues, internalized basic rules and role-responsibilities.

If the learning of morality's content is necessary for the development of morality's form, then the adoption of the learning method of habituation, assisted by Aristotelian-Skinnerian teaching devices, seems inevitable: 'Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes its birth and its growth to teaching …, while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, …' (Aristotle, 2009, 1103a, 14-17). Aristotle contrasts here teaching by explicit instruction as the method for the intellectual virtues, such as

scientific knowledge and theoretical wisdom, with teaching by habit-formation as the one for the moral virtues.[6] What exactly is habituation? Aristotle gives the canonical formulation of this concept:

> … , it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. … This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and by being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, in one word, states of character arise out of like activities. (Aristotle, 2009, 1103b, 7-26)

Repetitious activity, in the sense of going through the same motions many times, produces settled dispositions or habits, good and bad. One acquires virtues (or vices) by repeatedly doing virtuous (or vicious) acts in appropriate circumstances.

In line with this account of habituation, Peters (1971, pp. 250; 255) delivers the following conceptual analysis: In the moral education of children habituation is a learning process in which they familiarize themselves with and repeat certain action patterns so that specific dispositions to act get instilled. This process might, but need not involve, drill. During habit-training the action patterns are stabilized by means of behaviouristic reinforcement in terms of reward or punishment, praise or blame. Once inculcated, habits meet two conditions in particular: they are characterized by a settled dispositional structure which implies (a) repetition in the future and (b) a certain automatism in routine situations. Since one does not have to rationally reflect and deliberately take decisions about habitual action, one can habitually act more or less automatically. Yet on a particular occasion, mostly when routine breaks down, one may review one's habits and, for example, resolve against them.

According to Peters, learning morality's content by habituation is necessary, but not sufficient for the development of the moral life for three reasons (ibid., 1971, pp. 251-53). First, and this is an immediate consequence of Peters' ethical

[6] Compare this with the unrestricted concept of teaching, introduced in section 6.

pluralism, the different aspects of our moral life relate differently to habit-formation. The method of habituation works well in the cases of learning highly specific virtues, internalizing basic rules and adopting role-responsibilities. However, in the cases of learning principles, strengthening motivations and exercising will-qualities the effect of this method is very limited, or at most only indirect. As I already explained, learning a moral principle is not the same as learning explicit moral content. To grasp a moral principle, for instance that of the impartial consideration of interests, a child needs to grasp the presupposed concepts, such as that of 'interest', and the development of these cognitive prerequisites seems inconceivable on the basis of some process of behavioural conditioning alone. Moreover, the open-endedness involved in the application of principles is orthogonal with the condition of repetition in the future for habitual action. As to the other moral aspects, the process of habit-formation cannot directly reach both strengthening motivations, which depend on the arousal of emotions, and exercising will-qualities, which presuppose the presence of counterinclinations. The active participation of the mind in motivation and will-power goes against the condition of automatism in habituation.

Secondly, in non-routine situations habits can no longer serve as guides for conducting a moral life. In addition, when the reinforcing sanctions are withdrawn, there is no guarantee that habits will remain operative in controlling behaviour. As soon as one cannot rely anymore on the automatism of habitual dispositions, other considerations have to come in to guide the decisions and actions taken in the moral life.

Thirdly, and connectedly, moral habits have an essential incompleteness about them in that they exclusively operate on extrinsic reasons. Highly specific virtues, basic rules and role-responsibilities lack built-in reasons for action. Given that intrinsic reasons are absent, they strongly depend on contextual factors, such as the presence of reinforcing sanctions, for their continuation.

Exactly these two latter points constitute the kernel of Kohlberg's criticism that 'a bag of virtues' is situation-specific, short-term and reversible. This critique does, however, no damage to Peters' strong claim that the learning of a code-encased morality by habituation is (indeed) not sufficient but only necessary for the development of the moral life.[7]

[7] An extended version of this paper appeared as chapter 6 in Cuypers and Martin, 2013.

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EDUCATING COMPASSIONATE BEINGS

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Abstract. This paper explores the notion of compassion and points to some intricacies inherent in it, in particular the paradox of egocentrism. Most ambiguous is its ontological status: is it an emotion, a virtue, a moral commitment, or a neurological reflex? Each category entails different implications for the process of educating compassionate beings. The conclusion is that genuine compassion is, from the very beginning, not just mere feeling, it is based on the recognition of rights of others. A person in need is much more than the object of our noble compassionate feelings and caring help, she is the subject of rights.

Is compassion an emotion that is morally relevant, and to what extent could it be useful within the framework of moral education? Some philosophers obviously endorse the moral relevance of compassion, especially those philosophers who emphasize the importance of the psychodynamics of affectivity in the ethical field: Adam Smith, Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Rorty, Nussbaum and others (not to mention Buddhism – or Dostoiewski). For Rorty, moral education consists primarily not in cognitive learning of moral principles, but in a kind of sensitivity training: 'What matters is not finding a reason to care about suffering, but making sure that one notices suffering when it occurs'. What we need is 'skill at imaginative identification' (1989, p. 93). Other philosophers are not convinced at all of the moral value of compassion. After all it is an emotion, and emotions, as we all know, are volatile and not completely rational: Stoicism, Mandeville, Kant, Nietzsche, Arendt. Quite divergent philosophers of course, but united in their distrust of the role of sentiments in the realm of ethics.

All the philosophers mentioned deploy their specific arguments and counter-arguments. It is not our intention to enter into a discussion with them; moreover we can refer to abundant literature on the subject. It is not our intention either to

discuss best practices in moral education, more concretely, pedagogical practices of how to increase the pupil's competence for feeling empathy or compassion. There is extensive psychological literature on empathy as well. We want to limit ourselves to what can be considered as the conceptual core of the problem: the notion of compassion as such possesses a very problematic and even paradoxical structure. In what sense?

At first sight this specific emotion of 'compassion' seems to be an ideal gateway to effective interpersonal moral engagement. Ordinary talk of moral duty tells me that I have to relieve the suffering of my fellow beings. It focuses on the suffering of the *other,* whereas talk of compassion is also about the pain I feel *myself* when being confronted with the pain of others. Com-passion, *Mit-leid*. I *myself* am afflicted, and touched affectively, so deeply that somebody else's suffering becomes my own suffering, so intensely that I am bound to *do* something about it. Moral commitment.

In our cultural tradition, the paradigmatic narrative is the biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Everybody knows the story. A man is wounded by robbers, who leave him half dead. A priest sees him, but passes by; a levite sees him, but passes by. But then 'a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion' (Luke, 10, 33). He went up to him, and took care of him. This is remarkable, because in those days, Jewish people looked down on Samaritans. They were considered to be tough commercial people, who only cared about business and profit, not about morality. So, why did this Samaritan care for the wounded man? The answer is, in the English translation: 'he was moved with compassion'. It repeats the Latin translation: '*misericordia motus est*'. But the original Greek is much stronger. It does not use the usual word for compassion (*eleos*), but says: *esplanchnisthè.* This is a very corporeal term, something like 'it turned his stomach'. The *splanchna* are the intestines (the bowels) that are used at ritual sacrifices (heart, stomach, liver) and those are the seat of our basic emotions like fear, anger, or compassion. *Gut-feelings*, so to speak, that affect, touch, catch, overwhelm us in a very immediate and prereflexive, corporeal way. Compassion seems to force us in a *visceral* way into the moral commitment to our fellow beings. So, cultivating that emotion might be a better way to educate moral beings and to initiate moral responses, than convincing them cognitively of their duty to help others.

The story of the Samaritan is not exceptional. In fact, it fits completely within the Jewish moral tradition throughout the ages. It is well known that in this tradition the very core of morality focuses on our commitment to the sick, the poor, the widow, the orphan, the foreigner. This focus is still present in 20th century philosophers like Hermann Cohen or Emmanuel Levinas. The idea is that only the *misery* of our fellow beings can put a binding moral claim on us. Why? If all my fellow beings were flourishing and perfectly happy human beings, why should I care for them in a moral sense? What could morality mean in this case? It could only mean that I have commitments to my own perfection, in other words, that I should become a gentleman among gentlemen, a *kalokagathos.* Hence morality would have nothing to do with hard moral commitments, it would be reduced to some art of living. But that means esthetics, not ethics.

So the claim is: it is only by being painfully affected myself by the misery of others (com-passion), that I am lifted out of my egocentrism, and *forced* into a hard moral commitment to my fellow beings. This idea is embedded so deeply in our judeo-christian tradition (the Good Samaritan being the paradigm of morality) that we might not be aware of its problematic or even paradoxical conceptual make up. If we understand 'compassion' as an emotion, and nothing more, it is very plausible indeed that experiencing such an emotion remains an egocentric attitude after all. Because after all it is *my* emotion, and there is a possibility that it stays focused on *my* suffering, and *not* on that of my fellow-humans. Let us examine this possibility on two levels: on the level of face-to-face relationships, and on the level of group behaviour.

Face-to-face relationships

In order to circumscribe the problem, we can start from the two best known philosophical texts on compassion: those of Aristotle and of Adam Smith.

In a famous passage in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines compassion, pity (*eleos*) as 'a feeling of pain caused by the sight of some destructive evil, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves' (*Rhet.* II, 1385b 12). Two points should be noticed here. First, we are in the *Rhetoric*, a treatise about the techniques of persuasion that can be used by an orator. Among these tricks is the manipulation of the feelings of the listeners. In forensic rhetoric the emotion of compassion is, of course, primordial. It makes a huge

difference, sometimes it makes all the difference, if as a lawyer one succeeds to arouse compassion for the defendant or not. In ancient Greek law courts it was common practice that a defendant dragged into the court his weeping wife or his crying children, in order to influence the emotions of the jury. We can find such texts in all the famous Greek lawyers, Lusias, Demosthenes and Isocrates. We *are* in a rhetorical context. On the other hand, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* compassion does *not* appear in the list of virtues, but in the list of *pathè* (literally passions, but to be translated as 'emotions'). Other *pathè* that are listed are: fear, anger, hatred, jealousy and joy (NE II, 5, 1105b 21-23). They are all emotions by which we are overcome, overwhelmed, moved on the waves of natural impulses – therefore they are unstable and therefore they can be manipulated by the orator.

A second element to be noticed in Aristotle's text on compassion is the following. Compassion is finally egocentric fear, fear that the same evil that comes to others could happen to me: 'What we fear for ourselves excites our pity when it happens to others' (*Rhet*. II, 1386 a 28). *My* fear, that is crucial. And that is the reason, Aristotle says, why only people we can identify with can arouse our pity. (Much later Rousseau will use this idea in his *Emile*). But this is a completely egocentric statement. It does not even contain a beginning of a moral approach. It is about *my* fear for *my* vulnerability. I am not *morally* addressed by the suffering of the others. I suffer myself, but I do not suffer from his or her suffering, I suffer from the tragedy of a fatal destiny that also could be mine. Later, Nietzsche's vehement attack on compassion in *Morgenröthe (Daybreak)* is mainly targeted on this Aristotelian egocentrism.

The other famous text is the very beginning of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* by Adam Smith (1759). It is a type of modern naturalistic interpretation that has become popular in the British moral sense tradition and in Darwinism. Here, compassion is to be understood as a kind of physical causalistic process: when others have a feeling of discomfort or pain, and when we come close, this feeling is transplanted, grafted upon us as a kind of contagion. Just as when, in the opposite case, a cheerful guy joins the group, and his merriment infects everybody. A transfusion of feelings, Adam Smith calls it. But such a kind of mechanistic contagious process, is beyond any *moral* intention. *The greatest ruffian is not altogether without it*, he says. We resonate in the vicinity of suffering, a kind of instinctive natural reluctance, or discomfort, is initiated (2002, pp. 13-15).

The idea has recently been supported, as is well known, on a neurological level by the discovery of the system of mirror neurons (Stamenov & Gallese, 2002). A mirror neuron is a neuron that fires both when an animal acts and when the animal observes the same action performed by another. So it has, quite surprisingly, both motoric and perceptive functions. It is active, say, when I raise my arm, but also when I see *you* raise your arm. Thus, the neuron mirrors the behaviour of the other, as though the observer were acting himself. And this is also true for emotions. The same brain regions are active when people experience an emotion (such as pain) *and* when they see another person experiencing that emotion. So here we reach a kind of neurological basis for social interaction and empathy (although there might still be some speculative elements in the theory).

But some questions remain unanswered. Even if I can understand now how I intuitively feel pain myself when noticing the pain of others, does this imply that I have a *moral* feeling? Am I already on the level of morality? Of course, I can *use* this mechanism for my moral plans, as Kant already wrote in his *Tugendlehre* (*Doctrine of Virtue § 34)*. When I am aware of my duty to help others, this awareness alone will not be sufficient to make sure that I really will fulfill this duty. Consequently, I have a kind of indirect duty to visit hospitals and prisons, in order to let nature stimulate my natural feelings of compassion, and drive me in the direction of helping others. Compassion here is morally relevant, but only instrumentally. It is not a moral attitude in itself.

In this context, compassion is not much more than a passive natural reflex or reflection. Seeing the pain of others, awakens a kind of natural discomfort or even repugnance in me. I cannot stand seeing the suffering of somebody else. But is this a *moral* reaction? I cannot bear the sight of blood either, but this is not yet an ethical position. If somebody's suffering proves infectious, and is causing in me a kind of reduplicated suffering, I remain focused on my own misery, and not on the misery of the other. Real com-passion in a moral sense should be the primordial concern for somebody *else's* misery. It should therefore remove the emphasis from my own misery. But compassion as mirror pain increases this emphasis. It remains within an egocentric universe. It might not be the ideal gateway into my *moral* commitment to others.

The problem can be summarized as a paradox. At the very moment when compassion becomes ethically promising, namely in the affective moment, the moment of pathos and *splanchna*, the moment when we get deeply touched and

afflicted, prereflexively, by the suffering of others, at that very moment everything becomes problematic, because the response that follows, helping the other, seems to become a solution for my very own suffering, my own emotional housekeeping. When I am really and totally concerned about the suffering of the other, and totally focused on it, then my own suffering should vanish, so to speak, or should become completely irrelevant.

This skepticism is shared by experimental psychologists who conducted experiments on empathy. In psychological terms we could define empathy as the attitude of a person who not only cognitively perceives somebody's distress as distress, but also affectively immerses oneself in that situation to such an extent that he himself is feeling in distress. Eisenberg (1990), who did a lot of research on empathy, is quite convinced that it is possible to share somebody else's distress *without* experiencing any impulse to console the other or to come to his assistance. The reason is that so many factors, different from feelings of empathy, play a part in social behaviour. Cognitive factors. Important, for instance, is the way in which we assess the meaning of our own emotions, and the way we control them. As important is the global moral judgment we pass on a situation. For instance, we can empathize, and still try to repress that emotion. Or we can feel so overwhelmed by that emotion, that we try to run away from it by closing our eyes for the other person's pain. Or we can judge that more important things are at stake than the pain of an individual: we can be smart enough to find reasons to overrule compassion by other considerations. Although not all psychologists agree on Eisenberg's skeptical viewpoint, we could refer to many other elements in support of her. An extreme example of overruling compassion by ideology, are the texts of the nazi-regime, where compassion (*Mitleid*) was very explicitly considered as a vice that should be resisted (Haas, 1988). Or even worse, we can think of situations in which compassion can be deployed as an alibi for crime. In this respect the Milgram experiment is widely known. Under the cover of an experiment on memory, what is measured is the readiness of a person to administer electro-shocks to a fellow testee, when this is commanded by a scientific authority. Everybody knows the amazing percentage of people that obey the authority. But it also became obvious from the experiment that feelings of empathy with the pain of the other person, do not always obstruct the readiness to inflict pain, and in some situations even *facilitate* it. The very human, and socially applauded, feeling of compassion forms a kind of alibi to render the acts of cruelty

(the electro-shocks) psychologically bearable, and consequently, possible. In Milgram's debriefing it is very clear that in some experimental subjects precisely the feeling of compassion with the victim counterbalances the reluctance people normally experience against administering painful electroshocks, because it proves that after all they remain human and that they continue to have honourable emotions. Compassion as an alibi for crime! (Milgram, 1975, pp. 73-77).

These considerations do not imply that compassion is not important in moral life at all. They imply that we have to redefine this emotion in such a way that its relevance for moral life should be safeguarded. We should redefine it as being more than a purely emotional attitude, more than just *splanchna.* In order to achieve this, we should reconsider its time dimension. In most concepts of compassion it is presupposed that there is first a moment of the *splanchna*, when we are touched naturally and prereflexively by the misery of somebody else. And this affect is so intense that it motivates me, in a second moment, to a helping response, a moral reaction. It is precisely this second moment that was the problem. But maybe a different chronology is possible. The *pathos*, the affect by which I am overwhelmed, is not just emotion. Maybe it is already of an ethical nature itself. Kant calls this 'a moral feeling' (*moralisches Gefühl).* Respect is his example of such a moral feeling that is more than just an emotion, because it already embodies a moral attitude. In compassion, I suffer from the suffering of somebody else, because I consider his distress unjust, something that should not be. I suffer from the other, not in a natural feeling of sympathy or resonance with his suffering, but I suffer from the ethical claim which he lays on me. That explains the Good Samaritan: not the emotional shock of seeing the horror of another man's wounds. In that case he could as well be inclined to flee from it. But he is overwhelmed by something that already contains an ethical element: a call for help. The ethical reaction: I cannot let this happen, I need to respond, *is* the shock, *constitutes* his compassion and stirs his *splanchna.*

Social macro-context

So far we have spoken about face-to-face relationships, and in how far a real concern for my fellow beings can be provoked by compassionate feelings. But what about macro relationships, in society at large, in group behaviour, humanitarian aid for instance? Would the same problem and the same paradox occur here?

And if yes, is the same solution possible? Presumably the same problem, that paradox of egocentrism, would occur and the same solution would be possible. Let us consider humanitarian action as it is admirably exemplified in organizations like *Medecins sans frontières*, or *Amnesty International*. At first sight, they are based on feelings of compassion that are overwhelming people when they learn about the misery and suffering of people in the third world. And just as Aristotle said, this humanitarian emotion of compassion can be manipulated, provoked even (*emotelevision*.) And to some extent, it can be egocentric as well. The thesis of the French sociologist Lipovetsky (1992) and the French philosopher Finkielkraut (1996) has become quite popular. In their view, our emotional humanitarian responses, these collective versions of compassion, do not embody a real moral commitment to others, and cannot even be understood as emotional impulses to help others. What is at stake is, in their interpretation, that we live in a culture that can only appreciate positive feelings of well-being, ease, and pleasure. Such a 'wellness-culture', they say, is incapable of dealing with suffering. In such a culture suffering as such, and even each kind of negative feeling as such, have become unbearable and intolerable, something that should be exterminated in ourselves and in others. I undergo suffering, even the suffering of others, as a kind of assault on *my* quality of life, a kind of environmental pollution, and I must get rid of it. In this sense, the so called humanitarian concern for our fellow beings and their misery, is finally an egocentric regression. Even worse than in the Aristotelian context, because it is based not on my fear of my vulnerability, but on a perverse fear of each and every negative feeling, in and around me. Now this is a very extreme position, because it interprets humanitarian intervention as egocentric: we feel compassion for suffering people, and we help them, simply because we cannot stand suffering, the latter being an attack on *our* feelings of wellness.

This kind of *Kulturkritik* is wrong, but on the level of society it exactly expresses the problem of egocentrism we already encountered in the notion of compassion in face-to-face relationships. And we can propose the same solution. This kind of criticism repeats the same error. It interprets our humanitarian solidarity with victims as being nothing more than pure emotion, pitying *Les misérables* all over the world. But is our solidarity with victims nothing more than being moved by a vague sentimentality, or even by a perverse relation to suffering? The answer is that humanitarian action should be interpreted as being based on the *rights* of those victims, which is something quite different. Of course,

the humanitarian organizations mentioned above apply what is called caritative marketing, focused on emotions of compassion and charity. But the humanitarian idea itself is not merely based on emotions. The core of the message of *Medecins sans frontières* is *not* how terrible and painful those miserable people feel who lack medical treatment. The core of the message is the recognition of a universal *right* to medical care, in all situations. The core of the message of *Amnesty* is not to trifle with the feelings of those who cannot tolerate emotionally that people are imprisoned (like the old women in Seneca's *De clementia).* The core is a universal right to a fair trial and a fair punishment. William Turner's famous painting *The Slave Ship* (1839), recently exhibited in the National Museum in Krakow, is full of drama and emotion: the spectator stares right into the faces of the handcuffed slaves who were thrown overboard. This painting shocked the public so deeply, that it played an important role in the abolitionist campaign in those times. And yet this campaign was not about our feelings of aversion and pity when confronted with ill-treated slaves. It was about their rights to be free.

So here again, in the macro-context, the misery of the other not only elicits suffering in me, but in the first place lays a *claim* on me. And in a macro-context, such an ethical claim amounts to a rights claim. This viewpoint has an important consequence. It answers the much-heard criticism that any form of compassion is, by definition, condescending, or even humiliating. Of course, when people are in trouble *any* form of help is condescending at first sight. Who does not need help but extends help, is by definition in the stronger position. Unless. Unless we are mindful of Kant's *Doctrine of Virtue* (§23)*:* 'we should be reminded that the welfare of the poor to whom we come to assistance, is dependent on our benevolence, and that this is *humiliating* him. Therefore it is our duty to act as if our assistance is nothing more than what he is entitled to'. All condescension vanishes when suffering is understood as a claim on us, a rights claim, and when our compassion is understood as suffering from that claim. Then we, those who show compassion, are in the weaker position. An example. I can conceive of disabled people being the object of our noble compassionate feelings and our caring help. Or I can conceive of them as subjects of rights. Both approaches are very different. If the story is only about caring and benevolent people, the handicapped person, being only an object of care, disposes only of a vocabulary that permits him to say: thank you, you really take care of me. A 'thank you' that is quite humiliating indeed. A help that is quite condescending. On the contrary, the

disabled person, if he is approached as a subject of rights, disposes of a language that permits him to claim those rights, to make demands, to assert his claims, and if necessary to organize protests in the streets when rights are violated. It is all about dignity. Feelings of compassion with the sick and disabled always existed. But the disabled have only become dignified in 1975: when mankind proclaimed their inalienable rights in resolution 3447 of the United Nations.

Compassion is more than just emotion. Compassion is linked with rights claims. Consequently, our final conclusion will be the following. Of course moral education should take into account the dynamics of action, and human affectivity. But at the same time, it should be more than a kind of é*ducation sentimentale*, more than a process of learning to empathize. It should induce commitments to others that are based not just on *our* emotions, but on *their* rights.

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ETHICS AND EDUCATION: TAKING GLOBALIZATION SERIOUSLY[1]

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Abstract. Central ethical concepts in education should be interpreted in a global frame, beyond the conceptual confines of the nation state. My underlying claim is that globalisation's effects and significance are profound, but that while new global practices, norms and structures are increasingly evident, developing our key ethical concepts and assumptions accordingly is limited by the narrow and outdated moral universe of the nation state. The intertwined demands of justice and democracy in education now require conceptual adjustment to meet a different world. First, the features and significance of globalisation are considered, with particular reference to globalisation in education, as well as political globalisation as indicative of the now outdated model of the Westphalian state. Secondly, a revised conception of justice based on recognition of global association is sketched and illustrated by the case of the global campaign for Education for All. Thirdly, possibilities for globally democratic decision-making after the monopoly of the nation state are outlined, advancing the discussion towards some concluding observations about the implications of the argument for the education of global citizens.

1. Introduction

Although the effects of globalisation on education have received much attention in educational research, some of its far-reaching implications are yet to be established – not least with reference to ethical issues. Taking the field of ethics as a broad one that encompasses questions of justice in access to education and of democracy in making decisions about its provision, this paper argues the case for central ethical concepts in education to be interpreted in a global frame,

[1] This paper draws in parts on work co-authored with Mary Tjiattas (see Enslin and Tjiattas, 2012 and 2015).

beyond the conceptual confines of the nation state, and it considers what this might mean. My underlying claim is that globalisation's effects and significance are profound, but that while new global practices, norms and structures are increasingly evident, developing our key ethical concepts and assumptions accordingly is limited by the narrow and outdated pre-global moral universe of the nation state. The intertwined demands of justice and democracy in education require conceptual adjustment to meet a different world, but so far they remain hampered by the influential assumptions of the Westphalian system of nation states.

Rapid globalisation is under way across many spheres, including education. Adjusting to the consequences of the globalising processes in play, which sometimes seem beyond control, demands scrutiny of the very concepts we use to discuss ethical issues, in this paper those of justice and democracy. Here I take these complementary concepts to be fundamentally about who gets what education (justice) and how the allocation of educational resources is decided (democracy). Such scrutiny reveals the need for conceptual correction, a process that has to start with the concepts associated with the framework of the Westphalian system of supposedly sovereign, territorially defined nation states which globalisation has loosened from empirical reality, though these associations were never a completely accurate way of describing the system of states (here I draw on Caporaso 2000, p. 4). While the concepts we use are supposed to group elements of our experience in such a way as to make them understandable, connecting abstraction and empirical observation, prevalent and influential assumptions about the nation state fail to do so and are no longer fruitful. Relying on the influential conception of philosophical method as analysis of how we typically *use* concepts would be inherently conservative and unequal to the task of taking globalisation seriously in the ethics of educational distribution. We need to look to new uses that match new circumstances.

In pursuit of such conceptual adjustment, the paper proceeds as follows. First, the features and significance of globalisation will be considered, with particular reference to globalisation in education, as well as political globalisation as indicative of the now outdated viability of the powerful model of the Westphalian state. Secondly, a revised conception of justice based on recognition of global association will be sketched and illustrated by the case of the global campaign for Education for All. Thirdly, possibilities for globally democratic decision-making after the monopoly of the nation state will be outlined, noting scepticism about

the idea of global democracy, advancing the discussion towards some concluding observations about the implications of the argument for the education of global citizens.

2. Globalisation: meaning and significance

Accounts of globalisation vary between differing emphases. Scheuerman's entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online source) emphasises a triad: 'deterritorialization, social interconnectedness, and acceleration', which have recently become more intense due to innovations in information technologies and transportation. Communication has become instantaneous, as technology minimises distance and fosters simultaneity. So possibilities for social connection and deterritorialisation are heightened. To Scheuerman's type of primary emphasis on spatial and temporal shifts, we can contrast Meyer's (2007) preferred emphasis on globalisation as cultural and institutional. With an over-emphasis on the economic as his critical target, Meyer argues that:

> Discussions of globalization tend to emphasize economic dimensions of expanded world transactions more than is justified. They see more change in economic interdependence than really exists. More important, they understate the intensely sociocultural character of change in the modern global system. (Meyer, 2007, p. 262)

Rather than heightened levels of exchange and consequent economic integration, or the political and military interdependencies that he also acknowledges, Meyer focuses on interdependence in cultural consciousness, in what he chooses to call a world or global society, while adding that this comes nothing close to any world state. People and associations now frame themselves in global terms. Societies and states adopt policies and institutional arrangements that are globally informed (ibid., p. 263). So Meyer emphasises globalisation as cultural and institutional, citing as evidence that societies and states define themselves and their people in standardised ways as committed to economic, political, social and cultural progress, pursuing to varying degrees political, social and economic rights, including education. He cites as examples of modern world culture the authority of science, collaborative peacekeeping efforts, a culture of regulation, e.g. in monitoring elections, corruption watchdogs, as well as global movements for human rights and the environment. Educational systems increasingly adopt similar models in policy, organisation, curriculum and enrolment (ibid., p. 267).

So, as examples of these globalising trends, he notes that women's enrolment has expanded, curricula emphasise maths and science, and English is a lingua franca. As mass primary school enrolments aspire towards universal access, citizens are educated to develop a country's human capital.

That many governments explicitly pursue educational policies intended to make their domestic economies more competitive is, however, evidence that globalisation nonetheless occurs across and between nation states pursuing their own interests and still politically defined as separate political and moral spheres. This definition now demands critical scrutiny. Scheuerman's analysis draws to our attention the fundamental challenge that globalisation's deterritorialisation and intensified interactions present to traditional assumptions about nation states as bounded communities. Clear distinctions between domestic and foreign are no longer consistent with actual social relations and so we 'need to rethink key questions of normative political theory' (Scheuerman: online source).

The historical framework of the Westphalian system of states dates to the signing of two treaties in 1648 (of Osnabruck and Munster) that ended the Thirty Years War in Europe. Signatories agreed to respect the territorial integrity of bounded states, within which rulers would exercise sovereign authority without outside interference. This system developed and shifted internally over centuries, with additional layers of meaning added later, as national identities were fostered, roughly more or less to match separate states, and the franchise was extended to include a widening pool of citizens. As relatively recent modern conceptions of citizenship took hold and sovereign nation states became the locus for political rights and duties, their borders came to be understood as boundaries of moral obligation. In many instances these borders replaced those of the village and the tribe, though even that process is far from universally complete. But with the growing global association across these boundaries, as the result of the forms of integration we have noted as comprising globalisation, has come the *de facto* decline of the authority of the state over a clearly delineated territorial community.

Of course, the Westphalian state is at least partly a myth. Very much European in origin, its vaunted principles were hardly respected by European colonial powers in the age of imperial expansion. Even in the postcolonial era, richer mainly western powers have effectively continued to construct and benefit from the global order that prevails between supposedly autonomous, independent states. And while Westphalian principles of national sovereignty are routinely

invoked, they are also observed in the breach, as demonstrated in the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. In the failed states and the poorest members of the international system of states, there is limited government authority at best. Elements of political and economic globalisation, including voluntary agreements on international co-operation and the fact that states have also involuntarily ceded some of their authority to largely unaccountable international corporations, add up to a dilution of the state's monopoly on power. The movement of money, people and disease across borders is difficult to control. But the hold of the consequential though largely uncontested Westphalian concept of the state remains strong and its presence makes thinking about justice and democracy beyond this immediate bounded context initially difficult because this seems implausible. Yet it is important to stress that I am not, in raising the question of the status and future of the nation state, arguing its irrelevance or calling for its dismantling. It continues to play the primary role, in states that are functional, in maintaining order, collecting taxes, and funding services including education. But it has also outlived the circumstances that produced its long-time conceptual identity. The Treaty of Westphalia was signed to meet specific conditions in a war-torn and post-medieval but pre-industrial Europe, though in a context already starting to change. While the future of the nation state in a global order is hard to predict, my critical interest is in its associated conceptions of justice as owed to fellow national citizens and democracy as largely about periodic elections of national governments and the need for their conceptual alteration, in the present discussion in relation to education. We begin with justice.

3. Justice

Global integration requires a revised conception of justice based on a principle of association beyond the physical, political and conceptual boundaries of nation states. These have long been taken to limit obligations to those outside the borders of the state. The practices, institutions, agreements, agencies and networks that now criss-cross the globe ground a new ethical framework for deliberation about who should get what and how this should be decided. In education, such questions ought now to be addressed in a wider frame than the nation state, if justice and democracy are accepted as key ethical principles in addressing the distribution of education.

The principle of association is fundamental to our assumptions about who is owed duties of justice. Increasing evidence of emerging international institutions and agencies suggests that even if it is not in place yet, we are on the way to realising a global basic structure of some form – even if it is not likely to be simply a much larger nation state. While a non-relational principle of global justice could be based on recognition of the common humanity of all, regardless of whether any human engagement is involved, many cosmopolitan theories of justice resist this alternative. For Moellendorf '...justice is a property of social and political institutions so duties of egalitarian distributive justice don't exist between persons merely in virtue of their personhood' (Moellendorf, 2009, p. 32). Duties of social justice, including duties to construct and support egalitarian institutions, do not fall immediately out of rights to inherent dignity, but depend on the kind of association that generates them (ibid., p. 75).

A revised principle of association that acknowledges the fact of globalisation rests on a much expanded set of relations based on interdependence and shared membership of institutions and schemes of co-operation (Cohen & Sabel, 2006). Cohen and Sabel identify global politics as the 'terrain of moral-political argument' (ibid., p. 148), insisting that even if historically there was an intimate connection between justice and the state, it is now mistaken to assign such a fundamental role to the state. They recast the notion of inclusion as central to the wider frame of global justice:

> Conceptions of global justice offer accounts of human rights, standards of fair governance, and norms of fair distributions (including access to such basic goods as health and education). Competing conceptions can be understood, then, as advancing alternative accounts of what inclusion demands: of the kind of respect and concern that is owed by the variety of agencies, organizations, and institutions (including states) that operate on the terrain of global politics. (ibid., p. 149)

The wide range of relations that comprise this terrain now operate in: trade, financial regimes, the environment, labour relations, human rights, collective security, peacekeeping, health, education, and the International Criminal Court. That such forms of co-operation and accompanying norms are already in play can be seen in global developments in education since the middle of the twentieth century. Even in education, though policy and provision are still largely under the control of nation states, this is no longer a matter of separate nation states developing and implementing their own norms in a way that is closed off from those

affected by the behaviour of their citizens and institutions. Those non-citizens also affected by the forms of association that connect them are implicated too and so eligible for considerations of justice.

The establishment of UNESCO after the Second World War as a specialised agency of the United Nations Organisation (UN) triggered this co-operative, organisational and normative shift in education. As the body tasked with the role, from 1948 onwards, of fostering global security and peace through education conceived as a human right, UNESCO pursued the global development of education in collaboration with other UN agencies like the UNDP and UNICEF. With an institutional design based on a principle of multilateral collaboration, UNESCO set out to support co-operation with governments and later with non governmental agencies too. Although its earlier work was vulnerable to the criticism that international co-operation in education was uncoordinated and tended to be dominated by western agencies and governments while allowing limited roles for local governments and recipients of aid to actively manage their own development (Mundy, 2006), this nonetheless constituted a shift towards a more globally organised and justice-oriented international educational regime.

The campaign for 'Education for All' marked a further shift from the 1990s towards a more co-ordinated and extensive form of global collaboration in education. Arguing that this campaign signalled a very different regime, Mundy observes:

> The idea of 'education for all' has become part of a broadly based consensus about 'what works' among bilateral and multilateral development agencies. It is also a rallying call for heads of state and international financial institutions, a focus for transnational advocacy, and an arena of expanding development practice characterized by widespread experimentation with new modes of aid delivery, new kinds of donor-recipient relationships and relatively high volumes of aid spending. (ibid., p. 24)

The goal established at the World Education Forum held in 2000 in Dakar reflects a common commitment to universal basic education for all, emphasising that education is a human right in all societies. The universal norm of providing free, compulsory primary education for all children by 2015 (UNESCO 2000) marked the adoption of a significant global principle in the provision of educational opportunities. 'Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies

of the twenty-first century, which are affected by globalisation' (UNESCO 2000, Article 6). In urging universal educational provision, the earlier Jomtien Declaration had similarly described the basic need for learning as a universal responsibility.

On the campaign's universal norm of justice in education rests its consequent call for redress of economic disparities between countries. The campaign for Education for All identified the unequal distribution of resources as key to the global disparities in education, calling on the global community to make increased resources for education in poorer countries a priority. Although the campaign focused attention on the provision of primary education, and even though the goals of the campaign look unlikely to be fully met in all countries, the significance of these developments for the purpose of the present argument is clear: that a global basic norm had been agreed, alongside the principle that the availability of resources for education is an issue of global justice. In this respect the principle is a more expansively conceived one, more widely cast than a basic principle of association might be expressed, as it suggests obligations of educational justice among all states.

The shared norms and priorities of the EFA campaign have led in turn to the setting of monitored, measurable targets, crucially that of universal primary education by 2015. Mechanisms to coordinate donor activity suggest that 'UPE is steadily being recognised by rich governments as a global public good in need of collective rather than unilateral action' (Mundy 2006, p. 38). A further significant shift, confirming the growth of global collaboration is the involvement of new actors in educational development: beside national governments and organisations like UNESCO, these now include the private sector, advocacy networks, unions and international NGOs. A wider range of players now participates in policy development and monitoring, in a reshaped 'global architecture of education' (Jones, 2007) whose global scope transcends the previous authority structures tied exclusively to nation states. This transnational configuration of organisations, agencies and communities 'culminated in the turn of the century summits that produced the Millennium Development Goals reflecting commitments by broad international communities, not just collaborating states' (ibid., p. 330). The ongoing problem of a lack of resources in poorer countries is emphasised in annual EFA Monitoring Reports (e.g. UNESCO 2008) prompting calls for increased international support for the campaign. This emphasis on justice in redistribution of resources from the richest to the poorest countries is further evidence that

a global principle of educational justice is well established, even if far from achieved. Its limited success so far, far from proving that the principle of educational justice across states is incoherent, mirrors arguments against domestic inequalities in educational opportunity and achievement within nation states.

To my claim that these developments imply a required conceptual correction, from a state-bound conception of justice to an emergent global conception, it might be objected that the example of EFA does demonstrate increased international co-operation but that ultimately the notion of justice is tied to the motivations of individuals, and that the boundaries of the nation state inevitably define the limits of solidarity and hence restrict citizens' moral horizons that still tie the meaning of justice to a domestic frame. But there is evidence that these ties are loosening. Gould (2007) proposes a revised conception of solidarity as social empathy that goes beyond the historical meaning that presupposed a relationship within single group, to include the forms of transnational solidarity now evident. Shared commitments to justice in cross-border relations (p.156) show an affective recognition of the plight and needs of distant others and a willingness to support them, as in the response to the 2004 Tsunami.

A specifically educational example of such solidarity is public donation in support of Oxfam's various educational initiatives (http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education). The assumption that national identity delimits the bounds of obligations to one another is increasingly questionable on empirical grounds. Relatedly, national membership does not persuade citizens of a common nation state to voluntarily share the burdens of providing resources for services like education. As Weinstock (2009) argues when discussing possibilities for global justice and democracy, the coercive power of the state has to be used in all modern states to require citizens to pay their taxes. 'We simply do not have enough evidence to support the ambitious claim that co-nationals are naturally disposed to share with one another in ways that people from different countries are not' (2009, p. 94). Furthermore, domestic disagreements about moral values and so about distributive justice are rife in liberal democracies and are no more amenable to resolution than they are in the international context (Miklos, 2009, p. 109). A more prudential acknowledgement that the domestic-foreign divide is disintegrating concedes that inequalities in resources and political instability in the poorest and most troubled countries are a threat to peace and prosperity of rich countries. So self-interest may drive willingness to act for global justice.

The richest countries are aware that they are threatened by global poverty, which increases health, security and environmental risks to their citizens (Weinstock, 2009, p. 100). 'There are, in other words, "global public goods" – that is, goods that the world's richest countries cannot obtain unless the needs of the global poor are catered to as well' (ibid., 2009, p. 98).

Shifts in political motivation towards global justice also have implications for the possibility and importance of transnational democracy. Exclusion from decision making about matters that directly affect them is an injustice to individuals, groups and societies that enjoy fewer resources and less influence over their distribution; such injustice reproduces other injustices. An obvious means to address injustice is through more democratic ways of allocating resources, hearing the demands for justice of those who get less.

4. Democracy

Having addressed potential statist objections to the argument for global justice, we now need to consider a similar objection to the parallel proposal that democracy too ought to be freed of the state-centred logic of Westphalia, while looking to possibilities for post-Westphalian democracy.

Adopting the term 'democratic justice', Marchetti argues that: '...true political justice is fundamentally entrenched in a procedural and multilayered democracy, within which all individuals can advance their claims and complaints in order to defend their freedom of choice' (2008, pp. 1-2). Democracy is either global, he insists, 'or it is not democracy' (ibid., p. 1). Since interpretations of both justice and democracy are likely to continue to operate in both largely domestic but increasingly global arenas, for now this may be an overstatement, but Marchetti has an important point to make about the urgency of conceptual alteration in loosening democracy from its historical development as a modern layer of the states system. In truth, the development of transnational theories of democracy is not as far advanced as is the literature on global justice, but there is no shortage of proposals for preferred models and their predicted development. What is clear is that our thinking about democracy remains in thrall to national elections: 'Wherever we look, the electorally oriented, vote-centric model really does seem to dominate practical political discourse on democracy' (Goodin, 2010, p. 176).

Those ready to dismiss the very idea of global democracy as preposterous have often taken it as axiomatic that it must mean world government, or at least an assembly elected by all citizens of all countries. Neither is necessary to a theory of global democracy, though it is worth noting that Held's (1995) theory of cosmopolitan democracy has proposed an elected assembly as an additional UN structure. Various possibilities for world government are still taken seriously by some and less easily dismissed by their critics. But taking a long view of global democratisation as a process in its early stages, we would do well to follow Goodin's advice (2010) and to look for first rather than final steps in this process, bearing in mind that historically democratisation of the nation state took five or six centuries. To pay too much a-historical attention to the extension of the franchise, and so to democracy understood as popular elections to a national assembly, with citizens requiring accountability of their national government in their own domestic sphere of authority, is to risk ignoring the historical processes that led to the curbing of arbitrary power and gradually rendered the holders of power accountable for their conduct. These are crucial steps towards domestic democracy, as they are transnationally. The powers that affect citizens cross borders, be they the influence wielded by stronger governments than their own or the unaccountable actions of multinational corporations acting beyond governmental or popular accountability. Nor are citizens dependent on national elections to express their will; global networks and organisations offer other means to do so.

But what alternatives to state-centred structures or practices are possible? Several options have been put forward so far and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Some theorists turn to the European Union (EU) as suggesting what a transnational democratic order might be like. Cohen and Sabel (2004, p. 158) see the EU as such a 'nascent political order', with democratic potential in its web of problem-solving procedures. Similarly, though acknowledging that there is room for further development, Bohman describes the EU as 'an ongoing experiment in political integration' (Bohman, 2007, p. 172) that has produced innovations in deliberation and a transnational institutional design with further potential for democratisation towards a transnational order. Its progress in fostering human rights is held up as particularly praiseworthy. 'With the recognition of the full range of human rights of all persons within a complex and differentiated institutional structure, the EU shifts from a regional to a cosmopolitan polity' (ibid., p. 150). Habermas has given much attention to European integration

within a model of global governance (2009). Globalisation, especially global markets, necessitates a form of political regulation above the national level. Habermas calls not for a world government that supersedes nation states but for a form of supranational transnational regime to complement nation states that could regulate matters of collective concern like global economic crises. Asking how public communication could operate above the national level, in a Europe-wide public sphere, he envisages a deliberative model of transnational democracy and an associated Europe-wide public sphere. In spite of the crisis of the Euro, it can still plausibly be argued that the current crisis of financial regulation will accelerate the growth of institutions that will ultimately deepen European political integration. The EU remains an institutional example that stretches traditional conceptions about the meaning of democracy. This view has its critics and it is important to note, for example, Scheuerman's position that '...the realization of a global federal republic, or even a federal Europe, seems politically unrealistic today' (2009, p. 59), and his caution that democratisation beyond the nation state poses many difficulties and is a long term project. Arguing from a rather different critical angle, Goodin cautions that 'When it comes to the global polity, we are still very much in the *early* days – both of developing a global polity, and still more of democratizing it' (2010, p. 179).

Goodin's more cautious assessment points to various international 'accountability mechanisms' as evidence of the growth of 'networked governance', which he describes as comparable with those present in the early phases of domestic democracy. He cites as examples professional associations and policy networks, which comprise communities now able to assert norms transnationally in monitoring the conduct of governments, NGOs, INGOs and private bodies. Instead of supporting the more visionary predictions about future transnational political structures, Goodin prefers to advance the idea of a 'slippery slope' towards global democratic inclusion, attributing to the 'stickiness' of democracy potential for further widening mechanisms of accountability.

Other possibilities on offer in the debate about possible and preferred future directions for global democracy focus on the potential of deliberative democracy. Bohman's recent work (2009) turns to the potential formation of publics, drawing on public sphere theory, which is an influential presence in current theories of global democracy. Bohman's sustained explorations look to a conception of 'distributed deliberation', rather than civil society, as offering the best potential

for democratisation as the kind of 'communicative freedom across borders' (ibid., p. 149) that could successfully challenge political domination. Enabling NGOs to monitor institutions' performance and to rally cross-border public opinion, the public sphere thus understood is exemplified in the work of, say, Amnesty International and anti-whaling groups. Technologically mediated public communication can advance what Bohman calls multiple *demoi* that enable citizens to deliberate. Pointing to the obvious example of the internet, Bohman also cites emergent practices in the EU, such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), that enable citizens to simultaneously debate EU policies with citizens elsewhere in Europe.

It seems likely that global democracy will develop across multiple sites and practices, but that controversy about the extent to which the conceptual dominance of the nation state has been loosened and what might replace it does not reduce the salience of the case against the monopoly of the Westphalian conception of political authority, justice and democracy. Although none of the emergent possibilities has clinched the argument, there is no shortage of possibilities. As a central democratised authority is unlikely to emerge, it is likely that democratisation of global governance will be piecemeal and partial, with a continuing role for the nation state even as its dominance recedes. Wherever efforts to promote transnational democracy are ultimately concentrated, it is evident that the ways we conceive of democracy in the ethics of education need to shift beyond the conceptual straightjacket of the nation state.

5. Education

Taking globalisation seriously, I have argued, requires conceptual correction, altering our understanding of both justice and democracy to accommodate the expanding global frame in which ethical assumptions and decisions now operate. Although, as the EFA campaign demonstrates, conceptual alteration is now evident in the transnational norms, structures and initiatives in pursuit of universal primary education, actual progress towards global justice in education to date is modest. Global access to education falls a very long way short of equal opportunities in early years, secondary, further, and higher education – and improved access to primary education still varies widely in quality and outcomes.

The fact of vast global inequalities in educational opportunities, dictated by the accident of where people are born, is both a consequence and on ongoing

cause of economic inequalities between nation states. These in turn are at least partly a result of a global history that includes northern enrichment at the expense of southern poverty. Some countries thus have the advantage in developing their citizens as human resources that support competitive national economies in global markets. Their populations will also enjoy growing advantages in acquiring the skills needed to access and use the global mechanisms and publics that comprise emergent transnational democratic structures and practices. If economic prosperity and higher levels of education are more conducive to democracy, educational inequalities between nation states are of huge significance to global justice and to the relative capacities of citizens in different nation states to assert demands for resources and redress through democratic structures, whether by using domestic institutions or in access to global mechanisms and publics. So great are the disparities at stake that even anti globalisation activity, ironically of a kind organised on global scale (see Meyer, 2007, p. 270) and using the technologies at the heart of globalisation, is the preserve of those schooled in the discourse of human rights, ICT skills and democracy. Beyond these elites, the 'utterly peripheral people who are outside the sweep of globalisation, in the current world, are almost invisible' (ibid., p. 270). A state-centred logic in the ethics of education is inadequate to thinking seriously about such injustice.

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THE INHERENT ETHICS AND INTEGRITY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract. The paper begins with some introductory remarks that explain why understanding education as a coherent human practice is necessary for a proper account of ethics in the field of education. The authors take three steps: presenting education as a practice in its own right, discussing the concept of thinking in the context of educational practice and finally revealing some practical consequences of the inherent ethics of education. The paper invites readers to further investigation rather than giving ready-at-hand answers. It challenges conventional approaches to ethics in education and seeks to provide a more adequate and appropriate context for pedagogical discourse on ethics.

INTRODUCTION
Some opening questions concerning ethics as a field of study in relation to education

We wish to argue the case that the ethics of education arise in the first place from the demands that are inherent to education itself as a coherent human practice. The argument we will be making stands in marked contrast to a widely held view that the ethical orientations of education are to be supplied by a body of superiors, such as a Church, or the current government, or other institutional power. The priority given to institutional political power in this common view consigns educational action mainly to the ranks of subordinates, but it also communicates an unexamined assumption that this is the natural order of things, notwithstanding major political changes. To take a prominent historical example, when Napoleon Bonaparte saw himself as emancipating French education from the control of the church, he did not promote the further step of enhancing the influence and decision-making capacities of educational practitioners. Rather, he left hierarchical assumptions and practices very much in place but his reforms

served to recast the entire order of values that the new centralised educational system would be called on to serve.

The argument we are keen to make contrasts not only with standpoints that make educational practice an essentially subordinate domain to the wielding of political-institutional power. It also contrasts with philosophical standpoints which hold that the ethics of education are to be supplied by one or other ethical *theory*, such as utilitarianism, a deontological ethics, a teleological ethics, or even an ethics of care. It is not that the insights yielded by such theories are devoid of relevance. It is rather that the priority given to theory and its formal conceptual demonstrations tends to eclipse the specific and many-sided nature of the ethical challenges that occur within educational practice itself. Something similar might be said of other practices, for instance, nursing or medicine; but as we shall see below, the case of education presents particular difficulties.

To get our enquiry under way we have identified three questions that arise from these introductory remarks.

1. Why is ethics a more problematic issue for education than for other fields?

One central reason is because education is widely viewed as 'a highly contested field'. Let us simply call this 'the contestation thesis'. That is to say, education is seen as an arena where competing values do battle. A national report on research in education in US in 2002 puts it succinctly: 'People's hopes and expectations for educating the young are integrally tied to their hopes and expectations about the direction of society and its development' (Shavelson & Towne, 2002, p.17). Consider for a moment how this prevalent view – which promptly brings the plurality of human aspirations under macro questions about 'the direction of society' – influences the tenor of educational policy and practice at an institutional level. It is just this kind of 'natural aspiration' that fuels the assumption that the ethics of education are to receive their main orientation and character from some higher body, democratically elected or otherwise. The unvoiced assumption here is that education does not have inherent values – values that arise from education as coherent practice in its own right. Control over the conduct of educational undertakings thus becomes the prerogative of what Plato was pleased to call 'the stronger party'. In totalitarian societies this can be readily perceived as indoctrination, but in democratic societies the possibility of periodically changing a government by popular ballot tends to lessen, if not quite remove such

concerns. But democratic societies are also ones where 'the direction of society' is rarely far from controversial debate or robust disagreement. Thus the habits of democratic life itself, when fuelled by dubious assumptions of long ancestry, allow the view of education as a primary arena of contestation to prevail.

We will not be suggesting that educational practice, or the leadership of such practice, can be made independent of powerful political influences. The history of education, West and East, is replete with examples of education being made the instrument of church, or of state, or of industry and commerce. What we hope to point out, rather, is that the coherence of education as a public undertaking requires at least some recognition that it is a practice with inherent purposes of its own: i.e. different from those of church, or state, or other powerful bodies in society. This recognition of the integrity (or integral-ness) of education involves public trust: an acknowledgement that in some key senses education is not a contested field.

2. Are there particular difficulties in finding application for the major ethical theories in the conduct of educational practice?

Our answer to this question is that there are. There are many theories which seek to shed light on ethics – including theories of deontological ethics, consequentialist ethics, virtue ethics, utilitarian ethics, care ethics and so on. But none of these theories in itself provides a satisfactory approach for the ethics of specific practices: for instance, the ethics of medical practice, the ethics of engineering practice, the ethics of educational practice. In these instances the ethics for the conduct of the practice must arise firstly from the particular nature and purposes of the practice in question. Where there is a large measure of agreement on such purposes, or at least on some core purposes, the ethics of the practice can be articulated in a fairly coherent way, albeit that disagreements and difficulties will still arise. Where the practice of medicine is concerned, earlier and subsequent versions of the Hippocratic Oath provide an example of what is involved here. Such examples show moreover that ethical disagreements are not laid to rest for good, even in practices where core purposes command wide assent. But things are more thorny if the practice in question is regarded as a 'highly contested field', and if large numbers of practitioners themselves acquiesce in this view. In such circumstances it is hard to see how significant progress can be made in articulating a coherent and defensible practitioner ethics.

3. What then is really problematic in the relationship between ethics and education?

A historical perspective is important for any adequate approach to this question. Such a perspective allows us to see just how influential the infusion, or more critically the imposition, of a body of values on educational practitioners from above has been. This infusion has been characteristically accomplished by one or other institutionalized power, chiefly those of a church or state, though more recently forces of a more commercial kind have been jostling for such power. Such infusion, or imposition, fails to acknowledge that education is or could be a coherent practice in its own right; a practice that has its own inherent ethical imperatives. The record of effective influences in the history of Western education shows that the strategy of using education to advance the influence of ascendant powers has a long ancestry. On the face of it, it looks like a problem that could be traced to the paternalistic design for education in Plato's *Republic*; or to the political control of education that Aristotle argued for in books 7 and 8 of his *Politics*. In fact however, the historically effective origins lie less with Plato and Aristotle than with the Neoplatonism of Augustine and other early Christian thinkers from the fourth century onwards. The decisive event here was not just the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. Also crucial was the transformation of Christianity itself from a religion of spiritual aspiration for individuals and communities into forms of paternalism and custodianship that were to become powerful beyond all precedent.

These initial explorations of our three opening questions provide the background to our main investigation, which we will now begin.

PART ONE
Education as a practice in its own right: first steps

There are ethical imperatives that arise from the distinct purposes of education itself, when education is considered *as a practice in its own right*. To speak of education as a practice in its own right is not to suggest that it should enjoy an absolute form of independence. Every practice that aims at some distinct benefits must be answerable for its progress, or lack of progress, in promoting and sharing these benefits. Every practice is also affected to a greater or lesser degree by social and historical influences in the context in which the practice is

carried on. To regard education as a practice in its own right moreover is not to regard it as a uniform kind of action, far less a monolithic form of action. Rather, it is to call attention to a *range* of practices of learning that share some recognisable features, such as the following for instance:

- practices that are not harnessed in advance to the goals of one or other institution;
- practices that continually seek to identify the particular range of potentialities native to each learner;
- practices that endeavour to nourish such potentialities through forms of learning that bring benefits of mind and heart to others as much as to oneself;
- practices that take human differences seriously and seek to promote more a profusion of human flourishing than any alignment of capacities and commitments to one or other 'ism'.

Underlying such practices of learning is an important acknowledgement that illuminates the 'integrity' mentioned in our title: namely the ethical orientations, and the tenor of action, of education itself as a distinct human undertaking. This is an acknowledgement of the limitations that attend even the most advanced achievements of human understanding: a recognition that the fruits of such achievements (knowledge, skills, theories etc) are still only *partial*, and in both senses of that word: they are (a) incomplete; (b) influenced by the previous interpretations and judgements that one has internalised.

Such an acknowledgement is implicit in a suggestive way in those learning communities disclosed in the early (though not the later) dialogues of Plato; dialogues like Euthyphro, Gorgias, Protagoras, and Bk 1 of the Republic. In these instances the pedagogical action of Socrates carries the most fertile suggestiveness, while also giving pause for a more searching kind of thinking. In the early dialogues the outcome of the encounters is usually some decisive advance in ethical insight, not just for those present, but also for today's readers of the dialogues. But such advance characteristically lacks the certainty of an authoritative final word. Rather, it discloses at the same time a deeper understanding of the nature of the issue under enquiry *and* of one's own and others' limitations in relation to that issue. One could rightly call it a more educated sense of one's own ignorance, and of the relative ignorance of humankind more widely.

This twofold acknowledgement (a deeper understanding of human finitude and limitation and the unsettling of a self-assured certainty in relation to

knowledge) constitutes the heart of a Socratic educational legacy, properly so called. Such a legacy is a stranger to most forms of metaphysics and epistemology, as understood and carried out in Western traditions of philosophy. But from the middle of the first millennium the conduct of schools, and later colleges and universities, became deeply influenced by institutionalised and prevalent forms of both metaphysics and epistemology: – of metaphysics in earlier centuries and of epistemology in more recent ones. All too rarely is it noticed that these developments mark the enduring eclipse of a distinctly Socratic educational legacy, including the powerful ethical-pedagogical orientations native to that legacy.

But one should not conclude here that there has been an irrevocable loss. Some of the most probing philosophical researches of the twentieth century have made explicit, and progressively more so, what remained implicit in the Socratic learning communities. We can for instance, evidence decisive contributions from widely different philosophers: from Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Arendt, Dewey, Popper, Gadamer, Patočka, Tischner that share in one way or another the Socratic insight expressed in provocative terms by Gadamer: 'It is not so much our judgements as it is our prejudices that constitute our being' (Gadamer, 1976, p.9).

This kind of insight, when correctly understood as an inescapable feature of human understanding itself, opens in new ways the kind of eclipsed suggestiveness we mentioned above. It uncovers certain kind of ethical orientations rather than others where defensible practices of teaching and learning are concerned. Accordingly it also helps to highlight the particular kinds of thinking that are appropriate to actions that are properly educational. To a closer investigation of such thinking and action we now turn our attention.

PART TWO
Thinking and action in education

For centuries philosophers have dreamt of finding one conclusive, objective way of understanding all that the universe holds, including the world that humans inhabit. For centuries also others have retained vestiges of a largely eclipsed Socratic inheritance by challenging this dream of a conclusive grasp of finite things and ultimate reality. The latter efforts have tried to show that such a dream is dangerous, and seriously so, for human flourishing: that the epistemological quest for certainty needs to yield to other, more open, more democratic and dialogical ways of understanding all that human experience encounters, not least the world

as our place of living. The history of ideas tells us that the tension between these contrasting tendencies has had a huge influence on European culture, particularly on philosophical thinking. This has led to many conflicts and disagreements, not only in intellectual life but also and in the conduct of professions in everyday life, including educational professions. Edmund Husserl's 1935 Vienna lecture, 'Philosophy in the Crisis of European Mankind', serves as a philosophical landmark in establishing a critical consciousness of this tension (Husserl, 1965). In identifying key obstacles to the kind of thinking that is most appropriate to truth-seeking enquiries in sciences and humanities, Husserl's 'crisis' reflections mark a watershed; one between the objectivism of epistemologies informed by Enlightenment rationalism and the more inclusive reach of subsequent philosophical efforts that rejected objectivism. The tension between a strict objectivity stance on the one hand and a more dialogical style of reflection on the other has a significant impact on the way educational practice comes to be understood. It is a tension that adds a further layer of difficulties to the long-established ones arising from acrimonies between contesting parties in the field of public education. So it is all the more necessary to clarify here the kind of thinking that belongs to education as a practice in its own right. Without such clarity it may be futile to talk, as we do in our title, of the inherent ethics and integrity of education.

Not every kind of thinking that is practised in education is helpful for understanding this integrity. Even the more 'professional' forms of thinking in education might serve to becloud rather than reveal the kind of integrity at issue. Everyday 'professional' thinking in education is often a kind of cognitive psychology, or psychology of learning, constrained by taxonomies that reside in certain forms of psychology. By contrast, educational thinking – that which informs the actions of genuine practitioners – is a really complex and reflective *experience*. To seek to capture its characteristics properly we will need some philosophical figures or metaphors. Here we will identify and differentiate between four features of such thinking: (a) personal engagement, (b) being in jeopardy, (c) encountering the otherness and (d) opening new horizons.

(a) Personal engagement

The first feature of a distinctly educational kind of thinking that we can identify concerns the kind of reflexivity present in the practitioner's efforts to deal with problematic issues or predicaments. All too often here the practitioner relies chiefly on established routines and procedures while neglecting to relate

the issue at hand to a probing critical reflection. To illustrate with an example, in addressing a misconduct issue in a classroom a teacher draws on professional knowledge and objective expertise mastered during training and continual professional development courses. But in doing so she may habitually relegate or overlook valuable insights that a critical reflection on her own experiences as a teacher, and those of colleagues, might have to offer. While acknowledging that professional expertise in teaching makes available many promising possibilities, we would stress that it is a serious mistake not to include in such possibilities those that are more deeply rooted in the teacher's own life. To neglect to do so is to bypass the core of the ethical issues that arise from within educational practice itself. Dewey remarks perceptively on this in *Experience and Education*: 'The mature person, to put it in moral terms, has no right to withhold from the young on given occasions whatever capacity for sympathetic understanding his own experience has given him.' (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 38). In short, personally engaged thinking in education involves the whole of one's questioning experience. This distinguishes it from a thinking that takes its orientation merely or mainly from institutionalised professional habits, not least those connected with school rules, and with examination and test routines.

(b) Being in jeopardy

When any person, not just a teacher, reflects critically on issues that originate in one's personal experience, that experience receives a 'second reading', but now in a reflective and questioning mode. Limitations, missed opportunities and wrong turnings come to light, as well as accomplishments in which one can take an enduring satisfaction. Such reflection also helps to uncover previously undetected prejudices and to bring before oneself the unknown or even perilous aspects of one's life. The desire for a safe or cosy place in the world is thus confronted by the necessities of living in an unpredictable reality. Only with this kind of questioning experience is the person really ready to start the journey called for in educational thinking. This is a kind of thinking that puts one's self-understanding and one's understanding of the world in jeopardy, so to speak; it is a thinking that unsettles the settled tenor of one's outlooks; a thinking that accepts responsibility for building learning environments that seek to provide a rich quality of educational experience. It involves a willingness to experience risky situations as a part of one's *practice,* not just of one's research.

(c) The other as a stranger

We began our analysis of thinking with 'personal engagement' and then we moved to the reflection on being ready to experience the risky side of any serious questioning. An important consequence of the latter is the attitude that presupposes openness to the experience of the unfamiliar. This involves a shift of perspective on the part of both interlocutors, the one who poses the question and the listener who in turn reacts to the question. Thus, when we pinpointed the experience of risky situations as a necessary part of educational thinking, we shifted from the position of 'I' to the position of 'Thou' (Gadamer, 1975, p. 321 ff.). From that moment on, the other cannot be understood as a mere object of cognition, as a resource to be used, or as an event to be endured. To experience the other means first of all to accept the situation when 'Thou' surprises us with her unfamiliarity or strangeness. It is not possible to foresee the other in her fullness, or to reduce her to our presuppositions. Thinking, when it is the kind of educational experience that we are exploring here, takes from the outset the form of encountering. Good teachers genuinely encounter their students in their otherness, even though they must experience the unexpected and sometimes even distressing consequences.

(d) The power to change

In everyday educational practice routine is almost unavoidable. Notwithstanding the fact that teachers and educators try to avoid repetitiveness and to bring freshness to their work, teaching and learning are frequently dominated by reproduction and by rote. It is often said that education should be innovative. But is it really possible to become creative in an atmosphere of learning by rote and rehearsing for tests? Educational thinking, it must be emphasised, not only embraces the situations when we meet something new. From the start it includes the expectation that it leads to new standards of understanding and acting, to new ways of solving problems, both theoretical and practical. This why in European culture thinking, from its beginning in its Greek philosophical modes, is understood as a good way of changing the world for the better. That is not to say that words have a mainly performative function and when we pronounce them they transform objects with magical power. The real power of any transformative thinking comes not from any magic but from the inter-subjective dimension of any real understanding. In that sense educational thinking, understood as a kind of

personal practice, always changes the world since it offers its participants the new horizons of seeing and acting upon the matter at issue. In other words, as distinct from something merely cognitive or preparatory, educational thinking is itself from the start a form of thinking-in-action as well as a form of thinking-on-action.

PART THREE
The Inherent Ethics of Education – Some practical consequences

The import for educational practice of the kind of thinking we have been considering can be explored in the main *domains* of action of pedagogy itself. We have identified four such domains here, not as an exhaustive list, but rather as four central and interweaving aspects of educational relationships which highlight the nature of the kind of ethics involved in educational practice. The four domains are: (a) the teacher's relationship to the subject or material being taught; (b) the teacher's relationship to his/her students; (c) the teacher's relationship to colleagues, parents, educational authorities and a wider range of others; (d) the teacher's relationship to him/herself, within which the ethical significance of the other three relationships is decided.

(a) The teacher's relationship to the subject or material being studied

Where the teacher's relationship with a subject is concerned – e.g. economics, physics, history – it bypasses the heart of the matter if one regards this as a matter of competence in a body of knowledge and skills that is ready and waiting for transmission. If the subject in question is not alive and communicative *within* the teacher's ongoing relationships to it, it's unlikely that students will experience the worlds of possibility, challenge and discovery to be opened up by the subject in question. That's to say, the teacher needs to build a relationship to the subject as to a *neighbourhood*, or range of neighbourhoods, in which she has become at home; but not in the sense of a cosy repose for thought and action. Such neighbourhoods contain not only their own harmonies, but also their own long-standing acrimonies. Moreover, they are not neighbourhoods characterised by horizons that are everywhere familiar. Rather, they are characterised by invitations that beckon and demands that lead quite beyond such horizons. Yet, they remain neighbourhoods into which students must be invited ever anew, and in ways that evoke and sustain the students' genuine potentials and energies. This

gives a new understanding of the notion of fluency, not just in languages but in all subjects of study. Fluency now becomes understood less as a skill available for deployment and more as the ever renewed fruits of a vibrant personal relationship to one or more inheritances of learning. The ethical core of this relationship lies in embracing the challenges involved in its own renewal and enhancement. But it also lies in becoming more mindful of the biases as well as the benefits that are continually encountered in inheritances of learning themselves, from the most ancient to the most recent. From an ethical standpoint then, when the subject comes to voice in one's teaching it seeks to address the students in the manner of an invitation, if sometimes a challenging one. This distinguishes it from any action that makes a proprietorial claim, overt or implicit, on students' minds and hearts. These references to students bring us now to the second domain of relationship.

(b) The teacher's relationship to his/her students

When viewed from any adequate pedagogical perspective, teachers' relations with students are more accurately conceived of as an ongoing *interplay* than as a transmission of any kind. Crucial to the purpose of such relations is that they seek to enable students to become active and responsible participants in their own learning. For students this kind of enablement means taking unforced steps toward the discovery of their own potentialities and limitations, in response to the voices that engage them in a buoyant community of learning – e.g. in maths, in music, in Polish, and so on. It's important to add that it is the reciprocal *realisation* of such relations, among students themselves as well as with their teachers, that allows environments of learning to become properly fruitful. This realisation involves continually renewed efforts from the teacher, but also from students, and it remains invariably incomplete. It is properly to be viewed as a progressive attainment of an aim-in-view, yet an ever-partial one, rather than any final accomplishment. It remains vulnerable moreover to setbacks, distortions, and even collapse. Recognition of the importance of this reciprocal dimension identifies a range of ethical responsibilities on the teacher's part that are rarely enough in evidence in more customary conceptions of teaching. These ethical responsibilities embody the kinds of thinking investigated in the previous section. They include, for instance, the moral insight and perseverance necessary to draw learners as active and responsible participants into a vibrant learning environment; or the courage to put one's own truth claims at risk in front of one's students; or the

foresight to envisage promising pathways for diverse kinds of learners and the commitment to explore these pathways anew with one's students. Pedagogical virtues such as these – the examples could run to a long list – also help to restrain impulses in the teacher-student interplay that tend more to a rule of domination and submission, or of recurring acrimony.

(c) The teacher's relationship to colleagues, parents and others

Where relations with colleagues, parents, educational authorities and others in wider society are concerned, this, like the former two domains, could readily be subdivided. Critical analysis of this domain moreover, and of its sub-spheres, can illustrate how pervasive the forces of domination and coercion can become. The history of education in Western civilisation is replete with examples of unequal power relations as an institutionalised norm: between older and younger teachers, between teachers and school managements, between teachers and parents, between teachers and policy authorities, and so on. In fact such analyses have contributed in no small way to the idea that educational thought and action is essentially a field of contestation, or even a battleground for ideologies. But critical analyses of this kind fall short of their own best purposes if they fail to make explicit the question implied in all critique of human practices: Critique for the sake of what? Recall here that education is a deliberate human practice, as distinct from a natural phenomenon, or biological process. It's when this practical question is engaged with that the real educational-ethical possibilities of this third domain of relations comes properly into view. To capture this view succinctly: one's teaching colleagues are prized as sources of constructive criticism and ideas; parents and guardians are properly regarded as supportive partners; educational authorities as potential sources of coherent and soundly based policy; and the public mainly as a body whose trust is necessary, but earned. This, it should be stressed, is less a *theory* of professional relationships than an unveiling of the kind of sustained pedagogical-ethical work that actually needs to be done in the everyday conduct of professional practice. Some might argue that ethical orientations like those just outlined may be all fine in theory, but that they are too idealistic for practice. To such an argument it is necessary to point out a fundamental error: the difficulties here are simply not difficulties of a theoretical character. Indeed the very practical character of the orientations called for in this third domain of relationships highlights the real nature of the difficulties involved. The ethical tensions that have

to be negotiated here are inescapably rooted in the specific challenges that the various parties – teachers, school leaderships, parents/guardians – have to face in seeking to make educational practice itself fruitful.

(d) The teacher's relationship to himself or herself

This is the fourth domain of relationship we have identified. More simply, we can describe this as the teacher's self-understanding. This is where the other three relationships come together – profitably or otherwise – to orient in one way or another the teacher's thinking and actions. For instance, my relationship as a teacher to the subjects I teach might be a cherished one that continually attracts me to new and invigorating encounters within these subjects. But I might be disposed in a different way towards my students, frequently resenting their lack of appreciation of my efforts. My relations with my students might indeed be fraught with difficulties that remain largely unaddressed, and possibly intractable. One might call this a lack of 'know how' or of 'pedagogical content knowledge', to use a common technical phrase. Rather than the possession of a 'know-how' or competence, however, what is at issue is more a lack of attunement to the kind of ethical insight that orients one's attitudes and actions as a practitioner. It is less a matter of having this or that competence and more a question of a way of being and relating.

In any case this kind of shortfall could be an enduring feature of a practitioner's capability, or more precisely incapability, in one or more of the domains of relationship that combine to give learning environments their particular character. In fact one might be seeking refuge from unaddressed difficulties in one domain by an excessive preoccupation with another. Such mis-perceptions in one's self-understanding as a teacher can have quite distorting consequences for the professional attitudes and practices that flow from that understanding. These consequences become very concrete ones when they affect the quality of learning experiences among students and the quality of the learning environment where these experiences take place. It is crucial therefore to develop an ethical approach that keeps the intermingling domains of coherent educational action itself constantly in the foreground.

Conclusion

We believe that these briefly-sketched points identify many promising paths for ethical enquiry in the field of education. But they cannot do so in any ample way if educational practice itself is already effectively harnessed to the imperatives of one or more powerful institutions in society. That is why we have emphasised from the start the importance of understanding education as a practice in its own right. The paths we have been trying to uncover moreover cannot be clearly discerned if ethical enquiry in education begins with borrowings from this or that ethical theory, insightful though many of the insights from such theory can be. These paths can only be sketched in outline in an essay of this scope. But we trust that our arguments reveal something central about the nature of the work that needs to be undertaken and renewed if it is to render educational ethics itself coherent as a field of thought and action.

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CREATING A MORAL SELF

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Abstract. The paper shows some philosophical and practical problems of moral education such as the gap between moral knowledge and moral action. It emphasizes the role of emotional dispositions and human character in building moral identity. And it articulates the criticism of Kohlbergian conception as an insufficient approach to moral education. Instead, a theory of moral deep self is proposed as a better account of the acquisition of moral guiding motivation.

Introduction

I begin with some general remarks and intuitions. By education in the most current and proper sense we mean the process of acquiring knowledge organized in certain forms: we learn in school and in university; we teach ourselves, we are taught by parents, by school teachers, or in contact with social environment. Now, this is an educational process not only in cognitive sense. It is also an experience reinforcing our will, preparing us for future professional life, while influencing the tenor of underlying human relations such as friendship or competition.

It is not the cognitive sense of education that interests me the most. As a philosopher, I am interested rather in how people grow and mature in their personal and social development from an early age to adulthood. This is also a process of education – we acquire certain moral knowledge about norms, prohibitions, and duties which make possible our life in society – but it is education of quite a particular kind. In brief, notwithstanding any epistemological similarities, moral education is not the same process as learning mathematical or natural sciences, because only the former type of knowledge influences our relations with other people. Numerous works and discussions on will, virtue, moral motives, moral

character or moral personhood, prove our great interest in such issues as: how to improve human moral character, how to form a child as a morally good person, what kind of society we want to live in, etc.

In analyzing the philosophical phenomenon of moral upbringing, it is also important to explore some purely philosophical problems. Does ethical theory, focused on educational processes, require a metaphysical ground? What kind of values and beliefs would we like to promote – or to impose – on children? Normally we ask such questions of ethical theories *tout court*. In the case of theories of moral upbringing we tend to adopt a number of normative ideas rationally accepted in our culture which underlie educational procedures, such as: an ontologically grounded idea of humanity, the idea of personal autonomy, an educational model of parents and educators, or a model of proper educational institutions.

The fact that we have moral beliefs acquired in different ways – irrespective of their metaphysical roots – is a quite natural feature of the human condition. In educational practice two things seem essential: (a) how to bridge the gap between moral ideas and moral actions and (b) how and when these moral ideas become a ground of our personal and moral identity. So we ask as moral philosophers: when does a child become moral person, governing his actions by virtuous motives? When does practical rationality turn into moral rationality? Moral education can be developed in several ways, but its task is always the same: we want to develop a morally *good person*, well integrated by a coherent body of moral ideas.

A critique of Kohlbergian theory

The classic aim of moral philosophy, and an aim of every education theory, is to transform moral knowledge into a system of motives. It is evident that we have such knowledge at a relatively early age, but it is naive to identify – as Socrates mistakenly did – moral judgement with virtue. No one believes that moral knowledge automatically brings about good actions. Moral agency and moral upbringing cannot be adequately considered without reference to such terms as weakness of will, personal identity, moral character or virtues. Does moral judgement play a significant role in motivating moral action? Where is the missing link between moral cognition and action?

Contemporary moral psychology often refers to a kind of Kohlbergian project where a moral life is considered as a developmental parallel between cognitive and affective functions.

Such a scheme, with rationalist antecedents in Kantian and Socratic philosophy, is based on a heavy reliance on the intellectual abilities of a person. On this account the person resolves difficult strategic and moral situations by engaging her logical capacity, empathetic skills and pro-social attitudes, thus coming to the level of universal moral rules at the end of moral development. However, Kohlberg's theory lacks strong educational implications because he does not say how to provide motivation to act morally. He does not explain how our natural cognitive and emotional competencies are formed; he does not say either if we can count on them in every situation. It is almost as if the problem of moral evil does not exist – independently of what we mean by it at any stage of personal development. In the Kohlbergian scheme moral evil would appear merely as some kind of lack: lack of hedonic reactions, lack of empathetic abilities, incapacity of thinking in civic terms, or lack of understanding of highest universal moral principles. So, believing that moral development is the natural, inevitable phenomenon resulting from natural, emotional and intellectual development of the person, Kohlberg presents some kind of naturalism. However, he forgets that there are other psychological, also natural phenomena, such as weakness of will, moral indifference or aggression, which can be harmful for morality. That is a real concern of moral educators. The Kohlbergian scheme does not indicate how to resolve essential educational dilemmas: how to pass from moral conviction to action. All decisions made from the perspective of Kohlberg's stages 1 - 4 are strategic, and the fact that two last stages involve the moral reasoner's respect for certain values does not mean that they have a special motivational force. The cognitive skill of reversibility, the ability of putting oneself into another's place (common to Kohlberg and Kant) does not correspond to proper moral action; nor does it evoke a deep feeling of duty. It is also not clear that respect (in theory) for such values as social contract, the idea of life, the idea of greatest good for the greatest number, or the idea of liberty, incline anyone to right activity at the expense of his private pleasures. Kohlberg does not tell much about the agent's emotional reaction to transgression of moral rules – such as sentiments of guilt or shame.

Moral philosophy has always been a big educational utopia – in the best sense of the term. Its essential problem is to find the proper significance of *good*

and to show the way to practise it. Normative projects which indicate moral goals without indicating how to achieve them are useless from an educational point of view. The greatest moralists – Aristotle, Kant, Hume, Mill – explored individual character skills and tried to examine to what degree general norms can influence our real actions. They attempted to find a way to shape human character in view of moral excellences. Aristotle analysed in a very detailed way the process of passing from moral conviction – through taking decision, the force of will, stability of character, virtuous dispositions – to moral action. Kant was aware of the resistance of sensuality to moral aims; he was also aware of fact that overcoming this resistance in the name of autonomous will is a difficult, quite individual process requiring the force of will and purely moral motive. Hume examined the very nature of emotions inclining people to moral actions and analysed the different motives of our choices. Mill tried to show that associating virtue with pleasure leads to virtuous actions. All these projects to a great degree individualized the human subject, indicating psychological space where the individual moral development can take place.

The Kohlbergian theory does not give this possibility. On that theory we do not know much about the subject of moral life, except the fact that the human being is theoretically capable of resolving some moral dilemma in a natural way. On Kohlberg's account this occurs by means of a special logic corresponding to the individual's level of cognitive-affective development. At the lower stages of such development our motivations are rather simple: they have a hedonic and strategic character. What Benhabib has termed the „generalized other" – is common to the approaches of Kant and Kohlberg. It is an attempt to imitate socially accepted personal patterns and is also strategic. But the question remains: Why and how might the empathetic skill of putting oneself in others' position motivate a person to proper moral action? We can easily imagine a cruel and malevolent activity based on this competence – simply aiming to harm to other people. It is not clear either that adopting such social values as civic obedience or respect for law enable us to bring about morally good results. It is not clear why or how the idea of life protection, liberty, or *summum bonum* for the greatest number, can have a big motivational force. In Kohlberg's theory the fact that we accept universal moral values at stage 6 because they are the part of our civilization does not grant the theory's application in social life. Recognition of universal values and their philosophical promotion by great critical moral consciences (Socrates,

Ghandi) indicates only the desirable direction of our activity. I do not deny that Kohlbergian theory contains many interesting and philosophically attractive claims, but we cannot on this basis answer the key question of how to construe the theory of human selfhood. This task has to be a real object of educational efforts - where moral conscience remains an open space for pedagogical deeds. Though the Kohlbergian scheme is generally a formal one, rarely referring to concrete moral ideas – in describing the sixth stage of moral development Kohlberg indicates some important values, such as freedom, respect for persons, justice and certain utilitarian ideas.

Contemporary critics of Kohlberg's theory propose to divide moral life into 4 interacting components: moral sensibility (evaluating situations in terms of consequences of our action on others), moral judgement (cognitive skill to recognize the rightness of action), moral motivation (priority of moral concern over utilitarian goals) and moral character (self-regulatory capacities to make decisions in the same way in similar situations) (Nunner-Winkler, 2007, pp. 399-414).

The separation (at least in theory) of these fields of our moral life abandons a mechanistic structure of moral development in Piaget-Kohlberg style and formulates instead quite a simple claim based on everyday observation. On this latter account people may be seen to differ in many aspects: in moral knowledge, in level of moral motivation, or of moral sensibility. And such characteristics should not be tied into some close parallel to intellectual development. Educational practice can concern each and all of such characteristics. This was pointed out by Aristotle, who called attention in his *Nicomachean Ethics* to cognitive elements in morality: to *phronesis* (or practical reason), to force of will (resistance to passions), or to shaping our character. The term *will* was a fundamental *novum* in his theory, in opposition to Socratic naive intellectualism, because at least the act of will highlights the importance of decision in moral action (alongside moral knowledge), and the *will* also individualizes moral persons. We know the normative content of moral rules or virtues – the main goal of moral education – because they are the core of our civilization, but the individual choice, an effect of our self-government or even useful strategy, is always an action that is profoundly personal; its moral value calls for a demanding act of evaluation. This effort of overcoming one's weakness, independently of the content of moral rules, is well described in Aristotle's analysis of *akrasia*. Therefore, in reproaching people for a poor relation between their moral beliefs and actions we address, so to speak,

every person separately. In most cases we criticize a person for lacking a strong moral will and for lacking a critical self-evaluation. In acts of will one articulates her auto-reflexivity, self control or self-governance.

Moral identity and the question of *will*

It is difficult to consider moral education without engaging with the idea of the moral identity of the person, where the cognitive skills, moral reasoning, emotions, and character states are inescapably related, and structurally interwoven. Even admitting for the purposes of analysis that the moral life can be divided into different parts: motives, character, virtues, moral knowledge which are formed in the process of moral upbringing, we can interpret it as a sort of narration of succeeding holistic stages of educational process. However, we must not forget that: (1) our moral experience is essentially personal, notwithstanding the social context of human experience; and (2) persons differ from each other in their capacity for auto-reflexivity, or critical self-understanding. As Thomas Nagel points out, we are functioning in two orders: the natural one (predictable emotional reactions, acquired moral rules or trained character) and the *noumenal* order, where the uniqueness of one's moral acts and decisions depends on non-transparent acts of will, possible, if at all, only by a profound self-reflection and by the image of one's own person (Nagel, 1989). These two perspectives are put together in moral life, but only one of them can be the subject of discursive analysis.[1]

The first gives us the possibility to discuss the content of normative systems of values, to consider strategies of reacting to the external world and to work on proper pedagogical training resulting in learned, para-moral reactions on social situations. The second is the first-person perspective of our deep experiences, conditioned by our individual view on the world; it is also the experience of moral comfort, moral effort or moral motivations sometimes easily given up for personal benefit. Therefore, in an educational process we should try to influence not only the person in her *natural* para-moral functionning but also to influence her non-transparent experience of will, the very core of her *self-identity*.

[1] Discursive analysis, or so-called scientific aproach, generally concerns visible and predictable aspects of human behaviour - which we can compare in different persons. The moral phenomena, always lived from 1-person perspective are subjective, like psychological states or cartesian *cogito*.

Bernard Williams points out the uniqueness of human *self* in his essay 'Persons, character, morality' (Williams, 1981). He criticizes two classic modern conceptions of morals (Kantianism and utilitarianism) for lacking the precise idea of personal identity. According to Williams, these theories are incapable of showing the way we pass from moral convictions or moral commands (and not from indications of how to realize a life plan (Rawls) or how to adapt to social life) to real moral actions.

> A man who has such a ground project will be required by utilitarianism to give up what is required in a given case just if that conflicts with what he is required to do as an impersonal utility maximizer when all the causally relevant considerations are in. That is a quite absurd requirement. (ibid., p. 14)

The Kantian position is not much better. As Williams says:

> ...impartial morality, if the conflict really does arise, must be required to win, and that cannot necessarily be a reasonable demand on the agent. There can come the point at which it is quite unreasonable for a man to give up in the name of the impartial good ordering of the world of moral agents, something which is a condition of his having any interest in being around in the world at all. (ibid., p. 14)

Williams' conclusion is clear: we are so different regarding internal moral structure that it is impossible to adopt an abstract Kantian vision of personal identity. And he draws the same conclusion for the moral subject as a more or less passive receiver of pleasant states in utilitarian theory. Neither the principle of maximisation of pleasure nor that of transparent anonymity in impartial and impersonal morality are adequate in understanding the particularity of moral thinking and reasoning in determining our decisions. We are not interchangeable, because we differ regarding our desires, life projects, characters or moral luck. Criticising Parfit's theory, Williams observes that the narrative moral uniqueness of every human being is a quite personal experience, irreducible to natural facts, such as satisfaction of desires, or to or being governed by the rules of practical rationality (Rawls). Narrativity of our self and of moral experience cannot just be divided into temporal segments, such as our past or future selves. It is always one's own life's perspective, embracing past and future, although viewed from the actual moment. According to Parfit, there is not any metaphysical personal identity. We are living our life as continuous due to the continuity of memory; our present and past states of mind are only *connected*. But as moral educators we must treat human

life as metaphysical, unconditional unity (fluency) in time. So it is necessary for pedagogical purposes to accept a philosophical idea of personal identity.

Williams' researches have provided valuable insights, not least the idea of not letting morality be reduced to natural facts. But here I want expand the analysis of the importance of *will* by raising further questions and calling on further philosophical perspectives in pursuing these questions. The questions are particularly important from an educational standpoint. They include: Apart from their strategic dimension what specific character do moral motives have? When and how do moral reasons turn into moral motives? How is moral character formed and what does it depend on? The sources I wish to draw on in addressing these questions include Harry Frankfurt, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Daniel Dennett and Anette Baier.

The importance of self-reflective capability

Frankfurt, in his two-level construction of his theory, gives a response to at least some of these questions by referring to the concept of will. This concept doesn't refer to natural, hedonic attitudes such as *wantonness*, but to second order volitions, whereby first order desires are shaped in the act of free will. It is also helpful here to recall an important distinction in Wittgenstein's *Notebooks 1914-1916*. His notion of *will* appears when defining a human agent, maybe only in a *first person* position. According to Wittgenstein, being a subject of thinking is not as sure as being a subject of will. Wittgenstein distinguishes between *will* as a phenomenon dependent on other phenomena, whether psychological, biological or physical, and *transcendental will* as conscious activity, that is the *bearer of the ethical*. In his *Philosophical Investigations* wanting is clearly separated from will as a moving force. 'The world is given, but my will enters in it from outside' (Wittgenstein, 1961, p. 74e) also 'Wishing is not acting, but will is acting' (ibid., p. 89e).

According to Wittgenstein, our wanting is not an activity, it is a sort of passive experience. Our will, on the contrary, is a real activity. *Will* in an ethical sense ('transcendental will') is the bearer of good and bad; phenomenal will is simply an ability to command our limbs (Tagebucher, 171, PW 216). In Wittgenstein, moral activity of the *will* and the dependence of *wanting* on the natural world, seems to be a good analogy to Frankfurt's theory of the hierarchical subject. According to Frankfurt, humans have a capacity for reflexive self-evaluation manifested in so called *second order desires*. In order to be a person one must identify with one's

freely chosen desires – desires to have or not to have different *first order* desires (spontaneous, non-reflexive *wants)*. A decision made from the level of *second order* desires engages our will while deliberating about our motivations, thus moving us to action. So Frankfurt describes human beings who are incapable of dealing with second-order desires as *wantons*, in opposition to *persons*. We become persons through the acts of normative moral will. In the theory of Wittgenstein it is *transcendental* (ethical) will, as primary to will *tout court*, that is responsible, for example, for moving a hand to eat one's dinner.

Affirming moral order in one's own life is solely a matter of *will*, an element external to the simple desires of a trifler (a *wanton* in Frankfurtian theory). According to Frankfurt, the essential psychological feature enabling a searching analysis of ourselves is self-relexivity, manifested in higher-order acts of *will*. Frankfurt likes Descartes's philosophy, so we can understand why self-reflective consciousness is for him a concept that is particularly important and useful. The ability to examine our own conscious acts and decisions is in Frankfurt's philosophy a way to gain distance from oneself and the basis for a better, impartial account of our behaviour. If we were to determine the identity of *wanton* (in Frankfurt's theory a *wanton* person is a human acting in nonreflexive way, according to his spontaneous desires), the description would involve relatively simple psychological structures subordinated to natural desires, and lacking moral motives. The description would identify a being with anthropological features, but not moral ones. Perhaps such a being could be trained, but it would make little sense to speak of moral education in this context. Such a 'training' is surely not what moral educators would like to achieve, even if society felt better with this outcome than without it.

The naturalistic description of *wantonness* cannot properly be applied to moral beings with *self-reflective* abilities. Only from the level of second-order volitions can our intentions be directed towards moral plans that we can consciously put at the core of our psychologically and morally integrated life plan. Frankfurt does not care much about the content of normative desires, but he emphasises a distance between phenomenal and noumenal sides of our lives. Auto-reflective self-consciousness examines critically what's naturallly non-reflective and spontaneous in us. We shape our acts of will from the level of *moral self* – regardless of particular moral content forming its basis – to achieve conformity between our actions and our ideals. The human who is strongly distanced from his simple

desires becomes more fully a person through acts of will that engage with normative ideas. Frankfurt's theory goes back to a Cartesian idea, unfortunately with all its imperfections for moral philosophy. Frankfurts's work continually emphasises the importance of will. It is not only a disposition of reason or senses, but also a part of something extremely important for morality: *self-reflection*. While Kohlberg bases his idea of development of morality on the concept of intellectual development, the idea of *self*, understood as a field of possible pedagogical deeds, is based on a deeper understanding of the *psychological structure* of human being.

An insight by Daniel Dennett will prove useful here. He points out six elements constituting the psychological structure of moral personhood. According to Dennett, only a fully developed self can bear responsibility; but for this to happen one has to be a human person, capable of interacting morally. Firstly, one has to be a rational being (Kant, Rawls, Aristotle). Secondly, one has to be a physical being capable of experiencing conscious states and acting intentionally (Strawson). Thirdly, one has to be able to relate to this being in some way or another, e.g. by adopting a stance of respect. Fourthly, the object toward which this personal stance is taken must be able to reciprocate (Strawson, Rawls, the Golden Rule). Fifthly, she has to be able to communicate verbally; this condition is presupposed silently by all social contract hypotheses. It also eliminates animals from moral world, creatures incapable of abstract thinking. Sixthly, and most importantly, a *person* has to be able to experience *self-reflective* states (Anscombe, Frankfurt) (Dennett, 1976).

Only the sixth condition makes one a moral person. Apparently the concept of *moral person* is for Dennett the fundamental condition of ethics. He emphasises the transition from a metaphysical theory of person to the view of person as a responsible agent. The first three conditions are necessary, but not sufficient. We can imagine physical, conscious, rational beings, working in an intentional way, but they are not necessarily human persons. Even plants can be described as *rationally* and *intentionally* directing their growth towards sunlight. But is not the fourth condition – the ability to reciprocate feelings – typical for humans? According to Dennett, intelligent animals (god, chimpanzees) apparently are able to feel others' intentions, needs and desires, therefore they can also formulate second order projections like 'I think X needs y', eventually 'X expects z'. Here there is nothing more than strategic expectations, calculated for some beneficial result. (A dog gives his master a paw not from respect for his needs – like the

companionship of an obedient animal – but because it wants to receive its favourite food). Therefore we are left with a fifth condition – the ability to verbalize intentions and reflections about other people's thoughts and desires. Even here Dennett hesitates: is every verbal statement deeply intentional? Can't we imagine acts of communication as manipulation, lies and intentional misleading? However, the deep essence of communication is the honest message and according to Dennett and Anscombe verbalization of our convictions is also a form of honest interior dialogue with oneself. Looking at the sixth condition of being a moral person, the ability to gain distance from oneself, Dennett concludes that at the same time the ability to convince ourselves about certain reasons should be a part of our moral silhouette, or at least of our intentional system of desires. He argues that we take part in a specific inner game of 'questions and answers' which should lead us to full understanding of our own arguments and decisions. Therefore, the fifth condition, the ability to verbalise our thoughts and intentions, is itself the basis of self-reflectivity and of the internal dialogue preceding moral choice. So, on Frankfurt's analysis, a Cartesian first person self-consciousness becomes a structure upon which the idea of responsibility can be founded.

Annette Baier goes even further; she shows how Cartesian distance from one's conscious content can shape moral archetypes. She is not emphasising the verbalisation of convictions, or even the game of 'questions and answers', as much as acquiring in childhood such competence in internal language as makes creating ideal models of action psychologically possible.

> Being conscious is not enough to make a (moral) person. For that we need Cartesian consciousness of ourselves and our place in the world, not merely consciousness of the stimuli relevant to what in fact is self-maintenance in that world (...) Both our goals and our beliefs, even those which concern satisfaction of our animal needs, take a form which animal intentional states could not take. Unlike animals we have the concepts of self and others, of presence and absence. (Baier, 1985, p. 88)

So, according to Baier, to become a moral person is to embark on a path of verbalisation. Without language self-knowledge would be impossible. This is not knowledge about the natural world – the knowledge of hunger, danger or what differentiates us from others – but self-consciousness built upon it: the self-reflective basis for *moral will*. In the beginning, a child learns simple relations with others using pronouns like *I*, *you*, *we*, *they*. By participating in a discourse, operating with images of oneself and others, he gradually achieves a state of

self-consciousness of Cartesian type. According to Baier, learning the pronoun 'you' plays a crucial role in distancing from oneself. Criteria once used for self-evaluation are being transformed into criteria used interpersonally; the child is feeling that he is a part of community bound by an internal system of mutual obligations. Before we get to be first-person (for ourselves) and third-person (for others) we are in this particular sense *second-person* – says Baier. Two messages fit in this Cartesian rhetoric. Firstly, the structure of internal dialogue allows us to gain distance from oneself and to examine ourselves from a point of view of a system of values rooted in society. Secondly, using the second-person pronoun (Baier) allows us to construct a model of ideal person as a part of community. By virtue of this particular duplication of consciousness, I am at the same time myself – a natural being with a set of particular desires – and idealised other (Mead): I am me and you. Maybe right choices are being made from *your* point of view, but in reality it is *I* who chooses. This is a slight departure from Frankfurt's idea, who does not see a need to grammatically verbalise the distance between second-order and our own, spontaneous desires: so to speak, between *you*, represented by second order desires which are often socially accepted normative projects, and *me*. Maybe the game between imagination and moral commitments is sufficient.

On this analysis, Frankfurt's 'second order volitions' (with resonances of Wittgenstein's transcendental will) that are made possible by self-reflective consciousness constitute the field of acts of the conscious moral will. But how is such conscious moral will shaped? How can we influence it? That is the problem of moral educators: how to transform moral aspirations generated in didactic processes into motives and acts of will.[2] Grounding moral upbringing on the concept of *self*, understood as self-reflective psychological structure, provides a promising orientation for addressing the problem. Such an orientation suggests a picture of the ideal person, with moral convictions, inclinations and desires. Thanks to auto-reflexivity we can distance ourselves from our own desires while at the same time being constantly confronted with the systems of value respected by others.

[2] From the internalistic point of view, value judgements defining the *good* become sufficient reasons and an eficient motivational force to act; it seems, however, that this Socratic position is not very useful and effective in practical life and in educational practice. It is naive to hope that moral knowledge about the meaning of good is enough to act morally.

For moral psychology probably the easiest way to resolve all educational and moral problems is to analyse the logic of moral imperatives and to follow feelings accompanying choices, because these structures are based in culture, somatic to some extent (emotions), and statistically susceptible to interpretation. Unfortunately the nature of self-reflective *ego* is a tougher material, only accessible to the moral agent. She is the only subject aware of the extent of the moral distance from her desires and of the transition from simple wants to the level of Wittgensteinian transcendental *will*. But even this psychological phenomenon can be shaped. For Annette Baier the only good educational perspective is a dialogue with a child developing his reflective self. Through the dialogue we teach a child his being in a world of other humans and we teach him how to respect other people's needs and desires.

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SCHOOL FAILURE AND ITS INTERPRETATIONS

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Abstract. The author sketches the history of a longitudinal study on student failure in Poland conducted by a Polish educational sociologist, Zbigniew Kwieciński et al. Simultaneously, he provides a philosophical review of the study which took nearly three decades, starting in the early 1970s continuing through the fall of communism in Poland and the advent of liberal democracy. The findings of the longitudinal study are striking. They suggest that changes in the political system, in social and economic factors, in educational ideals and policies accompanied by different dominant philosophical paradigms, had no major effect in redressing school failure, or in reducing the numbers of socially excluded pupils. Having critically reviewed the research, its findings, philosophical interpretations, as well as the evolution of Kwieciński's views, the author highlights the significance of the role of the teacher in the complex dynamics of educational practice. He argues a case for substantial teacher responsibility, and for greater moral responsibility for the student.

In this paper I present a concise history and a philosophical review of an important body of research on failure in Polish schools from the early 1970s until the late 1990s. The research was carried out over this period by Zbigniew Kwieciński, a Polish sociologist of education, and his team. The research period covered different stages of recent Polish history: from the last years of communism, through the transformation period, until the beginning of liberal democracy. The most striking point in the research was that, in spite of the many social, political and cultural changes over the three decades, the numbers of pupils socially excluded because of underperformance or failure remained stable. Significant change was evident, not in students' achievements but in the dynamics of school selections, as well as in the philosophical interpretations brought to bear by the researchers in their analyses of failure.

The longitudinal approach adopted by Kwieciński involved not only investigating the level of educational achievement of pupils and its relevance to consecutive school choices; it also involved tracing the careers of the research populations as they developed fifteen and thirty years after graduation. School failure, as conceived by Kwieciński, has always been connected with the pupils' inability to participate in the mainstream culture due to their basic deficiencies in education, e.g. their poor understanding of written texts. Being unable to make sense of what they read, the pupils had a very limited access to symbolic culture and, as a result, they became prone to social exclusion. The full consequences of school failure, therefore, reveal themselves not only at school itself, but also in the years and decades after graduation. Kwieciński had never attempted to define the concept of school failure in an analytic way. For him what was indicative of such failure was the actual experience of socially excluded pupils viewed in contrast to their successful peers. Tracing the lives of both groups over a long period of time forcefully confirmed that the setbacks experienced by certain pupils did not stop with school graduation but accompanied pupils for the rest of their lives.

I focus here on philosophical interpretations of school failure and on their investigations of the question of responsibility for social exclusion in education. If phenomena like repeating a year, dropping out, or completing compulsory education without or with little knowledge of symbolic culture are hardly acceptable from a moral point of view, an important question arises: Who, if anybody, is to blame for these phenomena? The interpretations by Kwieciński and his team of the data they collected show some substantial differences between the earlier and the later analyses. Firstly, the responsibility for school failure was explicitly attributed to different agents involved in education, particularly public authorities in charge of schools. Then, a structuralist conception of society was employed in the analyses, in which schools, playing chiefly the role of an instrument of social reproduction, could not be blamed as such for the social exclusion of pupils. The final interpretation drew prominently on a concept of personal ethics, which aimed to develop the sense of personal responsibility among teachers, and thus to impel them to give more care to pupils at risk of social exclusion.

The shifts in Kwieciński's analytical stance over the duration of his research show much more than a mere change in educational paradigms within the work of an influential academic. These shifts also indicate the constant search on

Kwieciński's part for the best possible way to account for school failure in the context of a post-totalitarian state. In this search, different interpretations of a single phenomenon overlap with each other. These shifts are evidence of the inescapability of philosophical and ethical reflections within empirical research. They are shifts which in themselves need to be philosophically assessed.

I will develop my paper in five steps. First, I will depict the paradigm shift that occurred in Polish educational studies in the 1970s. Next, I will sketch the course of the longitudinal research on school failure completed by Zbigniew Kwieciński and his team in the last three decades of the twentieth century. Then I will show, in three consecutive stages, three interpretations of the researched phenomena as they were presented in the work of Kwieciński and colleagues.

Paradigm Shifts in Educational Research

In the early 1970s a new paradigm in educational studies appeared in Poland. It was called scientific socialist pedagogy and was a mixture of Marxist ethics and sciences such as psychology and sociology, the latter being made consistent with orthodox Marxist thought. This scientific socialist paradigm replaced the traditional academic approach to education which, since the beginning of the twentieth century, had been deeply humanistic and philosophical. The new paradigm was predominantly ideological *and* empirical, and at its very centre a Marxist-based theory of education was placed. 'Its task was to search for an effective system of "education" (rather indoctrination) in view of the fulfilment of the goals of "education" drawn from the progressive social ideology (communist doctrine)' (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2008, p. 428). Because of its allegedly scientific character and the significant social goals it had to fulfil, socialist pedagogy was often referred to as pedagogism.

The reasons why the new paradigm began to dominate educational studies were numerous. The first one was certainly the growing ideological pressure of Marxism-Leninism. Marxists always regarded traditionally conceived philosophy of education as a product of bourgeois ideology and the manifestation of false consciousness. At the turn of the sixties and seventies they felt strong enough to proclaim this criticism openly. They argued that instead of being immersed in futile speculations, educational researchers should, first of all, study social facts and relations between them. They should do this in order to elaborate

a thorough scientific theory aimed at educating new people suited for living in the socialist society. Such a theory should then be forged into practice at every level of education. In their eyes, philosophy of education as unscientific and unpractical deserved no serious attention. It is worth mentioning that the ideological offensive was accompanied by the passing away of ageing professors of education: these philosophically-oriented professors, educated before the Second World War, were reaching the end of their active lives at this very time. Their successors, taking over their chairs in educational departments and institutes, had hardly any knowledge of philosophy but were much more susceptible to the ideological expectations of the communist government. Kwieciński, describing the generation of the old professors, called it 'the generation of the righteous', while he characterised the generation of their successors as 'the organisationally-oriented generation'. Saying so, he suggested that the latter took their academic positions not so much on the basis of their intellectual and ethical virtues but rather on the basis of their faithfulness in cooperating with the communist government. The newcomers were oriented towards 'career, promotion, status, and power'. As Kwieciński puts it, they were interested more in 'being managers and being promoted than in research' (Kwieciński, 1982, p. 227). Their desire for the definitive overcoming of the tradition of 'the righteous' certainly contributed to the instauration of the new paradigm.

On the margins of scientific socialist pedagogy, the philosophical tradition still vegetated, complying, however, more and more with dialectical and historical materialism. The opponents of the new empirically-oriented educational studies, not being able to develop any non-Marxist philosophy, tried to adjust their humanistic ideals to the prevailing ideology. Good examples of such works were texts by Bogdan Suchodolski and Jan Legowicz. Legowicz, in the book *O nauczycielu. Filozofia nauczania i wychowania* (*On the Teacher. Teaching and Education Philosophy*), stated that the most human philosophy was 'the philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism, the philosophy open to the world and human affairs of people, the philosophy animating socially, culturally, and ideologically the contemporary shape of socialism, the philosophy for which knowledge and science are the empowerment of action, whereas humanity, as its perspective, is the goal and highest value' (Legowicz, 1975, p. 5).

A complete turning away from any critical philosophy of education and a focusing on ideologically conceived empirical research were the two main

characteristics of the new paradigm. The new researchers, like Kwieciński, who started their empirical work then were, on the one hand, deprived of any philosophical background except Marxist, and, on the other hand, exposed to ideological pressures from the communist government. Government expectations were that educational research projects would both confirm the educational policy of the authorities and bring solutions to numerous problems that the same policy had caused. It was an unhealthy situation, rewarding scientific conformism. The new paradigm encouraged researchers to undertake their work thorough empirical research, while the authorities still suggested what the outcome of that research should be. In that context Kwieciński started his work. The work was aimed at investigating school failure, first in poor rural, and then in both rural and urban environments. Kwieciński was a hard empiricist with a strong predilection for collecting and interpreting quantitative data. However, as soon as he started his research, he faced a number of issues that were philosophical and ethical in their essence. What he saw, in effect, was the problem of social inequalities in a society which, as the authorities claimed, should have been equal. He also saw the constant discontent of the authorities with the results of his research and the conclusions he drew from them.

Persistence of School Failure

The first empirical project in which Kwieciński took part was to investigate the state of rural education. In his first book he stated: 'Immediately after my university studies I faced the rural poverty and backwardness, the rural school and youth…' (Kwieciński, 2002, p. 7). An interest in rural problems was understandable from the point of view of the prevailing ideology at that time. Rural areas were always regarded by the communist government as the areas of cultural underdevelopment and religious obscurantism, badly needing social reforms and thorough education. Communists expected that without a consistent educational policy aimed at the levelling of chances of rural children and youth, the cultural distance between urban and rural areas would dramatically grow. But the problem was that the very rural areas which needed extra education investments were the bulwarks of private property so inconsistent with the Marxist ideology. The early research findings showed that rural areas were far behind urban ones, not only in education but also in civilisation development. In a 1970 article Kwieciński

noted: 'In order to guarantee to the rural children and youth the highest possible equalisation of chances for access to education, the schools functioning in the rural areas based predominantly on agriculture should be deemed as institutions of special care: state, social, and educational' (Kwieciński, 1982, p. 15).

In those years Kwieciński strongly believed that educational problems which rural schools faced could be effectively overcome. First of all, he perceived the tremendous progress that had already been made in rural schooling thanks to the determination of the communist state. The development of education in the fifties and sixties surely opened the way for social promotion for many rural inhabitants. Also, the rate of children going to school increased dramatically when compared with the period before the start of the communist government. There were many other tremendous achievements showing that rural education could change for the better. On the other hand, in spite of the official government declarations, the gap between urban and rural schools was constantly increasing. Children who graduated from rural schools were more poorly educated and had lower chances to gain access to better schools. The work conditions for rural teachers were much poorer than for their colleagues in urban areas. The former suffered from low incomes and inadequate housing conditions. Rural schools could not afford such facilities as a gymnasium, sports field, teaching aids, and had few resources for excursions and other activities. What was very disturbing was the very high rate of rural children kept back for a year or more at school when compared with urban children. The rate was even higher in the more senior grades. All this evidence showed that the educational chances of rural children were substantially lower than the chances of their urban peers; or as Kwieciński put it, 'the actual state of rural education was getting worse' (ibid., p. 278).

The honest diagnosis of rural education brought Kwieciński to ask a wider question about school failure in Polish education in general, both in the urban and rural areas. At the beginning of the seventies he created a team of researchers and started longitudinal empirical research, focusing on the factors which affected school-choice decisions by teenagers completing their obligatory education. At the centre of investigation was the process of selection, which mirrored class differences between pupils. This effectively meant the division of pupils into those who had a chance to achieve success and those who were deprived of the chance. Division was emerging throughout elementary school and reached its greatest momentum at the choice of a post-elementary school. The transition

from one school type to another was called by Kwieciński the first selection threshold. Now, the research showed that between 20 and 25 percent of elementary school graduates in the country as a whole completed their education with very poor skills in reading. They had difficulties in understanding simple texts; they were unable to make sense of abstract concepts and to draw logical conclusions and inferences from what they read. That kind of learning failure inevitably led to the curtailment of access to symbolic culture, and was an example of social exclusion. As I pointed out at the beginning of this text, the empirical results obtained by Kwieciński did not change over the time interval between the early seventies and late nineties. At the both ends of this period the causes of exclusion were linked to schools and to how schools acted, rather than to the mere lack of access to education. Exclusion, as Kwieciński understood it, arose in the context of social school functioning and should be interpreted as an educational socio-pathology.[1] As a result of school failure one-fourth of pupils chose, as the continuation of their education, vocational schools, where the process of social exclusion was prolonged.

As I mentioned in my book *Wykluczanie jako problem filozofii edukacji* (*Exclusion as a Problem of the Philosophy of Education*) (Kostyło, 2008, pp. 39-40), Kwieciński, when discussing the dynamic of the post-elementary school structure in the years 1972, 1986, and 1998 respectively, paid attention to an important point. In 1972 'as many as two-thirds of pupils (exactly 63.5 percent – P.K.) ended up in basic vocational schools preparing for worker professions and for professions in the area of simple services' (Kwieciński, 2002, p. 9). Grammar schools were attended by only 15 percent of secondary school students, while vocational and technical high schools were attended by 21.5 percent.[2] Another study, in 1986, showed that the proportion of students attending grammar schools had risen to

[1] It should be made clear that by no means does Kwieciński argue that students would profit from not attending schools at all. The fate of dropouts shows that leaving school gives rise to much deeper social exclusion. Negative consequences of not going to school cannot, however, prevent the scientist from investigating negative consequences of school functioning.

[2] The Polish system of vocational training consists of two types of schools. The basic vocational schools (szkoły zawodowe) last three years and instruct their students mainly in professional skills. They offer very little of general education and conclude with vocational training examinations that do not open a way for students to enter university. The technical high schools (technika) last four years. They offer much more of general education and conclude with both vocational training examinations and A-level examinations, allowing students to enter university.

18 percent, those attending vocational and technical high schools to 30.5 percent, while the percentage of those attending basic vocational schools had dropped to more than 51 percent. This trend, giving prevalence to basic vocational schools was clearly reversed in 1998. As Kwieciński noted, twenty five years earlier only one-third of students attended grammar and technical high schools, whereas two-thirds attended basic vocational schools. In 1998 the numbers showed the opposite – a huge majority of students opted for A-level schools, whereas only one-third chose basic vocational schools.

This reversal of proportions, although in itself undoubtedly positive, does not say much about the actual processes that took place over the last twenty years in Polish society; what is more, it may even obscure these processes. It turns out, however, that while in the seventies and eighties, the completion of secondary vocational education was a ticket to professions of relatively high social prestige, ensuring a stable living for the worker and his family, being in these same professions in the late nineties, placed these workers on the edge of the social margins. Not only did the percentage of students choosing vocational schools decrease; there was also a decline in social regard for occupations for which these schools prepared pupils. Kwieciński notes that there were proportionately fewer students in vocational schools in the late nineties, but the risk of their social exclusion was also proportionately higher. In contrast to the situation twenty years earlier, vocational schools vocational schools in the late nineties were attended mostly by excluded students.

The key conclusion that Kwieciński has drawn from the research discussed above is that 'positive selection for secondary schools [in the seventies and eighties – my note, PK] has been replaced by negative selection for vocational schools [in the second half of the nineties – my note, PK]. Climbing up to the elite through schools has been replaced by pushing the most vulnerable to the margins' (Kwieciński, 2002, p. 32).

The Enlightenment's Optimism

Trying to explain the reasons for a high rate of school failure, Kwieciński addressed in his early researches the concept of the personal responsibility of those involved in the education process. Here, he was faced with two possible explanations, both in fact rather optimistic. The first one came from Soviet

education researchers, the second from a Polish tradition of educational studies called social pedagogy.

Some Soviet theoreticians of education put forward the conviction that responsibility for school failure lay exclusively on the teachers' side. In 1950 Ivan Kairov, then the Minister of Education in the Soviet Union, organised a scientific conference at which he discussed, among other matters, the issue of school failure in a communist state. He acknowledged that the problem existed, but pointed out that it was relatively easy to solve. What was needed was to strengthen the commitment of teachers. Indeed, Kairov went on, more than 10,000 Soviet teachers had already taken part in the movement which was to show that deep commitment, determination, and sincere work would eradicate any trace of school failure. According to Kairov, the teachers present at the conference proved that the theory of the inevitability of school failure in Soviet schools was wrong.

Along the same lines a Soviet theorist, Boris Jesipow, in his 1967 book *Podstawy dydaktyki* (*The Foundations of Didactics*), translated and published in Poland in 1971, similarly claimed that any disadvantageous processes in education could be stopped, thanks to higher commitment of teachers. Difficulties in learning experienced by pupils would not become permanent, Jesipow wrote, as long as teachers and educators changed their attitudes towards children at risk, became more active, creative, and far-sighted. Jesipow rejected any suggestion that school failure might be in some cases inevitable, calling it 'a bourgeois theory', and argued that 'the practice of Soviet schools refuted it entirely' (Jesipow, 1971, p. 526). In Soviet educational studies social exclusion in education was then considered transitory and relatively easy to deal with through didactic measures applied by wise and sensitive teachers, committed to the cause of Marxism.

In the Polish literature at that time the Soviet point of view was plainly present, but not unique. A clear counterbalance for it was a Polish indigenous research tradition. Even before the Second World War several Polish research specialists in educational issues, particularly Helena Radlińska, indicated that the reasons for school failure were very complex and that they should be considered in the context of social factors rather than being regarded as teachers' personal responsibility (Radlińska, 1935). Many Polish authors elaborated that point of view in the sixties and later on. For example, Jan Konopnicki in the book

Powodzenia i niepowodzenia szkolne (*School Successes and Failures*) specified four different causes of school failures: intellectual, emotional, social, and causes directly linked to school work (Konopnicki, 1966). Wicenty Okoń, one of the leading Polish theoreticians of teaching methods at that time, wrote:

> The failures in didactic work are connected with the fact of disharmony or conflict between the teacher, pupil, and social conditions of this work. That disharmony or conflict can obviously lead to less serious outcomes, rectifiable immediately, that is without the inhibition of the school career, but they can also condition the prolongation of the pupil's stay at school or even his definitive removal from it. (Okoń, 1970, p. 369)

Thus, at least three factors were put in relief as relevant for understanding the phenomenon of school failure: teacher commitment, pupil disposition, and environment conditions. None of them was superior to another.

Interpreting the data gathered during his numerous research projects Kwieciński expressly referred to this tradition of a plurality of interpretations of school failure. Doing so, he rejected the simplistic view, expressed by the Soviet educational experts. He noticed that although it was usually teachers who were blamed for failures and inefficiency of school work, that kind of interpretation could not stand up to the facts. Instead, the most important factor was the relation between the work of school itself and the social conditions of its functioning. Although Kwieciński was far from laying the whole responsibility for school failure on teachers' shoulders, he was convinced in his early researches that the responsibility for achieving progress lay more with teachers than with structural features of the educational system . It followed that, according to him, thanks to rational and sensitive reforms, personal engagement on various levels of the educational system, and the commitment of local authorities and parents, substantial improvements could be achieved. Certainly, teachers were not the only group responsible for school failure; there were many other groups which could be blamed. What was important, however, was that each group could be made more sensitive towards the fate of excluded pupils and consequently could behave in a more rational and supportive way. By the early eighties Kwieciński would argue that the very problem of school failure was a wider social one, calling for rational understanding and the good will of those involved. 'If I then tried to unveil the relationships and dependencies between the operations of the rural school itself and the social conditions of its functioning, it was in view of

showing the need and necessity for a wide social support for a school operating in more difficult conditions than average' (Kwieciński, 1982, p. 29).

Education as Social Reproduction

The research carried out by Kwieciński and his team in the eighties and nineties showed that educational problems were much more complicated than Kwieciński first thought. In spite of rational reform projects and the sincere commitment of many education leaders, the unsatisfactory situation in education did not change. Neither the first Solidarity movement (1980-1981) nor the division of power between the communist government and Solidarity in 1989 stopped the negative tendencies in education, nor did they diminish the rate of pupils excluded because of school failure. Therefore, another explanation was needed: a theory that would cover numerous social factors contributing to school failure, that would account for them, and bring some kind of explanation for the alleged inevitability of social exclusion perpetuated by schools.

In those years Kwieciński became acquainted with a number of Western sociological and psychological theories which threw light on the problem he investigated.

> In the meantime, education, and within it principally the school, as a system of institutionalised influences on children and youth, is exposed in the West as 'the hidden programme' of the reproduction of the relationships of domination, hierarchy, and the legitimisation of inequalities, hate, and war. (Kwieciński, 1992, p. 119)

After censorship was abolished those Western theories were at last allowed to be referred to by Polish researchers. Following the texts he was then publishing one is struck by the number of names, concepts, and theories he quoted and discussed, stemming mainly from Western Europe and the United States. It seems that a theory which appeared to him to be particularly fruitful for explaining comprehensively the problem of school failure was Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, and within it the concept of symbolic violence. It is worth noticing that in a text of 1982 Kwieciński argued that badly functioning rural schools are 'the instrument of the reproduction of social differences' (Kwieciński, 1982, p. 278).

In the 1990 article *Ukryta przemoc jako podstawa racjonalności funkcjonowania szkoły* (*Hidden Violence as a Basis for Rationality of School Activity*) Kwieciński

explored the questions of symbolic violence, using Bourdieu's perspectives and analyses. He acknowledged that symbolic violence accounted well for the persistence of social stratification and he traced the role of education in assuring it. Although in the title of his text he called school activities based on symbolic violence rational, the key argument put forward in the text was that that violence contributing to social exclusion was far from being rational. The vision of a school which reproduces innumerable pupils doomed to educational failure and social exclusion was horrifying to Kwieciński.

> If the indirect means of hidden structural and symbolic violence – and particularly the system of educational institutions – reproduced (or produced) hosts of people unable to participate in culture, nothing would then justify the using of violence. What is more, that kind of violence would become utterly unacceptable from the point of view of the need of progress and self-realisation of an individual. (Kwieciński, 1992, pp. 123-124)

Educational structures reproduced educational poverty, obstructing the developmental possibilities of pupils. It excluded large numbers from cultural enrichment. It resulted in the symbolic feebleness of many individuals who became thus unable to understand adequately the meanings of their own culture. Instead of being a vehicle of social inclusion, schools became, at least from the point of view of the disadvantaged, an instrument of social exclusion.

Bourdieu's structuralist conception of symbolic violence suited well Kwieciński's needs. It brought an overall explanation of several educational phenomena with which he had dealt so far. Social problems of education became less impenetrable when they were interpreted in light of Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic violence, field, social capital, and habitus. But the problem was that in relinquishing over-optimistic views of teachers' unique responsibility for the achievements of schools, and attributing failure instead to social factors, one might easily come back to a disquieting structuralist insight. Such a structuralist account would on the one hand challenge simplistic Marxist orthodoxy; but on the other hand it would undermine the very concept of human freedom and its ability to recreate social life according to rational assumptions which saw themselves as free of ideological influences.

At that very moment (1992) Kwieciński was about to adopt Bourdieu's radical philosophical interpretation of school failure as conclusive. He faced the temptation of revisiting a Bourdeiu's neo-Marxist concept and using it to explain what was happening to Polish education. In my opinion Kwieciński did not succumb

to that temptation. He never admitted that the responsibility for exclusion in education lay exclusively on the side of the structures of power and dominance. On Kwieciński's later account, those structures are relevant to education, but not decisive. They may shape the form of education and give a direction to it, but they cannot relieve particular teachers, parents, or other agents of responsibility for particular students. The justification of a moral responsibility like that requires addressing a philosophy different from Marxist or neo-Marxist ideas.

Towards a Personal Ethics

The longitudinal research done by Kwieciński showed two things. Firstly, the phenomenon of school failure could be explained only in terms of social factors, among which an important but not unique role was played by the teachers' attitude. Secondly, a structuralist explanation of the phenomenon was scientifically attractive but it left little place for the concept of educational change and thus justified, as it were, the state of social exclusion of pupils. Here, a clearly new point in Kwieciński's thought appeared. In his texts of the late 1990s and early 2000s numerous suggestions were made as to the relevance of personal ethics of teachers in their dealings with pupils. A remarkable statement along those lines was included in the preface to the manual *Pedagogika* (*Pedagogics*) in 2005. Kwieciński pointed out that a good teacher was somebody who supported the development of the Other, who guided the pupil into self-reliance and interpreted to him the complex meanings of events and experiences, narratives and symbols. This was a clear rejection of Communist educational ideology in which teachers were the representatives of objective social laws and had to abide by them, not paying attention to the needs of an individual. On the other hand, it was a kind of admission of excessive liberalism in education, resulting in viewing the school as a place of constant competition between pupils getting them ready for the rat race in the future. In steering a defensible course therefore, the teacher was expected to have, as her personal spiritual endowment, benevolence and generosity towards other people, sensitivity to their problems, empathy with their emotions, consciousness of their capacities, their rate of learning and development. 'If that kind of basic benevolence is absent in somebody's life, let her abandon the idea of becoming a teacher, pedagogue, educator or counsellor' (Kwieciński, 2005, p. 12).

Developing this current of thought, Kwieciński argued that without that elementary readiness, academic knowledge and the opportunity of acquiring wisdom would become useless. If unconditional and unselfish friendliness were outweighed by envy and greed, if the good sides of the world were kept only to oneself, then it would be better to resign from the goal of obtaining a professional diploma in education. Candidates for the teaching profession should not waste their time studying educational issues if they thought that it was not worthwhile to help children and youth in their development and learning. The task of good education, Kwieciński concluded, would certainly not be undertaken by the mass culture and market economy.

The concept of particular moral responsibility of teachers for pupils at risk of failure has recently become a distinctive trait of Kwieciński's thought. The context of those reflections is an ethics of the personal rather than a vocational or legal ethics. Teachers' professional codes of conduct, as well as legal regulations dealing with teachers' rights and duties, are not enough to enhance teachers' commitment to the achievements of pupils at risk. Professional and legal rules, even if fulfilled faultlessly, cannot be expected to govern all situations. The insufficiency of law to provide a solution for all cases is particularly evident in education. This is why such authors as Richard S. Peters or David Carr highlight an ethical dimension of education. In that point Kwieciński would follow their line. Only a teacher who is deeply aware of her responsibility for the future fate of pupils would be ready to give them more attention and assistance while they face failure in school. That moral challenge faces the teacher independently of the degree in which she executes her legal duties. Even the most conscientious performance of the duties resulting from state laws and school regulations does not release the teacher from questioning herself: 'What else can I do for the pupil threatened by exclusion?' The expression 'what else can I do?' indicates the need for a kind of ethical concern which the teacher ought to provide for the benefit of the pupil. Thus, the teacher is urged to give from herself more than is required by law, to raise herself above the ancient justice principle telling us to give everyone what he or she deserves. Although Kwieciński does not draw this moral conclusion from his research explicitly, it clearly results from what he argues in the last of his texts.

The relationships between teachers and pupils cannot be fully perceived nor described by legal norms. The law, which functions in society as a tool for

distributing fairly and justly rights and duties, is an imperfect instrument for the analysis of what happens in the actual conduct of human affairs. Not all human relationships can be reduced to the notion of guaranteed rights and required duties. This is because in many cases (perhaps even in most of them) people do for themselves much more than is required by law. They do that although they have no obligation to do so. Leszek Kołakowski, criticising the notion of the so-called code morality, points out that relationships based on asymmetrical moral duties toward other people are the most valued. 'In reality, the most valuable moral values appear as a result of an asymmetry between code morality and a claim that is made in situations in which somebody decides to acknowledge as her or his obligation something which no third party has the right to ascribe to her or him' (Kołakowski, 2000, p. 158). People acknowledge, in dealing with others in a professional role, an ethical concern which stems from morality, not from law. Thanks to that concern such attitudes as generosity, forgiveness, mercy or magnanimity are possible and recognisable. Each of those attitudes implies that people do for others something more than they ought to on the basis of law, and they do that voluntarily, pushed by motives which escape legal analyses. Without that concern relationships between people would be based exclusively on the rule of justice, that is, on calculating the proportion between what we give and what we receive. It is obvious that the teacher in her work does not limit herself only to fulfilling the rule of justice and does not base her action exclusively on the principle *do ut das*. Rightly, we expect from the teacher something more than the legalistic fulfilment of duties.

Conclusion

The results of Kwieciński's research were not surprising. School failure is not only a phenomenon of poorer countries. They are put in relief in a number of publications in philosophy of education where a low level of compulsory education and various cultural weaknesses of students are indicated and discussed. Marek Dietrich, a late member of the Polish Academy of Science, wrote that today one can come across the statement that approximately 40% of society members of developed countries are functional illiterates; that is, persons who are not able to act in the real world (Dietrich, 1997, p. 87-88). School system failures are therefore somehow independent of how many resources public authorities spend

on education and which organisational system they actually adopt. No matter whether we talk about the school system in the West or East we are not fully satisfied with its educational results.

What was unique in Kwieciński's work was the time span in which the research took place. The last years of communism, the transition period, and the first years of liberal democracy represent three consecutive stages of recent Polish history. In spite of the significant differences between them, the very phenomenon of school failure has remained largely unchanged. On this account it would seem that school failure may be independent not only of economic factors, but also of political ones.

In Kwieciński's constant view the opportunities of a large proportion of the young could not be fulfilled, not only because of unquestionable faults on the part of teachers but also, and even more, because of wider and more complex social factors. Such questions as parents' education level, local community activities aimed at facilitating education, distance from school, and particularly, pupils' social class origin, were put under the spotlight by Kwieciński and his team, and were identified as significantly contributing to the educational fate of the young. At the beginning the research findings were utterly unfavourable to the communist ideology; they indicated, contrary to the official declarations, that Polish society was deeply stratified, and that the school system was ineffective in equalling educational opportunities. The later findings became a kind of accusation of the liberal regimes of the post-Communist era in Poland, which were also unable to eradicate the social exclusion of pupils.

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JUDGEMENT CALLS: THE ETHICS OF EDUCATIONAL DELIBERATION

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Abstract. In all kinds of ways the idea of judgement has fallen under suspicion in recent times, and opportunities to exercise it have become fewer. It has suffered from being confused with judgmentalism, and from the assumption that it amounts to little more than subjective whim or preference. In the public services of the UK, and especially in education, it has been steadily eliminated by micromanagement and the insistence on tightly specified criteria, for example for assessment, and centrally detailed curricular schemes of work. The growth of neoliberalism, in which judgement becomes replaced by choice, has contributed to these developments. I argue that while the use of judgement does not constitute judgmentalism it cannot be practised in a moral vacuum, and that the exercise of moral judgement is more ubiquitous in our daily lives than is generally acknowledged. Finally I argue that opportunities for judgement and interpretation work to give our lives meaning, and that understandings of the nature of education that are implied by prevalent models of educational research, especially Randomised Controlled Trials and the insistence that educational research should be focused on discovering 'what works', further marginalise judgement and the making and discovery of meaning.

I

It is, I think, a familiar point that increasingly large areas of people's professional lives (I have the Anglophone countries in mind, but believe the phenomenon is widespread) are being closed to opportunities for the use of judgement and instead are governed by the application of norms and criteria as a matter of routine. Academic life is no exception. For instance there is more and more an expectation that the marking of a student's essay will involve awarding designated numbers of marks for particular items of content. The corollary of course is that the lecturer or professor who objects that her subject cannot be taught and assessed in this kind of way – that the coherence, ingenuity, sensitivity and

logical rigour of the essay are what matters, and they can only be matters of academic judgement – is told that she should be teaching what *can* be thus taught and assessed.

Various mundane considerations feed this tendency in the academy: for instance, if the marking can be done by following published criteria and without specialised understanding of the subject then almost any member of staff, or postgraduate student, can do it, with resource implications that the managers of the system find highly attractive (and the specialist is thus freed to devote her time and energy to other matters, such as writing applications for research funding). But other professions too have experienced the same stripping-out of judgement: social workers, nurses, teachers, civil servants, local government officers. The decision whether or not to take a child into care, for example, involves complex sets of guidelines and check-lists which leave little room for a social worker to act according to her experience and judgement. A whole range of factors that have developed over the last forty years or so (I speak here mainly of the UK) have come together to feed this tendency. There is the demand for accountability, which can, it may be thought, be met if you can show that you have ticked the relevant boxes and operated according to the relevant criteria. There is the related sense that procedures must be transparent and 'objective', and the accompanying assumption that the use of judgement, by contrast, is inevitably subjective, as if in the absence of a mark-scheme and a list of criteria deciding on the quality of an essay on Shakespeare could only be as much a matter of personal taste as a preference for one kind of cheese over another. This in turn may be connected with another factor which is to be found here: the fear that judgement is somehow elitist, the individual using his or her judgement to come to a decision or make an evaluation being suspected of claiming mystical powers of connoisseurship not available to ordinary people and perhaps of intending to bamboozle them.

The political conditions of the last forty years, and in particular the growth of neoliberalism, have played a major part in marginalising judgement. They have fostered the belief that the world divides without remainder between on the one hand hard facts, such as those of science and no doubt the invincible laws of economics, and on the other personal taste or choice: to take your holidays in Spain or a more exotic location, to buy a family estate car or a four-wheel drive vehicle. Beyond what can be objectively demonstrated to be the case by

appealing to facts and laws, everything else can be, and indeed ought to be, left in the hands of 'the market'. This leaves no room for judgement. Ian Gilmour remarks on this in his critique of the 'Thatcher years', *Dancing With Dogma*:

> There is such a thing as the public good of the country, and no amount of 'freedom', 'choice', populism or neo-Liberal rhetoric can deny it or, by themselves, achieve it. The community and society do exist, and they are not the mere aggregation of individual wishes...How much should be spent on education, housing or health cannot be decided by the market. They are matters of reason and judgement, not just of consumers' inclination. (p. 208 f.)

Accordingly the professionals – teachers, social workers and so on – who had once been seen precisely as people who had acquired a trained and informed judgement in their special areas of expertise now found themselves routinely denigrated as the self-serving defenders of their own 'producer interests', concealing with talk of this mysterious thing called 'judgement' the self-serving protection of their status, salaries and conditions of service. The decline of the standing of teaching and social work in particular in the public mind follows naturally from increasing scepticism about the very idea of professional judgement, and this leads to further decline in the status of the public services in turn.

In the field of education numerous examples can be given of the hollowing out of judgement. In primary schools the teaching of reading follows carefully prescribed schemes of synthetic phonics (see Davis, 2012) that do not permit an individual teacher to decide that because Winston or Olivia are clearly reading for meaning and enjoying the stories they read they can be let off the process of sounding out the sounds of phonemes and syllables – a process which, while it may possibly be helpful for some at the beginning of their engagement with text, is likely at best to thwart the progress of Winston and Olivia and at worst strangle at birth their new-found love of reading. Secondary sixth-form teachers complain that the complexities of engaging with literary texts or arguments for and against the existence of God are reduced by Examination Boards to the 12 or 14 key points which candidates are expected to include in examination answers. The 'culture of Health and Safety' has reached the point where a university lecturer wanting to take her class to see a film at a nearby cinema has to fill in a version of a Risk Assessment form, or require the students to sign an indemnity statement, rather than using her judgement that sitting in a cinema some 400 metres from the usual lecture room does not really present significant

dangers. I return at the end of this paper to an extended discussion of the place of judgement in educational research.

Across all fields of work the phenomenon of micromanagement diminishes or eliminates the scope of judgement and perhaps reveals one of its roots. Every organisation, it seems, has the senior executive who insists on taking personal responsibility for signage (panels indicating 'Department of Medicine' and 'Careers Service' shall be in brushed aluminium; all internal documents to be composed in Arial 12-point) or for the pattern of carpet in the new building. Here inability to delegate, a kind of retentiveness or fear of ceding power to others may be suspected. An increasingly litigious culture as well as the colonisation of our thinking by neoliberalism are no doubt behind such cases as the following. A colleague's wife had suffered a long illness which left her with complex internal problems. The consultant outlined two very different possible procedures. Since my colleague and his wife have less knowledge of these things than the consultant they asked him which procedure he would recommend. Apparently he raised his hands in deprecation. He could only set out the options, he said: it was for them to choose. This is as clear an instance as there could be of choice moving into the place we might expect to be occupied by judgement.

The terror of judgement helps us to make sense of a diverse and unlikely number of phenomena of our time. Exhibit one: the feature of pronunciation called the 'high rising terminal', 'uptalk' or 'Australian Questioning Intonation' ('My parents wanted me to go straight on to uni, but I decided I wanted to take a gap year'), where the pitch of the last two words is markedly higher than that of the preceding ones, and the sentence seems to end with a question mark. This is sometimes said to have the effect of deterring interruption by suggesting the speaker has not yet finished. I hear it rather as leaving a proposition open to the point where no judgement, a candidate for disagreement or refutation, is being made at all. In the pseudo-egalitarian or 'democratic' spirit I identified above it implies that the speaker would not dream of imposing a definitive truth-claim or of committing herself to what she would no doubt call a value-judgement ('I'm not saying that a gap year is the right thing for everybody'), and so she delivers a high proportion of statements in the intonation of a question.

Exhibit two is the refusal to offer criticism often found among sports commentators and pundits on radio and television. The footballer, say, misses a simple chance. The commentator ventures, 'He should have scored from there, shouldn't

he?' and his colleague replies 'He'll be disappointed when he sees the replay of that' – as though to say something about the footballer's own likely estimation of the incident is somehow to be on safer ground than to offer the judgement that this was a case of poor technique. Interesting elaborations on this occur quite often when a pundit cannot avoid saying that the footballer made a mess of it, and promptly apologises for the solecism of offering a judgement by saying that this is only his opinion and other people may have a different view of it – as if we were back with preferences with one kind of cheese over another.

Exhibit three, and the phenomenon from which this paper takes its title, is the increasing prevalence of the phrase 'judgement call', in the context of situations where, remarkably it seems, the right course of action cannot in any straightforward way be read off from a set of data and applied algorithmically. A football manager has to decide which players to include in the team and which to drop: this means he faces a 'big judgement call' ('Hiddink faces first big judgement call', *London Evening Standard* 3 Oct 2009). The oddity here is that what is no doubt the everyday business of having to decide which player to include in the team and which player to leave out is here presented as a remarkable occasion for the deployment of a rare and special faculty. Of course the journalist needs to dramatise things for his readers, but in the process the nature of judgement is misrepresented. An online collection of 'Traveller's Reviews' of a New York hotel includes the comment, 'Excellent location, small rooms – a judgement call' (tripadvisor 2011), by which is presumably meant the unsurprising fact that the prospective visitor has to weigh up the advantages of the one against the other. An article on whether investors should bet on the future of a couple of underperforming companies is introduced by the headline 'Time to make a judgement call' (*Retail Week*, 2 Sept 2011). In all these examples the phrase 'judgement call' seems to point to the idea that occasions for judgement to come into play are unusual and even exotic.

II

No doubt a dislike of judgmentalism lurks here: of the readiness to criticise Jack for acquiring a tattoo, or Sarah for walking out on her marriage. If our societies are more reluctant than they once were to pass judgement, to weigh people up too quickly and conventionally, and to condemn people for being different,

this is not something we would want otherwise. But this flinching from making judgements, or perhaps from being seen to make judgements, is obtuse to two important features of the use of judgement. The first is that it is more difficult than might appear to separate moral judgement from other kinds or, to put it slightly differently, to practise judgement in a moral vacuum. The second is that the practice of moral judgement is far more widespread in our daily lives than is generally acknowledged.

To take the first point, the professor marking a university student's essay might not seem obviously to be concerned with ethical matters, still less with the student's character. But she might conclude that the student has, on the one hand, been thorough, has not shirked engaging with the more difficult parts of the question, has dealt sensitively with some of the more problematic issues that the question raises, and has not been afraid to take an independent approach. It sounds as if elements of the student's character, and not just academic competence, are at stake here. On the other hand she may find that the student has not gone beyond the points made in the lecture (has not *bothered* to go beyond them, she may feel, though she would be ill-advised to write this in her comments for the student to read), does not develop any personal or distinctive lines of thought (seems *afraid* to, perhaps), and consequently deserves no more than a mediocre grade (appears *all too ready to settle for* such a grade). At the same time marking an essay well requires the professor to consider whether she herself is being precipitate or measured in her judgements (a point which has its classical discussion in Gadamer, 1979, pp. 238 ff), whether she is influenced by her suspicion that the essay has been written by the young man who sits at the back and appears to spend much of the lecture texting his friends, or whether she is over-impressed by the independent line of thought that nevertheless, it must be said, shows little awareness of the ways that the subject has been treated by established scholars. Then too the student who has done little more than follow the structure and content of the lecture may reasonably be awarded an indifferent grade for not having gone further, but should hardly be penalised for laziness when we know some students are carers for sick parents or fund their university studies through long hours of part-time work in bars and supermarkets. It is because the professor, in this example, needs to monitor her own judgements – or, as we might put it, is weighing up herself as well as the essay – that the use of judgement does not automatically amount to judgmentalism. Is she irritated by the number of

poor essays she has just read, with the result that she has brought a particularly jaundiced eye to this specimen? Or is she over-impressed by its distinctive approach because she is bored by the number of standard answers she has read, and so is in danger of under-rating their solid if unspectacular merits?

Aristotle writes in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (VI.12) that practical judgement or *phronesis* 'is the quality of mind concerned with things just and noble and good for man, but these are the things which it is the mark of a *good* man to do'. The ethical nature of practical judgement emerges further if we consider the distinction between practical judgement and technical reason. Technical reason produces goods (the carpenter makes a table, the cook makes dinner) which are ends: doing or making (*poiesis*) is the means towards these ends, and the end are laid down by considerations external to the process of doing or making. The customer in the market for a pair of trainers is usually a technical reasoner: she wants a pair of the right size that feel comfortable and are durable. She does not on the whole, unfortunately we may think, search for a pair produced in a particular way: *ethically*, as we say, rather than made by children in sweat-shops in Vietnam. To exercise practical judgement, by contrast, is to see a good as something to be realised *through* the action from which it emerges and not as something which can be specified independently. Christopher Lasch (1984, pp. 254-255) writes:

> Instrumentalism regards the relation of ends and means as purely external, whereas the older [Aristotelian] tradition, now almost forgotten, holds that the choice of the means appropriate to a given end has to be considered as it contributes to internal goods as well. In other words, the choice of means has to be governed by their conformity to standards of excellence designed to extend human capacities for self-understanding and self-mastery.

A good pair of trainers on this account is made under conditions that respect and develop the human capacities of the workers who produce it. That is to say that at least some of the following conditions apply. They earn a living wage and work reasonable hours; they are learning a genuine craft, which gives them a sense that they are people of some standing in their community rather than being mere 'factory hands'; they have a sense of solidarity through membership of a union; there are opportunities for promotion in a career structure that stands to 'extend human capacities for self-understanding and self-mastery'. It is not difficult to construct a comparable account of teaching in school or university

according to which the good practitioner does not simply pursue certain ends (better examination results at school, more First Class grades at university) but respects values that are internal to the practice of education: truth, justice, the autonomy of the learner, love of the subject, and of books and ideas: none of which will be fostered by what we might call a 'technical' approach, and all of which will probably be damaged by it.

The central and defining, and irreducibly ethical, features of judgement can be drawn from Aristotle's account of practical judgement or *phronesis.* They include flexibility and attentiveness (understood as including alertness and sensitivity) as well as the ineliminability of ethical considerations. The idea of flexibility is well captured by Aristotle's image of the builder's comb used by the artisans of Lesbos: 'about some things it is impossible to lay down a law' (we might say, to stipulate criteria), 'for when the thing is indefinite the rule also is indefinite, like the leaden rule [ie comb] used in making the Lesbian moulding; the rule adapts itself to the shape of the stone and is not rigid...' (*Nicomachean Ethics* V. 10). The attentiveness of judgement lies in the importance of being alert to the details of particular cases. These 'do not fall under any art of precept, but the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion, as happens also in the art of medicine or of navigation' (ibid., II. 6). In using the example of medicine Aristotle is usually understood as meaning that the doctor must consider the unique particular patient before him, and not suppose that all similar cases lend themselves to identical courses of treatment. In our judgements we *ought* to be flexible, attentive, alert; the doctor *ought not* to jump to the conclusion that this patient is to be treated exactly like other patients who have had the same problem. These *oughts* do not rest simply on the thought that flexibility and so on will lead to more successful outcomes: this is not a disguised form of instrumental reasoning. Rather the demand is to be properly responsive to, to do justice to, the case or person under consideration. In this lies its ethical nature.

The significance of attentiveness is such as to remind us that practical judgement seldom comes down to inference, as if good reasoning was what is required. It is the minor premise of the practical syllogism where the interest lies. 'Idle students should be rebuked: this is an idle student, so it is appropriate to rebuke him' is a sound enough syllogism, but the art of judgement lies in the difficult business of distinguishing an idle student from one who lacks energy for one reason or another, or who fears his efforts will end in failure and so does not make

them. In earlier work (Smith, 1999) I noted that we live much of our lives in the territory of the minor premise, struggling to see how things and people truly are on the one hand or on the other permitting ourselves to view the world through the dark glass of self-deception, egoism, fantasy and other occlusions. I quoted Iris Murdoch: 'The selfish self-interestedly casual or callous man sees a different world from that which the careful scrupulous benevolent just man sees' (Murdoch, 1992, p. 177). She has a famous example (Murdoch, 1970, pp. 17 ff) of a woman who is inclined to find her daughter-in-law juvenile and superficial, and who, knowing that mothers-in-law tend to think no-one is good enough for their sons, strives to see if the girl can be thought of more charitably as spontaneous and refreshing. Murdoch notes that moral enlightenment, which we might also call wisdom or a kind of deep understanding, comes through 'a refinement of desire in daily living, and involving a clearer perception, including literal perception, of the world' (ibid., p. 175). The connection between knowledge or understanding and 'the refinement of desire' lies at the root of Aristotle's famous remark that we can speak of choice indifferently as deliberative desire or desiderative reason (*Nicomachean Ethics* VI. 2, 1139b 4-5). It is clear from this that quality of judgement is at the heart of the kind of person one is. It cannot be thought of as a skill or technique which one now chooses to deploy but at another time not, and which could be used for ill as well as for good: in the way that, as Plato observed, the skilled doctor makes a skilled poisoner.

I now pick up my second point from the first paragraph of this section, that the practice of moral judgement is far more widespread in our daily lives than is generally acknowledged. It is this that talk of 'judgement calls', as if they were rare and dramatic occasions, gets wrong. (We might compare talk of 'moral dilemmas', as if the moral life is most nearly itself when we are faced with agonising questions such as whether to ask doctors to cease keeping alive by medication an elderly relative in a permanently vegetative condition.) We are all the time negotiating the world and our encounters with other people with the help of concepts that are irreducibly moral. We see somebody in one light as solid and dependable and in another as dull and conventional; as deeply reflective or alternatively as self-indulgently navel-gazing; as 'good fun' or as light-weight and too exuberant; as forbearing or as down-trodden. I find it helpful to ask my students, who are invariably alarmed by talk of morality, as if the worst kind of priggishness and judgmentalism could only be a step away, what happens when they meet

somebody new. Aren't they concerned to work out whether this is a genuinely friendly person, or someone who wants something from them? Is it rather nice that she shows so much interest in you and your life, or is this in fact rather intrusive? Should you be pleased that he has invited you to the college bar this evening, or does he just want an audience for his political views or his jokes? Moral concepts, containing approbation or disapprobation, crowd our thoughts in such encounters. And just as we have a responsibility to see other people accurately, not least because from our view of them will follow the way we treat them, so too we have a further responsibility to acquire the most adequate set of moral concepts. Someone who can only bring the crudest set of ideas to bear, dividing the world exclusively into 'them and us', for example, or who insists on seeing all women as excessively emotional or all men as nothing but overgrown boys, is ill-equipped for our complex world. He or she risks coming to grief in it as well as damaging other people.

Literature and film, and in particular the novel, supply countless examples of this. To go no further than Jane Austen, the heroine of *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine Morland, sees the world through the Gothic novels that she reads avidly. A generous invitation to visit the Abbey of the title goes badly wrong when she imagines that her host, General Tilney, is the sort of Gothic villain who is bound to have murdered his wife. The significance of the title of *Pride and Prejudice* of course is that Elizabeth Bennet arrives at her judgements too impetuously, while Mr Darcy's bear the colour of his excessive regard for his station in life. The novel shows him as a man who needs to learn to bring greater humility and less egoism to his dealings with people, while Elizabeth Bennet needs to apprehend other people and situations with more care and caution. We see here at the beginning of the nineteenth century the legacy of the Enlightenment's interest in what it means for human understanding to be improved in ways that do not amount to an increase in scientific or geometric accuracy, that other strand of Enlightenment thinking about knowledge that derives largely from Descartes.

The ubiquity of judgement in our lives, with all its ethical implications, means that it cannot be treated as some sort of optional extra, a 'bolt-on' to be reconnected whenever some moral panic occurs. There are some very direct educational implications here, first concerning the danger of thinking of moral education as essentially occupying a self-contained school curriculum slot, and secondly

with respect to the importance for children of those forms of understanding and experience, in particular the literary and cinematic, through which we develop our capacity for judgement and its ethical dimensions and where we learn, as in the novels of Jane Austen, some of the ways in which judgement regularly goes astray. Perhaps the most important conclusion, however, especially in the present climate, seems to me to do with teachers, parents and other carers rather than directly with children themselves. We cannot expect children to learn judgement from adults who are too nervous to exercise it, or who are working in climates of regulation, control and micromanagement where their capacity for judgement is curtailed.

The language and methods of the empirical sciences have for several hundred years dominated our theory of what constitutes sound knowledge, to the point where we imagine that without solid empirical facts to ground our judgements they will amount to nothing more than whims or individual perspectives. This is why it is helpful to keep literary and artistic interpretation or judgement in mind as a different model of human understanding. Our judgement that Mr Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* is in many ways a droll and attractive character but a terrible father (abdicating responsibility for the moral education of all his daughters except Elizabeth) will not be settled – confirmed or falsified – by any fact or facts, nor by the kind of reasoning that would have satisfied Descartes. This is in part because our judgement of a work of art is never settled at all. It is always tentative and revisable, in the same way as the professor's judgement of the student's essay. Facts may emerge that show things in a new light (a letter from Jane Austen to her publisher, say, or the discovery that a student has been diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome), but the new light suggests a different interpretation rather than enjoining a firm, final conclusion. We make progress by reflection, by arranging what in some sense we have always known (cp. Wittgenstein, 1958, § 109), rather than by unearthing truths. Thus at the end of *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth Bennet thinks twice (which is what she had to learn to do) about teasing Mr Darcy ('She *remembered* that he had yet to learn to be laughed at, and it was rather too early to begin', ch. 58, my italics).

III

We talk as if meaning is something we discover: 'I find him a rather withdrawn young man – perhaps it's down to shyness'; 'the language of the poem suggests

desolation and weariness'. Yet it is no less the case that meaning is something we make, something we bring into being. Words on the page mean nothing until someone interprets them. We interpret people too, in love, friendship and ordinary engagements, and they us. Without human connectivity, without the reading, literal and otherwise, of people and texts, and those readings of ourselves that other people suggest to us, life holds less meaning. Those who deny us opportunities for the exercise of interpretation and judgement make our world flatter and duller by depriving us of possibilities of making and finding meaning.

Education – we might think of it like this – is the process of introducing people to the activity of finding and making meaning. Widespread current understandings of education itself, however, at least as revealed by how research into education is widely conceived, are very different. Here there has taken place a violent shift away from philosophical to empirical investigation, or to put it another way, from *verstehen* forms of social science, which foreground understanding, meaning, interpretation and judgement, towards *erklärung* forms whose model is science and scientific explanation. Its chief shibboleth is 'rigour', with its connotations of exactness, accuracy and precision, and its wider associations of (distinctively Anglophone) no-nonsense hard-headedness. Its deployment of mathematical models and statistics conveys the impression of certainty and proof even if, statistics being what they are, it is possible to wonder sometimes if little more than another form of rhetoric is in play. Various techniques for collecting data for empirical 'research projects' – T-test, ANOVA, ANCOVA, Chi-square, Linear regression, Factor analysis – impress by their mathematical language and tropes.

There is of course a host of historically local and contingent factors that feed this conception of research. The increasing expectation that academics will secure external funding for their projects is a major factor, since the employment of research assistants to collect data and analyse it will justify funding; all the better if it requires travel to distant locations for purposes of comparison. Research that requires judgement and interpretation, on the other hand, will require, obviously enough, sound judgement – as well as experience and an extensive grasp of the issue being investigated, which are less susceptible to being out-sourced to members of a research team. The teaching of 'research methods' to undergraduate and postgraduate students naturally breaks down into the teaching of particular techniques such as T-test, ANOVA and the rest, which have the further advantage that they can be acquired relatively easily, since no great conceptual

sophistication is required, by lucrative overseas students whose grasp of English is not strong. There are no readily acquirable techniques to learn for the use of judgement, however, by the very nature of judgement. To the empirical researcher no doubt this is simply one more reason for suspicion.

Above all, forms of educational research in which judgement and interpretation have a central and proper part to play are marginalised by the growth of the expectation that educational research should be focused on finding 'what works', and the idea that Randomised Controlled Trials are the principal instruments in that search. It seems to me important that the hegemonic pretensions of such research be challenged. In a recent book on *Evidence-based Policy* Cartwright and Hardie (2012) note that RCTs cannot in fact tell us 'what works': they can only tell us that a particular policy worked in a particular time in a particular school, hospital or other setting. To go further than that to 'it works generally' we have to be clear just what constitute relevantly similar schools or hospitals and so on, and this requires judgement or, as Cartwright and Hardie usually call it, deliberation. Deliberation is needed to answer crucial questions about whether what is identified as 'working' has a causal role. For instance, is it the policy to teach reading through phonics, or in some other way, that brings about the high standards of reading in a particular school, or might it be down to teachers who are unusually united and enthusiastic for whatever the policy is? It is needed to identify support factors: what 'works' in a school which can afford supplementary material for a reading scheme and where parents are actively involved in different ways might not work in another school where these support factors are absent. In a passage reminiscent of Aristotle, Cartwright and Hardie write that the 'orthodoxy...is a rules system', ie evidence-based policy is widely regarded as a matter of applying to school or hospital *x* the rules or procedures that worked in school or hospital *y.* This, they note,

> discourages decision makers from thinking about their problems, because the aim of rules is to reduce or eliminate the use of discretion and judgement, and deliberation requires discretion and judgement. The aim of reducing discretion comes from a lack of trust in the ability of operatives to exercise discretion well. Whether it is possible to reduce discretion depends on whether the process of deciding what will be effective...can be reduced to the operation of rules. We say that it often, or typically, cannot. And that if it cannot, the attempt to replace discretion with rules, such as 'Do it if, or maybe only if, it has worked there', is very damaging. Deliberation is not second best, it is what you have to do, and it is not *faute de mieux* because there is no *mieux.* (ibid., p. 158)

Elsewhere they note that 'mandating RCT-based policies selects in favour of operatives who are good at conforming with rules and against those who are good at thinking' (ibid., p. 11). Thus this hegemonic form of educational research not only does not tell us 'what works', even if we supposed this was pretty much all that educational research was supposed to do. It adds its weight to the forces tending to reduce the scope of judgement, and to turn the practice of education, of all things, in the direction of the absurd and meaningless.

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In this critique of the hollowing-out of judgement in educational research I have drawn on parts of Paul Smeyers and Richard Smith, *Understanding Education and Educational Research* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2014).

TOUGH LOVE AND CHARACTER EDUCATION. REFLECTIONS ON SOME CONTEMPORARY NOTIONS OF GOOD PARENTING

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Abstract. In her paper the author points to the impoverishment of the popular and policy discourse on good parenting and highlights a glaring absence of the moral dimension and moral language in the debate. This fact unveils a somewhat flattened understanding of the process of child-rearing - devoid of moral reflection, moral choices, and moral concepts, thus giving the impression that modern parenting is solely a matter of skilful application of universal, neutral, scientifically verified procedures and tools. Such discourse promotes, so called, effective parenting conceptualized as a set of skills or 'the science of parenting' rather than the process that should assign moral meaning to the things parents and educators do with children. The paper reveals weaknesses of such conceptualization by unveiling some of its underlying assumptions that are questionable and yet determine the discussion on and approach to child-rearing and parenting in Britain today.

The Politics of Good Parenting and Character

The ongoing national debate about parenting was heightened by the London riots of Summer 2011, prompting the familiar refrain that bad parenting is at the root of our serious social problems. In his frequent references to 'broken Britain', Prime Minister David Cameron echoed the views of many politicians and commentators that 'feckless parents' and a lack of discipline and authority in the home are the main reasons behind these recent waves of anti-social behaviour.

Well before the London riots, the Coalition government, and the New Labour government before them, were already pursuing an agenda of active intervention in family life through a range of various initiatives designed to support and promote 'good parenting'. I will not focus here on the ideological aspects of this policy trend, although obviously it has significant political implications, some of which will emerge in the following discussion. I want, instead, to focus on an aspect of

the debate on good parenting which has become increasingly prominent in policy and popular discourse and which raises deep philosophical questions about our understanding of morality and the moral self.

Although policy-makers constantly reassure us that the form and effectiveness of 'good parenting' has been established by 'scientific research', Cameron suggests that the science here is simply reinforcing an accepted and common-sense view: 'We all know what good parenting looks like. It means setting boundaries as well as providing love and offering security. These are things that help foster commitment, resilience, empathy – and everything else we associate with responsibility' (Cameron, 'Supporting Parents' 2010, http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/01/David_Cameron_Supporting_parents.aspx, accessed 17.12.2012). Yet, while 'we' all apparently understand this, the implication is that there are others – those feckless parents whose children ran amok on the streets of London, looting shops and destroying property – who have either failed to grasp this truth about good parenting, or are finding it difficult to implement. So if the government wants to address these kinds of social problems, its 'responsibility agenda' must, Cameron states, 'go beyond simply supporting families and helping them stick together, to the complex territory of helping to develop parenting skills' (ibid.).

Recently, the notion of character has been creeping in to similar statements by policy makers, and has attracted a great deal of public interest, not to mention public money. It also appears increasingly in the titles and contents of popular parenting books, e.g. '*Building character through setting boundaries*'; '*Parenting To Build Character In Your Teens'; 'Parenting for Character: Equipping Your Child for Life Positive Parenting'; 'Building Character in Young People'*. In May this year, the think tank Demos published *The Character Inquiry*, the culmination of an extensive research project investigating the meaning of 'character' and its importance in public and social life. David Cameron spoke at the project's launch last year. His central message, and one that has since been translated into a range of government policy initiatives, was that 'we have a whole host of severe social problems that are caused in part from the wrong personal choices, so who can seriously argue that the state should continue to just treat the symptoms of these problems instead of the root causes too?' The root causes, it is implied, can be understood in terms of personal character. And, Cameron went on, 'Of course the most important influence on the character we grow into is the family we grow up

in' (...) 'When I talk about the importance of the home to character I don't mean the material architecture of the place. I mean the emotional architecture of what happens within it – the parenting that children receive.' (ibid.).

Many policy initiatives in this area that reinforce the centrality of the notion of character are based on the recommendations of Labour MP Frank Field, who holds the role of 'Poverty Tzar' in Cameron's coalition government. In December 2010, Field published 'The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults'; the report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances (Field, 2011).

Amongst Field's recommendations, all enthusiastically endorsed by the Coalition government, are that parenting courses should be 'offered as routine to new parents', a new Cabinet-level ministerial post should be created to oversee new early years interventions; and children should be closely monitored and their mental, physical and emotional development registered and reported. He also suggests that children should be taught parenting and life skills, and has proposed a cross-curricular qualification in parenting at GCSE level.

Parenting, in short, is more important than income or schooling to a child's life chances, on Field's view; a position that is welcomed by both Conservative and Lib-Dem politicians, chiming in as it does with their rejection of traditional welfare policies of wealth-redistribution. Indeed, both Cameron and Nick Clegg, in a joint letter to Field, praised the report as 'a vital moment in the history of our efforts to tackle poverty and disadvantage', with Clegg stating, in his Hugo Young lecture at the Guardian, that 'insufficient attention' had been paid by Labour to 'the non-financial dimensions of poverty' (Guardian, 2010).

Field refers enthusiastically on several occasions to the anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer, stating in his report: 'Geoffrey Gorer, the sociologist, noted in the early 1950s that the spread of a tough love style of parenting had been the agent that changed England from a centuries long tradition of brutality into what was remarked upon by visitors to these shores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as one of the most peaceful European nations.' (Field, 2010, p. 18).

Connecting this work from over 60 years ago with current research into 'parenting outcomes', Field goes on: 'Research published much more recently on different kinds of parenting shows that the style most beneficial to a child's emotional and intellectual development is this particular style of nurturing. But that tough love tradition has recently been in retreat...' (ibid.).

Having recently read Gorer's 1955 book, *Exploring English Character,* I can say that it makes for a fascinating and often alarming read, and offers a snapshot of the attitudes of a cross-section of the English population towards such issues as crime, sexual morality, religious belief and discipline in childrearing. What it does *not* offer is any basis whatsoever for the claims made by Field about the causal relationship between a particular style of parenting and particular (national) character traits. The extracts from the questionnaires filled in by Gorer's 2,500 respondents, a sample of parents from amongst a self-selecting group who answered an ad placed in the Sunday paper *The People*, almost all include approving accounts of physical punishment of children, including beatings with belts or other implements, as well as deprivations such as locking children in rooms or withholding food. As Gorer sums up his reading of the questionnaires, the dominant view amongst parents from all social classes seemed to be that:

> The formation of a good English character depends on the parents imposing suitable disciplines as early as possible; the child's character will be spoiled if the discipline is insufficient or not applied soon enough.' [...] Implicit in this statement is the assumption, which quite occasionally becomes articulate, that there are innate tendencies of an undesirable nature in all newborn babies which will develop unless appropriate training is applied at the proper time. [...] one facet of English character which would appear to be fairly widespread: the preoccupation with the moral duty of punishing children and the pleasures of severity. (Gorer, 1955, p. 294)

In short, the kind of 'character education' referred to by Field in his rather creative reading of Gorer's work, seemed to consist largely of hitting children. All of which prompts one to ask whether 'tough love' – a notion which is becoming increasingly fashionable in policy and popular literature, urging parents to combine 'love and boundaries' – is an accurate description of the prevailing attitudes of 1950's Britain. Even more astonishing is the fact that, in spite of Field and Cameron's enthusiastic references to Gorer's 'research' and its purported support of the link between authoritative parenting styles and social outcomes, Gorer himself does not actually regard this type of parenting practice as the only, or even the main reason why the British 'national character' underwent the outward transformation that he so picturesquely describes, from one of the most aggressive nations in Europe to a peace-loving and congenial one. In fact, Gorer states quite unequivocally in his conclusion:

> On the basis of the evidence available to me, however, I should consider that the most significant factor in the development of a strict conscience and law-abiding habits in the

> majority of urban English men and women was the invention and development of the institution of the modern English police force. (ibid.)

Gorer's argument is that the recruitment and training of the police force in the historical period in question focused above all else on the nurturing of a particular brand of moral character, which served as a role model for people in communities across Britain.

While there are serious questions to be asked about the way in which rather dubious research findings of this type are taken up and used, or distorted, by politicians, my main concern here is that this way of presenting similar findings sustains and reinforces a completely instrumental view of parenting: certain parental behaviours and practices are to be adopted because they will lead to certain outcomes in children. The term 'character', in this case, serves as shorthand for a list of supposedly desirable outcomes, the emergence of which parental behaviour is supposed to ensure. Indeed the very idea of 'tough-love' as an approach to parenting that combines 'setting boundaries as well as providing love and offering security' is simply a repackaged version of what Diana Baumrind referred to as 'authoritative' parenting in her original and highly influential research into parenting styles in the 1960's (see Baumrind, 1966, 1967). I have discussed elsewhere (see Ramaekers and Suissa, 2012, pp. 83-88) the problems involved in mapping isolated instances of parent-child interaction onto pre-existing categories, independently of their context, and of implying that the 'best style' is that which produces the right kind of child. Not only do research and popular literature on parenting styles focus overwhelmingly on specific incidents to do with disruptive behaviour, bedtime, mealtimes or violence in the playground (see e.g. http://www.ivillage.co.uk/whats-your-parenting-style/121528#ixzz19nggS7Ys, retrieved December 2010), thus failing to capture the complexity of the experience of being a parent, but they also, in spite of frequent references to 'finding the style that is right for you', leave parents in no doubt as to what 'style' they should adopt. The report of The Good Childhood Inquiry (Layard and Dunn, 2009), for example, explains: 'some parenting styles are more positive and successful than others: Researchers have studied the effects of each style of parenting upon the way in which children develop. They agree that the style of parenting that is loving and yet firm – now known in the jargon as authoritative – is the most effective in terms of children's outcomes and

well-being' (ibid., pp. 16-17); thus reinforcing the instrumental view of parenting mentioned above.

The problem, in other words, is not the possibly dubious scientific basis for Gorer's observations: the un-representativeness of his sample; the tenuousness of the implied causal connection between the behaviour he observed and the supposed end-state, but the fact that we seem to have lost the ability to talk about either the behaviour or the end-state in anything but instrumental terms. The dominant discourse about parenting, at the policy level and in much popular debate, encourages a view of parenting that assumes a straightforward, simple logic whereby everything parents do is both causally related to and intentionally aimed at creating a certain kind of child. I have developed elsewhere (with Stefan Ramaekers) a sustained critique of this logic, and of the language of psychology and, increasingly, neuroscience, which informs and reinforces it. Likewise, there are important sociological critiques of classed, cultural and gendered assumptions behind dominant accounts of 'good parenting' (see e.g. Gillies, 2005; Edwards and Gilies, 2004). Our philosophical work (Ramaekers and Suissa, 2011a, 2011b, 2010, Suissa, 2006; see also Smith, 2010) explores the possibility of talking about the parent-child relationship in other languages, acknowledging that we can never be a hundred percent sure of how our behaviour will have an effect on our children, and that there is no single clearly defined point or criterion within the trajectory of the parent-child relationship that enables us to say definitively that our parenting has 'worked' or succeeded. In one sense, as we discuss in our work, questions about whether or not we have succeeded as parents are meaningless because there is no obvious 'end' to parenting. Furthermore, the notions that feature as posited 'outcomes' or goals in the kinds of prescriptions for good parenting documented here, notions such as 'well-being' and 'resilience', are not neutral, empirically measurable scientific terms, but reflections of the kinds of values, beliefs and ethical commitments that themselves form a part of parents' ongoing interactions with their children. Being a parent means constantly asking questions about the meaning and value of what one is doing with and for one's children and why one is doing it; and the infinite variety of these questions is such that one could not possibly predict or articulate them in advance; the questions are themselves thrown up by and derive their meaning from the experience of being a parent; and in asking them, parents are also asking questions about their own life: its meaning, its value, and its challenges. Yet in the dominant

language of 'scientific' parenting, notions such as 'well-being' are presented as the unproblematic findings of empirical research (e.g. into the effects of different 'parenting styles'), and this more open-ended form of questioning is shut down; it is not just the answers but the very questions that are given to us in advance. The instrumentalism implicit in the scientific account of parenting sees parents as responsible for creating a certain kind of child.

Moral Character and Flourishing: The Disappearance of the Moral Domain

I want now to explore this idea of parents as seen as responsible for creating a certain kind of child in relation to the notion of character, looking more closely at how this notion is used in popular literature on (good) parenting, in light of some philosophical work on moral character and flourishing. Building on the general critique alluded to here of the instrumentalism implicit in many contemporary accounts of good parenting, what I want to focus on is the strange disappearance of morality – moral meaning, moral language, and notions of the moral life – from parenting advice and policy.

While countless books and magazines have advised generations of parents on how to produce happy or flourishing children, recent years have witnessed a subtle shift in the language used to describe just exactly what this means. As Rima Apple documents comprehensively (Apple, 2006), 'scientific mothering' has existed at least since the mid nineteenth century, when physicians began to take on the role of authorities on child-rearing. But whereas earlier accounts focused on practical advice for the early years (feeding, sleeping routines, weaning, etc), and tended to phrase their recommendations in terms of general notions like 'children's flourishing' or 'healthfulness', the messages of the current dominant accounts of 'good parenting' are far more explicit: it is not just about having 'flourishing children' but about 'emotionally stable', 'mentally healthy', 'emotionally literate' and 'resilient' children. Furthermore, and connected to this shift, while there has always been an instrumental, scientific logic to official accounts of good parenting, the science is now more explicitly presented, and often takes the form of the 'hard data' of neurological research (for a detailed discussion of this point see Ramaekers and Suissa, 2010, 2011a, 2011b).

While it is also true that the term 'mental health. appears in childrearing advice books at least as far back as the 1930's (see Apple, 2006), this term is now both made far more prominent as an explicit goal of good parenting, and given a very specific meaning, often drawing on theoretical paradigms and measurement tools such as those of positive psychology or some variant of cognitive behavioural therapy.

In some cases, the title alone indicates the theoretical paradigm informing the parenting approach recommended, as in for example Stephen Briers' (2008) book *Superpowers for parents: The psychology of great parenting and happiness,* or Margot Sunderland's popular book (2006) *The science of parenting. How today's brain research can lead to happy, emotionally balanced children*.

Briers explicitly recommends that parents adopt the techniques of skilled therapists in ensuring that their child turns out to be a mentally healthy individual. Other authors are similarly clear about the parent's role. Erica Etelson, for example, talks of parents having to 'make a commitment to taking responsibility for their children's mental health' (Etelson, 2010, p. 289). In short, what good parenting is essentially about, as attested by the titles of several dozen parenting books on the Amazon bestsellers list, is producing flourishing children, where flourshing, in turn, is defined as 'mental health'.

Behind every scientifically proven approach to 'effective' child-rearing is an implicit assumption about the desirability of the end-state, or the thing that we are, presumably, supposed to be effective *at*. In recent popular and policy discourse, this is a model of a 'mentally healthy' individual, with mental health defined in terms of specifiable and measurable traits, tendencies or behaviours. Central amongst these are, for example, 'emotional literacy', the control of 'negative' emotions; 'resilience', and 'self-esteem' (you may be interested to know that you can take the Resilient Mindset Quiz – 'Are You A Parent Capable of Fostering Resilience?' at http://www.raisingresilientkids.com/quiz/index.htm).

The overwhelmingly instrumental framing of the parent-child relationship within this psychological language is reinforced by the frequent citing of a range of research findings that demonstrate a correlation between parental behaviours (especially in the 'crucial' first three years) and the prevalence of a range of negative social phenomena (drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, violent crime), and by the fact that parenting is increasingly spoken of as a skill. When the 'ends' of good parenting are specified in a narrow, empirically defined terms, what gets ruled

out of the discussion of parenting is the irreducibly moral dimension to questions about human flourishing; questions about what it means to live well, what we want for and with our children, and why. There is no room, in this discussion, for questions of meaning and value, for ambiguity and uncertainty. Such questions, though, are as central to our attempts to live well and our understanding of human flourishing as they are to our attempts to be good, or perhaps just good enough, parents.

In encouraging us to see parenting instrumentally, the dominant discourse encourages us to see good parenting as just another life skill that can be learned, and correspondingly, to see the 'outcomes' of good parenting – such as 'well-being' or 'character' – in purely empirical terms. In so doing, the parent-child relationship is cut off from the moral language about what it means to live well, in which discussions of human flourishing are more appropriately anchored.

A good example of how notions of flourishing, which are conceptually inseparable from questions of values and morality, have been cut off from this conceptual background, is Margot Sunderland's *The Science of parenting* (2006), a whole section of which is entitled: 'The Chemistry of living life well'.

Taking up the general theme of her book, Sunderland states: 'hormones and brain chemicals powerfully influence our feelings, perceptions, and behaviour, and your child's early life experiences have a direct influence on which emotional states will become common for her'. What is more, 'the way you are with your child has dramatic effects on her brain's key systems for drive, will, motivation, and zest for life' (Sunderland, 2006, p. 84).

An example of how this works in practice is the discussion of bad behaviour (e.g. tantrums) in children and the desirable parental response. Whenever your child is behaving badly, according to Sunderland, it is due to one or more of the following six reasons:

1. Tiredness and hunger
2. An undeveloped emotional brain
3. Psychological hungers
4. Needing help with a big feeling
5. Picking up on your stress
6. You activate the wrong part of your child's brain. – for example, if you shout and issue endless commands – 'Do this' 'Don't do that' – you could be Sunderland unwittingly activating the primitive RAGE and FEAR systems deep in the mammalian and reptilian parts of his brain. In contrast, lots of play, laughter and cuddles are likely to activate

> the brain's PLAY system, and CARE system. These systems trigger the release of calming opioids, and presto! You have a calm, contented child! (Sunderland, 2006, p. 112)

This passage is remarkable not only in its explicit adoption of a causal, even deterministic, logic regarding child development, but also in its choice of language. 'Rage' and 'fear' here are not acknowledged as moral concepts, whose meaning is determined in social use and that are used interpretively to describe and evaluate human behaviour, but serve as descriptive terms equivalent to physical states in the brain.

Likewise, there is no distinction drawn between the different moral significance of various kinds of 'bad behaviour'. The point is 'why your child behaves badly' – tiredness, hunger, sugary foods impacting the brain, and so on – not the meaning of the term 'bad'. But surely the moral meaning and salience of, for example, 'hyperactive behaviour such as rushing around and climbing up things' and 'persistent screaming and raging in reaction to a parent's stress, depression, anger or grief' (ibid.) are a significant and intrinsic aspect of how we describe these kinds of behaviour, and thus, in how we respond to them as moral agents? In thinking about the reasons for the behaviour, its moral significance, and the appropriate way to respond, we are not just identifying which form of interaction on our part will be more effective in bringing about a particular behavioural, cognitive or neural result, but engaging in action as moral agents, and expressing, in doing so, something about the significance and meaning of what Blasi (see below) calls 'the moral domain'.

A particularly striking example here is the section in Sunderland's book entitled 'joy juice for babies', which talks about the importance of 'activating joy' (Sunderland, 2006, p.21) as not just a behavioural but a neural process – without any acknowledgement of the point that parents presumably want their children not just to have 'intense feelings of joy', but to have intense feelings of joy about morally appropriate things.

A similar flattening out of our moral language runs through Bronson and Merryman's popular book for parents, 'Nurture Shock' (2009). The authors enthusiastically discuss Carol Dweck's research on praise, which suggests that 'People who grow up getting too frequent rewards will not have persistence, because they'll quit when the rewards disappear' (Bronson and Merryman, 2009, p. 24). Parents, the authors explain, need to take this insight on board and learn

to give their children 'specific' or 'focused', rather than 'universal' praise. The problem here is not only that 'persistence' itself is assumed here to be a neutral, descriptive and universally applicable term, rather than a moral evaluation that only makes sense within a normative account of human flourishing, but that all discussion of parents' behaviour is focused on the distinction between the effective and the non-effective ways in which to guarantee the end result, namely, the achievement of persistence. The distinction between what is morally salient and what is not, between morally valuable behaviour and morally less valuable behaviour; the very ability to assign moral meaning to the things that we do with children, disappears in the face of the significance of choosing particularly effective forms of response over others.

The way in which 'the science of parenting' is presented as a neutral, empirical and descriptive project thus exemplifies the way in which our everyday moral language has been expunged from talking about parent-child relationships. The recent focus on the notion of 'character' in this context is further evidence of how notions which one would think have their home within a moral, humanistic discourse, are disembedded from this moral landscape. Character, a notion which, surely, derives its core meaning from an understanding of humans as moral agents, is conceptualized, in the context of recent research and policy on parenting, as a measurable end-state and a psychological descriptor, rather than an aspect of our moral lives.

A glance at some standard philosophical accounts of moral character should alert us to the problems with this conceptualization. If we acknowledge that character is an irreducibly moral and evaluative concept, and take on board the insight that 'morality requires action guided by moral intentions, providing the behaviour with moral meaning, within the framework of the agent's understanding of morality' (Blasi, 2005, p. 76), then it simply makes no sense to regard the formation of character as the creation of a set of objectively identifiable personality traits in a child. We cannot, connectedly, construe parenting as a neutral set of techniques designed to achieve a form of behaviour in children which we regard as optimal without any discussion of its moral and social significance.

This is not to say that we can or should aspire to capture the 'science of parenting' away from psychologists and reclaim it for philosophy. A philosophically informed moral psychology can help to identify what is lacking from the current dominant picture in the parenting literature. As Blasi explains,

> Cognitively, the child constructs categories of actions and experiences. For what concerns the moral domain, labels like 'good', 'bad', and 'nice', are extremely important, even if the corresponding concepts remain undifferentiated and motivationally confusing for some time. In the area of motivation, at some point the child begins to appreciate the intrinsic value – that is, independent of immediate self-interests – of certain aspects of the world: the harmony of music, the beauty of a picture, the sharing involved in playing with others, the goodness of giving, and so on. This expedience, no doubt socially and culturally mediated, is the foundation for the understanding of objective values and of their normativity: there are objects that one desires and wants, but there are also objects that are desirable and valuable, and should be desired and wanted also by other people. (Blasi, 2005, p. 81)

Yet it is precisely this central part of our understanding of what morality and moral development consists in that seems to have completely vanished from discussions of parenting. The very delineation of the moral domain – the distinction between the moral and the non-moral; the morally good and the morally bad; the valuable and the less valuable – is glaringly absent from a lot of popular parenting advice on how to behave with children in order to enable them to flourish, as illustrated by the above examples. This is evident not just in the way the ends of 'good parenting' – e.g. creating resilient children – are discussed as if the positing of these ends does not involve any evaluative exercise or any moral deliberation about how we want to relate to our child; it is evident also in the articulation of the advice to parents on how to behave with these ends in sight.

In short, discussions of parenting such as Sunderland's, Bronson and Merryman's and other 'scientific' approaches imply that our reasons for doing things as parents have to be backed up with scientific evidence that the appropriate behaviour will provide a certain result. What this approach glosses over and distorts is the fact that we live in a world of meaning, above all, perhaps, of moral meaning, and it is in this world of moral meaning that we act as parents. It is not just that our action as parents gets its meaning from being part of our moral lives, and thus that any coherent notion of what we want to achieve for and with our children cannot be cut off from our moral lives. What is more, coming to appreciate the world as one imbued with moral meaning surely forms a central part of moral education – whether or not one sees this as form of character education - on any robust account of moral development.

As Blasi notes, the classic philosophical conception of moral character identifies moral character with 'a predisposition to experience certain emotions and

to engage in ethically significant kinds of behaviours in response to more or less specific situations' (Blasi, 2005, p. 69). But the significance of identifying and alerting children and ourselves to what constitute ethically significant behaviours is lost when all we see is the effect.

Moral development and upbringing

If we want to go along with some notion of moral character as being at least a part of moral development and upbringing, we need to take on board the point that 'the moral attribute, of either action or character trait' is conceptually dependent on 'the person's moral intention and motive and therefore on some, perhaps minimal, grasp of what morality is and involves' (Blasi, 2005, p. 70).

This point seems to echo Vasilou's point, in his discussion of Aristotelian virtue ethics, that acquiring the virtues consists precisely in acquiring not just the 'that' but 'the why' of ethics (Vasilou,1996).

I have focused in the above discussion on the conceptual concern that glossing over or leaving out the moral language from discussions of good parenting has the danger of offering us an impoverished picture of the parent-child relationship, of failing to see parents and children as moral agents, and of conceptualizing 'parenting' as a set of skills rather than a part of broader discussions of human flourishing and the moral life. But while I cannot go into this in much detail here, it seems to me that this analysis also has important implications for the field of moral psychology, specifically, for philosophical work on moral upbringing. While most philosophical work on moral education is overwhelmingly focused on schools and formal education, there is a lot more still to be said about the role of parents in this regard, particularly in light of the instrumental conception of parenting that, as discussed, characterises much contemporary policy and popular literature on good parenting.

The prominence of discussion of the emotions in the popular parenting literature referred to above may give the impression that such work is compatible with Aristotelian insights about the connection between the emotions and moral character. Yet in fact this kind of work is distinctly un-Aristotelian in so far as there is no notion anywhere in it that 'living life well' is, above all else, a moral concept. As Vasilou notes, within this moral conception of flourishing, it makes no sense to view 'the cognitive and desiderative components of full virtue' as

'aspects that can or should be developed independently'. Bringing up a child, he says, means that 'developing its motivational propensities is the very same activity as the developing of its cognitive faculties.....When you punish your child and tell him that what he has done is shameful the motivational, desiderative portion of the lesson is inextricably interwoven with the reason captured in concepts like 'shameful' 'not nice' 'bad', etc. To believe that these capacities could be separated would be to understand Aristotelian habituation as the sort of process to which a dog would be susceptible.' (Vasilou, 2006, p. 780).

Contemporary parenting science, which ignores the background moral and cultural context in which certain character traits are regarded as desirable (as opposed to just adaptive), fails to take on board this Aristotelian insight. Thus policy discourse on 'character' that is informed by this science effectively drives a wedge between the individual and society, implying a view of parenting in which parents' relationship with their child(ren) is isolated from broader political and moral context, and in which it is thus possible to think of upbringing as a process of creating a certain kind of child with certain traits, without questioning the moral significance of either the supposedly desirable traits themselves, or the actions that parents perform within their relationship with their children. Indeed, the very prominence of the notion of 'resilience' within contemporary parenting literature encourages a view of parents as charged with creating a child who is resilient to the various unpredictable experiences thrown up by the outside world, rather than as moral agents living in the world and reflecting and conveying the moral meaning of these experiences in their relationships with their children.

The enthusiasm, in recent policy debates, for a form of character education as the basis for 'good parenting', and the psychological research to which it often refers, completely fail to take on board any of the insights arising from recent work in moral psychology, such as those articulated by Kwame Anthony Appiah, who points out that 'we can't be content with knowing what kind of people we are; it matters, too, what kind of people we hope to be' (Appiah, 2008, p. 72). It is precisely in the sense of 'what kind of people we hope to be' that moral values come into what we do when we act as parents: wanting to be certain kinds of people and wanting our children to be certain kinds of people is a part of living as moral agents in a social world. In interacting with our children, we are expressing what we want to be and what we hope our children will be. The language of the science of parenting not only shuts down our ability to discuss, question and

explore the meaning of this kind of hope, but also suggests that – to paraphrase a famous phrase from Dewey – we can replace the hope with certainty. Obviously, so this account suggests, everyone wants emotionally stable, happy children with high self-esteem; well, here's how to get them. The suppression of an alternative, morally-saturated thinking about human action – indeed, the replacing of this category of 'action', in the Arendtian sense, with a category of 'making' (making happy children; making emotionally balanced children) – runs through talk of 'parenting skills' and 'effective parenting' and, as argued above, distorts our picture of what it means to be a parent.

Good parenting, in short, has been reduced, in the popular and policy discourse, to a recipe for creating a certain kind of child, with everything parents should and should not do framed as either contributing or detracting from this desirable end-point. As I have argued, this overwhelmingly instrumental language makes is increasingly harder for us to talk about parenting in moral terms. It is no longer enough to say that we shouldn't hit children because it shows a lack of respect for them as moral agents, or even simply because it is unkind: we need to look at evidence of the effects of these actions on the child's brain, or of a correlation between the use of physical punishment in certain population groups and the prevalence of anti-social behaviour. The disappearance of our moral language from discussions of parenting has the effect, I argue, of painting an impoverished picture of what it means to be a parent, and of the moral life in general. It also, I have suggested, may have worrying implications for our understanding of moral development and moral education.

To imply simplistically that 'good parenting' will produce 'good children' is not only to ignore the empirical complexity of any purported causal link between parental behaviour and children's traits or propensities, and indeed the sheer unpredictability and fragility of our lives and those of our children. It is also to ignore the complexity of any understanding of what makes for a good human life and why. This way of thinking amounts to a failure at what is surely a task of central significance for moral philosophers and moral educators.

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