

THE RELATION OF EDUCATION FOR AUTONOMY AND EDUCATION FOR MORALITY:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR DEBATES OVER EDUCATIONAL AIMS

by

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## Abstract

In this dissertation I analyze the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, and assess the implications of this analysis for debates between liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist philosophies of education. A conceptual analysis of education based on R. S. Peters' later work posits education as the expansion and deepening of awareness of those aspects of the human condition that are of particular relevance for a given socio-historical situation. In this sense, education can be conceptualized as the development of excellent perceivers of the human condition. I then posit nine fundamental awareness-promoting capacities whose development will be a necessary part of education: the five senses, critical thinking, empathy, imagination, memory, self-awareness, concentration, intuition, and language. Drawing upon an expanded account of Eamonn Callan's conception of autonomy, I propose an integrative account of education for autonomy that includes social conditions, and educational and caregiving practices that facilitate autonomy. Drawing upon work in moral psychology, I conduct an analysis of the degree to which these elements of education for autonomy contribute to or hinder moral development. I conclude that education for autonomy and education for morality are mutually interdependent, and any overemphasis of one to the detriment of the other will be self-defeating. Finally, I argue that this analysis reveals the feasibility of liberal and communitarian philosophies of education that are balanced in their advocating of both morality and autonomy as educational aims, but reveals fundamentalist philosophies of education to be problematic insofar their stated educational aims are incompatible, and their

methods partially self-defeating. Conceptual limitations of this study and areas in need of further research are discussed.

## Preface

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of author, J. Bigari. Portions of Chapter Six will be published in J. Bigari, “Personal autonomy for the survival of community in pluralist liberal democracies,” in M. Moses (Ed.), *Philosophy of education 2014*. Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society (in press).

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Growing up in a conservative Catholic family, religious issues were an ever-present part of daily life. With six children in the family, my parents worked to ensure our inculcation into the doctrinal and moral aspects of Catholicism. Over the years, and especially as my siblings and I moved through adolescence, one theme continued to arise: on the one hand, my parents were clearly concerned that we develop in a way that seemed morally admirable in their eyes; on the other hand, they clearly wished to allow us a degree of personal freedom to develop and pursue our personal interests as unique individuals. As time went on, this apparent tension between my parents efforts to inculcate Catholic morality and our personal autonomy became a substantial issue, as each of us took our own philosophical and religious paths. My two oldest brothers deepened their commitment and moved into a highly conservative and authoritarian version of Catholicism. My father transitioned into Protestantism, and my mother moved towards a more liberal Catholic view. In contrast, my older sister, younger two siblings, and I would leave Catholicism, and for that matter, not subscribe to any one religious tradition. This diversity of views led to conflicts within our family, and I found myself a keen participant in late-night debates and sometimes heated email exchanges. I watched as some of these arguments grew into fractured relationships and bitter silences, while others led to greater love and appreciation for alternate perspectives, notwithstanding the continued differences. I came to appreciate, in a way close to home and heart, the importance of moving forward on the collective project of living and being together with our differences: learning to talk to, and not past, one another; to

find points of commonality in the differences, upon which we could work together for common goods; and to retain good will and love throughout these processes.

As I left home and became more socially conscious, I came to see my family as a microcosm of the wider pluralist North American culture. I began to see how fundamental differences in competing frameworks often led to not only an inability to move forward on important public projects (e.g., education), but also a tendency towards the characterization of others as, at best ignorant, and at worst evil; with social fragmentation, suspicion, and a breakdown of discourse, bonds of affection and respect ensuing. This dissertation is an attempt to contribute to productive conversations across religious and other differences through an analysis of the challenge that was so prevalent in my home, and that lies as a fundamental source of tension in western educational philosophy: how to find the right relationship between educating for autonomy and educating for morality. Offering an analysis of this relationship, I hope to contribute to more productive and informed debate between competing philosophical frameworks, so as to contribute to more decisive and effective action on important educational aims.

### **Background to the Problem**

The primary focus of this dissertation is the relationship between education for autonomy<sup>1</sup> and education for morality.<sup>2</sup> The nature of this relationship is a fundamental source of conflict between liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist educational

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<sup>1</sup> While education for autonomy can be seen as a form of moral education insofar as it is espousing a particular brand of individualism, education for autonomy is concerned with more than merely autonomy in relation to moral concerns. Rather, it is concerned with autonomy in relation to a wide range of content areas (e.g., epistemology, aesthetics, etc.). More will be said about the precise nature of education for autonomy below.

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed account of what I mean by “education for morality” will be given below.

philosophies; three general philosophical positions that have been influential in North American educational theory and practice (e.g., Hunter, 2000; Nash, 1997; Rose, 1993). There is concern that this conflict impedes our ability to move forward on important educational initiatives (Macedo, 2003), provokes isolationism and radicalization of certain groups that threatens social stability (Talisie, 2009), threatens the functioning and reproduction of the liberal democratic state (Gutmann, 1999), and poses a risk to personal and social flourishing (Brighouse, 2006; Chirkov, Kennon, & Ryan, 2011; Swaine, 2012). This dissertation will present a new formulation of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, and argue that this new understanding holds important implications for debates between liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist educational philosophies.

### **Defining Autonomy**

This dissertation will address a particular understanding of personal autonomy that is prevalent within the liberal philosophy of education, and whose relation to education for morality is in need of clarification. Before saying what that conception is, it is perhaps helpful to say what it is not. It is not the strong autonomy of Immanuel Kant wherein the rational agent is an autonomous source of universal moral law via his or her application of reason towards the deduction of what are claimed to be universal ethical principles (Ameriks, 1999; Johnson, 2008; Kant, 1797/2007). This conception of autonomy and morality permeated educational psychology and philosophy through the work of Lawrence Kohlberg who took up this Kantian approach in his theory of moral development. Kohlberg understood reasoning at the highest stage of moral development as based upon self-chosen ethical principles that were derived from

applying one's rational abilities to ethical dilemmas until one reached principles that are maximally consistent, coherent and universalizable (Kohlberg, 1981).

If one were sympathetic to the Kantian/Kohlbergian account of autonomy and morality, then any worry about the potential tension between education for autonomy and education for morality would seem to be a moot point, as the two are mutually interdependent (Gewirth, 1973). However, not only have there been substantial critiques of this deontological ethic (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; MacIntyre, 1981, 1988), but also the conception of autonomy at work in these theories is not the kind of autonomy with which many philosophers of education are concerned. Rather, much of the literature is concerned with autonomy understood as the ability to make substantial inquiry into various conceptions of the good life, and to choose to live one's life according to the conception of the good or the right that seems most responsive to what one perceives as one's fundamental needs and interests (e.g., Brighouse, 2006; White, 1982; Winch, 2006). Although this short description of autonomy seems highly individualistic, the proponents of autonomy cited above make clear that autonomy depends on various forms of relationality; there is no autonomy without specific kinds of personal relationships, community, and tradition. The relationality of autonomy creates interesting and complex connections with education for morality that will be discussed in this dissertation.

The above view of education for personal autonomy might call to mind the now largely defunct Values Clarification approach of the 1970s. However, authors who advocate education for autonomy do not see it as a form of education for morality per se. Rather, education for autonomy is often discussed as possibly related to, but

distinguishable from, education for morality; a distinction evident in many philosophers of education claim that we need both education for personal autonomy and some form of education for morality (e.g., Callan, 1997; Gutmann, 1999; Levinson, 1999; Macedo, 2003; Noddings, 1984, 2011; Scheffler, 1973). While one could argue that education for autonomy holds autonomy as a moral ideal, and thus is a form of education for morality, education for morality is clearly understood differently in philosophy of education literature than education for autonomy, a distinction that will more clearly elucidated below. It is this division of education for morality from education for autonomy that raises the question of their compatibility.

### **Defining Morality**

To elucidate the problem this dissertation will address, it is helpful to formulate a working distinction between morality and ethics. While there is a large and contradictory body of literature on this distinction (e.g., Gert, 2012; Gordon, 2013; Habermas, 1996; Katz, 1955; Nietzsche, 1887/2008; Williams, 1985), for my present purpose let us understand *morality* as referring to a given socio-historically situated set of interpersonal norms concerning the weal and woe of others. In other words, morality is a set of conventions. *Ethics* I take to refer to something akin to a postconventional conception of interpersonal norms such as justice, equality, and respect. While this conceptualization of the morality/ethics distinction is contestable, it will serve as a clarifying distinction in the following pages.

By what standards do we judge something as moral or immoral, ethical or unethical? What is specifically meant by these terms? Because this thesis aims to address different groups, I cannot use any particular substantive account of the “moral”

and the “ethical”, as those who hold competing conceptions would see any such account as inherently contestable. Furthermore, many of those researchers in moral psychology upon whose work I draw do not investigate moral development and functioning in light of any one robust ethical theory. Rather, they tend to look at more general outcomes, such as helping behaviour and pro-social motivation, fairness (e.g., not cheating), empathic and sympathetic responses to others, or the level of sophistication in moral reasoning. Given this, the question becomes: Which conception of the “moral” in “education for morality” can stand as a basic point of consensus upon which to begin a conversation about what education for morality consists of, and what kind of outcomes would indicate a successful or admirable approach to education for morality? These limiting conditions leave us only able to employ a general account of morality. That is, rather than citing a specific characterization of the “moral”, we are left with general indicators that are associated with a wide variety of moral positions, and for which there is wide consensus on them as important indicators of an admirable education for morality.

Most generally, morality is primarily about normative judgments regarding the weal and woe of others (Vetlesen, 1994). We often claim to be morally outraged when we see an action that inflicts what is perceived to be unjustified harm on another. Similarly, we are considered morally culpable for cruel or unfair treatment of others. Jonathan Haidt (2012) expands upon this general understanding of morality by arguing that, cross-cultural scientific research reveals five sets of values often associated with “morality”, with some being more emphasized than others depending upon the particular social group in question: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal,

authority/subversion, and sanctity/subversion. Haidt's work expands the "weal and woe" conception of morality by including elements that don't affect others' well-being in any substantial way, but which are also often understood as indicating a moral failing, such as engaging in behaviour that arouses disgust in an onlooker but is harmless (as found in the sanctity/subversion value set).

Haidt's taxonomy of morality as a guiding conceptual framework may seem unfulfilling in its generality, especially given the rich body of philosophical work done on the concept. However, I believe it holds a number of benefits for this thesis. First, while still general, Haidt's taxonomy offers some specificity to the concept of "moral" that will provide nuance to the following analysis. Secondly, Haidt has argued that social liberals tend to understand morality as consisting primarily of care/harm and fairness/cheating, while social conservatives conceive of morality as not only care/harm and fairness/cheating, but also loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/subversion. Given that this thesis seeks to speak to liberals, communitarians, and fundamentalists – arguably three groups that represent the socially liberal/conservative spectrum – Haidt offers a conceptual framework with which to analyze the implications of the following analysis for these three philosophical positions in light of their respective understandings of morality. Thirdly, Haidt has argued that both socially liberal and conservative groups recognize the care/harm and fairness/cheating value sets as part of morality. Given that the aim of this dissertation is to inform debates between groups that hold competing moral perspectives, these two value sets can stand as important points of consensus on general indicators of moral values that are common to the various parties involved. Relying on such a limited set of



outcomes as indicators of “morality” may been seen by conservative groups as problematic insofar as it neglects the latter three sets of values. In the final chapter I will discuss how this minimal focus limits the implications of this analysis for debates over educational aims. Finally, the care/harm and fairness/cheating value sets have dominated research in moral psychology. Given that I will be drawing upon such research, employing Haidt’s taxonomy of morality will help locate the limited conception of morality used in these studies within the wider spectrum of views on the nature of morality.

While Haidt identifies general terms sets that are often associated with morality, it is clear that these terms are interpreted in many different ways. One could imagine a host of contradictory behaviours that various parties might call care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal or authority/subversion. The content of these terms and how they are prioritized is up for debate. Thus, while Haidt claims that concern with care/harm and with fairness/cheating are common to social liberals and conservatives alike, each camp’s specific interpretation of these terms may vary considerably. In this sense, any apparent substantive agreement on care/harm and fairness/cheating between these two groups may be little more than a mirage (MacIntyre, 1991b). Still, if we are to move forward on debates over educational aims between various philosophical positions, we must start with some common conceptual ground, even if only minimal. In this sense, care/harm and fairness/cheating understanding of morality provides a point of agreement at least in principle, while leaving open the possibility that these may be interpreted differently by different traditions.

Given the above, what is meant in this dissertation by *education for morality*? Just as I cannot presuppose a robust account of morality in this dissertation, neither can I give a robust account of education for morality. The challenge then, is to use a term that is broad enough not to alienate competing perspectives, but still gesture towards the kind of activities I wish to address, namely, a wide range of educational activities that aim to influence those aspects of the individual that are explicitly moral (e.g., moral reasoning, moral behaviour, moral habituation, moral perception, knowledge of ethical theory, etc.). The two common labels used in this field are *moral education* and *character education*. While moral education is used by a number of traditions of thought on this topic, within the field of moral development from which I will in-part draw, moral education is often understood to indicate the Kohlbergian approach of cognitive development. I do not wish to align myself wholesale with this tradition, and I am concerned that using the term “moral education” will do just that. Similarly, character education is often associated with the Aristotelian tradition and the work of scholars such as Thomas Lickona or William Bennett; another tradition I do not wish to presuppose in this work. Finally, the way I have established the morality/ethics distinction may seem that my concern here should be described as *education for ethics*. However, again, this might be inadvertently equated with the Kohlbergian tradition given my characterization of ethics as concerned with justice, equality and respect. Furthermore, I do not wish to exclude in my conception of this educational project the unique moral norms of various communities and claim that I am only concerned with justice, equality, and respect. As will be discussed below, my concern is only that those moral norms unique to a given community do not infringe upon ethics as described

above. As is probably apparent, I am going to great lengths to avoid inadvertent presuppositions in the early stages of framing the issue. To this end I will employ the phrase *education for morality* precisely because it does not have precedence in the philosophical and scientific literature. While this formulation is not ideal, it seems to me that such an approach is the best way to gesture towards the wide range of educational activities that aim to influence those aspects of the individual that are explicitly moral (as described above), while guarding against inadvertent associations with specific approaches to education for morality that have been suggested in the past.

### **The Problem**

There are two primary worries around the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality. First, there is the worry that the moral code upon which a particular practice of education for morality rests might be ethically problematic, and relatedly, wield undue influence over students in such a way as to hinder their ability to make informed inquiry and decisions about moral issues.

Education for autonomy is often seen as a safeguard against this danger by providing individuals with a means of criticizing and reforming their tradition, or exiting the community altogether. For example, Nel Noddings (2011) discusses the history of subjugation of women and cites a relational account of autonomy as a means through which to combat such unethical conditions. Similarly, Harry Brighouse (2006) argues that some people are born into a system of morality that does not allow them to make inquiries into and pursue what they feel are their fundamental needs and interests. Such conditions are said to inhibit personal flourishing. Brighouse argues that an education for personal autonomy provides an opportunity to extricate oneself from

those contexts, and pursue membership in other communities. Finally, addressing modern capitalist conditions, Anders Schinkel, Doret de Ruyter and Jan Steutel (2010) discuss the value of autonomy as a defense against “socialization into consumption” in consumerist societies.

The second worry lies in the potential for autonomy to be employed in grossly unethical ways. This concern is one of the primary motivations behind communitarian critiques of liberalism, which argue that the widespread moral degradation of contemporary culture is due in part to the influence of individualistic liberal philosophy (Arthur & Bailey, 1999; Bell, 2012; Haste, 1996). The overemphasis on personal freedom and the devaluing of communal norms have led to selfishness and relativism. Relatedly, the conservative philosopher John Kekes (1997) argues that liberalism views human nature as ultimately benevolent, and pays almost no attention to the problem of evil. His concern is that the development of greater autonomy will merely empower people to pursue evil ends more effectively. James Hunter (2000) speaks to this issue by arguing that the ineffective nature of much of contemporary education for morality is the result of a loss of deeply socially embedded conceptions of good and evil that are held as sacred and authoritative and beyond calls for inclusiveness and personal autonomy. This worry about unconstrained autonomy is not limited to conservatives and communitarians; many liberal theorists have also voiced this concern. Eamonn Callan (1997) observes “the disturbing variety of conclusions and choices that human reason will reach under conditions of freedom” (p. 223). Amy Gutmann (1999) defines one of the central debates in the philosophy of education as being over whether we should “let children define their own identity or define it for them. Give children liberty

or give them virtue” (p. 36) – the implication being that, if we give them liberty, they may fail to develop virtue. In a similar vein, Lucas Swaine (2012) argues that education for personal autonomy permits students to use their imaginations in morally suspect ways – “suspect” because it is plausible that such imaginings will increase the likelihood of immoral behaviour.

To summarize, education for morality – if steeped in a dubious moral code and a hindrance to well-informed, critical moral inquiry – can constitute an ethically dubious educational program that propagates unethical social conditions. On the other hand, relying solely upon education for autonomy raises the worry that individuals might use their capacity for autonomous action unethically. One commonly cited solution to this dual worry is to argue that both education for morality and education for autonomy are necessary (e.g., Callan, 1997; Gutmann, 1999; Levinson, 1999; Macedo, 2003; Noddings, 1984, 2011;). Each is seen as providing a check and balance for the other: education for morality increases the likelihood that autonomy will be used for moral ends, and education for autonomy will help to ensure that, if a given moral system is problematic, then an individual can take effective steps to combat or abandon it.

While there may be merit to this approach, it assumes that these two educational initiatives are conceptually and developmentally compatible. There are reasons to question this assumption. For example, a fundamental aspect of education for morality will be the development of certain habits early in life. Such an influence is both inevitable – as the implicit norms of a given culture inevitably influence the development of habits (Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Jackson, 1990; Purpel & Ryan, 1976) – and necessary – as young children do not yet have the rational abilities necessary for

rationally based approaches to education for morality (Peters, 1981a). With this in mind, recent developmental research (e.g., Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Narvaez, 2007; Ozolins, 2007) provides some support for the notion, often emphasized by communitarians (e.g., MacIntyre, 1981; Sandel, 1982), that effective education for morality happens through immersion into a substantial moral culture that provides a consistent moral framework. Given this, it is not hard to see the potential for conflict between education for morality and education for autonomy. If immersing the child within a specific moral culture is an important element of education for morality, then it is not unreasonable to suppose that education for autonomy – with its emphasis on neutrally<sup>3</sup> exposing students to sometimes radically different worldviews and encouraging critical reflection on their own, as well as other, moral and ontological positions – might undermine education for morality. While this issue remains open, this brief example demonstrates how the compatibility of these two educational projects cannot be adequately addressed without a detailed analysis of the degree of compatibility between the developmental conditions of each.

In addition to the question of developmental compatibility, a host of conceptual issues is raised by the claim that we need to pursue both education for morality and education for autonomy. Just as there is conceptual plurality around the notion of autonomy, so too are there conceptual complexities that permeate debates over education for morality. First, as noted above, what constitutes the “moral” is subject to a variety of interpretations both in philosophy and moral psychology (Haidt & Kesebir,

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<sup>3</sup> Describing the exposure in liberal education as “neutral” is contestable. While, for lack of a better term, I will use the term “neutral” in the following pages, a more nuanced account of what is meant by the term, and the objections made by fundamentalist groups to this apparent “neutrality”, will be discussed in later chapters.

2010). Secondly, formulations of the relationship between education for morality and education for autonomy will be influenced by how one conceives of “education” and education-related concepts such as socialization, development, and indoctrination. Differentiating between these concepts is important in this dissertation because (a) education, socialization, development, and indoctrination, are used throughout the literature on education for morality, and (b) in order to make an inquiry into what constitutes *education* for autonomy, and *education* for morality, it is necessary to know what is meant by *education*, and this will be in part accomplished through contrasting *education* with *socialization*, *development*, and *indoctrination*.

Part of the challenge in addressing the conceptual issues around education for autonomy and education for morality is the size and complexity of the corresponding bodies of literature. For example, there are discussions around conceptual relationships between autonomy and certain moral attributes, such as integrity (Callan, 1997), the ability to resolve moral conflict (White, 1982), moral commitment (Aviram, 1995), as well as autonomy and human nature (Callan, 1994), one’s “right to exit” (Spiecker, De Ruyter, & Steutel, 2006), and moral education and indoctrination (Callan, 2001; Pincoffs, 1973; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). Furthermore, conceptual issues related to the relationship between moral reasoning and the development of moral habit have received a good deal of attention (see O’Hear, 1998 and Peters, 1981). Addressing these conceptual issues will play an important role in elucidating the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, and the implications of this relationship for the three educational philosophies cited above.

## **Significance of Study**

This dissertation addresses contemporary western accounts of education for morality and education for autonomy that have arisen out of, and are a response to, the socio-political contexts in which they are situated. These contexts include neoliberal globalization, capitalism, multiculturalism, democracy (and worries about its deterioration), rapid advance of information technology, a rash of school violence in the form of bullying and school shootings, increased surveillance (both on the part of governments towards a population, and self-surveillance within populations), climate change and environmental degradation, and increasing income disparities and the power imbalances they entail. Education for morality is seen as evermore important in the face of widespread corporate and political corruption, youth violence, and often tense multicultural contexts (Hunter, 2000). Education for autonomy is seen as important for human flourishing within multicultural, capitalist, democratic contexts insofar as the underlying theme running through these contexts is the individual's freedom to choose: to choose political representatives through voting, to choose one's livelihood and consumption habits, and to choose to live one's life according to that worldview that seems to one most fitting (Brighouse, 2006; White, 2007). The psychological, social, and political reality of freedom and the human ability to choose is not without its critics (Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx being the most influential of these). Regardless of whether or not choice as it is commonly understood is in fact a reality, the social conditions that have arisen out of this presupposition have played a major part in motivating the literature on these educational initiatives.



Like many others, I am both excited and troubled by the various conditions cited above; our contemporary predicament holds a great potential, for good and ill, and the stakes are global. I see education for autonomy and education for morality as potentially contributing to the development of a more just and caring world, and as helping to ensure that we all possess certain basic abilities and habits that allow us to be aware of and have an influence on the various elements – both inner and outer – that contribute to personal, social, and ecological flourishing. However, two issues need to be addressed. First, as already discussed, while both of these educational initiatives seem important at this time in history, their degree of compatibility is still an open question. In order to provide a compelling argument for these two educational aims, one must be able to demonstrate that they are compatible. Secondly, there is great controversy over these educational aims. While a certain degree of disagreement can be productive, a substantial lack of consensus can obstruct the implementation of important educational initiatives. As will be discussed below, a more detailed account of the relationships between education for morality and education for autonomy can stand as a feasibility constraint – vis-à-vis the degree to which the elements of education for autonomy promote or hinder education for morality, and the degree to which education for morality might unduly impose on education for autonomy – that informs educational philosophy.<sup>4</sup> As whether these two educational aims are compatible or in tension will inform the feasibility of educational philosophies that

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<sup>4</sup> The application of the concept of *feasibility constraints* to normative claims has precedence in the field of philosophy (e.g., Guillery, 2014; Hahn, 2012; Sanderse, 2012; Williams, 1985). While the concept of feasibility constraints can be interpreted in various ways, in all cases it is used to indicate a set of conditions that limit the realistic normative claims that can be made. For example, it would be unreasonable and untenable to argue for a strong utilitarianism that demands that every decision we make be preceded by an exhaustive calculation of utility. Our time and epistemic limitations make such a philosophical position unfeasible.

either advocate both, or one but not the other. The hope is that elucidation of such a feasibility constraint can, if not promote consensus on important educational aims, at least contribute to a more informed and productive debate.

### **Structure of Dissertation**

In Chapter Two, working from within analytic philosophy of education, I will discuss the method of conceptual analysis, conduct a conceptual analysis of the term *education* based upon the latter half of R. S. Peters' work (1981a, 1981b, 1983), and elucidate the related concepts of *socialization*, *development*, and *indoctrination* in light of this analysis. In the third chapter I will draw upon work within liberal philosophy of education to argue that previous accounts of education for autonomy have focused primarily on reasoning skills and have been incomplete (often times admittedly). I will offer an integrative account of education for autonomy through an expansion of Eamonn Callan's account of autonomy and the inclusion of developmental research. By *integrative* I mean an account of education for autonomy that includes its psychological components, social conditions and educational and childrearing practices. This integrative account will offer a more complete account than those found in standard liberal descriptions of education for autonomy. In Chapter Four I will draw upon recent work in the philosophy of education and moral psychology to offer an analysis of the degree to which the elements of this integrative account of education for autonomy promote or hinder moral functioning, and to what degree education for morality might promote or hinder personal autonomy. In the final chapter I will discuss the implications of these analyses for liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist philosophies of education.

## **Conceptual Analysis**

**Method.** The nature of and relationship between education, socialization, development and indoctrination play important roles in debates over education for morality and education for autonomy. These are complex concepts that have been the subjects of varying interpretations and applications. In order to conduct the aforementioned analyses in a way that speaks to the various camps in debates over these educational aims, it will be necessary to clarify what each of these concepts entail and their interrelation. To this end conceptual analysis is the most appropriate method. The analytic turn in western philosophy and the following post-analytical movement has been the subject of much debate, and the promises and pitfalls of the various approaches to conceptual analysis continue to be debated (Beaney, 2009). While many of the critiques of conceptual analysis draw our attention to serious and pressing issues with the method, it is arguably a vital part of any philosophizing (Dearden, 1982; Evers, 1998): “It is not pedantry accurately to determine the meaning of what is said, or the sense in which it is meant, for that is a necessary preliminary to the appraisal of its truth” (Dearden, 1982, p. 63). In my reading, critiques of conceptual analysis do not so much invalidate the method as provide compelling reasons why any conceptual analysis should be undertaken with some caution and with an eye on its limitations.

**Content.** My analysis will draw upon previous conceptual analyses done on the concepts of education, socialization, and development as found in analytic philosophy of education (e.g. Barrow, 1994; Gribble, 1969; Hirst & Peters, 1970; Peters, 1966, 1981b; Scheffler, 1973; Soltis, 1978; Wilson, 2003). I will also draw upon a number of educational theorists from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives to both

enrich and identify the limitations of my conceptual analysis (e.g., Biesta, 2010; Brezinka, 1994; Carr, 2003; Cuypers & Martin, 2011; Kohlberg, 1981; Martin, 1981; Roemer, 1981). The aim of my analysis will be to clarify the concepts of education, socialization, development, and indoctrination and elucidate their interrelation. These concepts will then be used both in my analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, as well as its implications for debates over educational aims.

### **An Integrative Account of Education for Autonomy**

I will review a number of influential accounts of education for autonomy (e.g., Brighouse, 2000, 2006; Dearden, 1972; Peters, 1973/1998; White, 1982, 2003) and argue that they are incomplete and tend to emphasize reasoning skills and choice while neglecting other important aspects of autonomy (e.g., awareness capacities, caregiving practices, social climate). I will argue that such limited conceptions of education for autonomy have led to a distorted view of the relation between education for autonomy and education for morality, and that a more integrative understanding of education for autonomy can provide new insights into the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality. I will construct an integrative account of education for autonomy based upon an expansion of Eamonn Callan's account of autonomy. Doing so will require me to draw upon recent scientific work on the development of autonomy (Chirkov, 2011a, 2011b; Chirkov, Sheldon, & Ryan, 2011), identity (Atkins, Hart, Donnelly, 2004; Blasi, 1984, 1985, 1993, 1995; MacKenzie & Stoljar, 2000;), self-regulation (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003; Eisenberg & Zhou, 2000; Florez, 2011; Goleman, 2006; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Thompson, 2013), social-

emotional learning (SEL) (Brackett et al. 2009, Bracket, et al. 2012; Mayer & Salovey, 1997), independent mindedness (Allen et al., 2012) as well as research on a number of awareness-promoting capacities (e.g., Alloway, 2011; Batson, 2011; Eisenberg, 2002; Fasko, 2001; Fivush, 2011; Hoffman, 2000; Hogarth, 2010; Oxley, 2011; Siegel, 1988, 1997;). With the substantial body of research that has amassed around these various elements, we can now construct a more detailed account of education for autonomy that can inform our understanding of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality.

### **Analyzing the Relationship**

The analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality will consist of two parts. First, I will review the literature in moral psychology on the influence of each of the elements of education for autonomy on moral development and functioning, and in the process address the conception of “morality” employed in these studies. This will be done in order to elucidate the degree to which education for autonomy also facilitates or hinders morality. The second aspect of this analysis will aim to show to what degree education for morality facilitates or hinders personal autonomy. The method used in this latter part is similar to the former. I will draw upon recent psychological literature on moral development and functioning, and compare them with the psychological and social elements of my integrative account of education for autonomy to elucidate points of harmony or tension.

### **Limitations**

I will employ research in moral psychology in my analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality. There are a variety of

theories of moral development, both secular (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Hoffman, 2000; Kohlberg, 1981; Nucci & Powers, 2014; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau & Thoma, 1999) and religious (for a review, see Thomas, 1997), as well as various theories of moral functioning (Haidt, 2012; Narvaez, 2008a; Rest, 1986). One problem is that each of these theoretical perspectives will have a unique relationship to education for autonomy. However, while there remains much debate over key issues in moral psychology, consensus has grown over the need for integrative approaches that draw upon various disciplines and draw together elements of moral development and functioning that have been the focus of more limited research projects in the past (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Narvaez, 2006, 2010; Roh, 2000; Sherblom, 2012). This call has been reflected in the construction of integrative accounts of education for morality (Berkowitz, 1997; Elias, Parker, Kash, Weissberg, & O'Brian, 2008; Lickona, 1991; Narvaez, 2006). Such accounts are integrative on multiple grounds. They try to address the nature, relationship and functioning of the various individual aspects of moral psychology (e.g., moral behaviour, moral values, moral personality, moral reasoning, moral intuition, moral identity, moral perception, moral emotion, as well as social-emotional skills), as well as evolutionary, social, and neurological aspects. It is not surprising that leaders in this ambitious new movement in moral psychology have argued that “there is much more to do before a synthesis in moral psychology makes sense” (Narvaez, 2010, p. 186), and acknowledge the possibility that “no grand unified theory of morality is ever supported – morality may simply be too heterogeneous and multifaceted” (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010, p. 797). However, efforts towards integrative accounts have revealed substantial agreement on the general features of moral

development and functioning and some basic conditions and practices that facilitate as well as hinder them (Fullinwider, 2010; Vessels & Huitt, 2005). In the following pages I will rely on these areas of general consensus as a way of constructing an argument that can be accepted by various theoretical perspectives, notwithstanding their differences. This approach also helps to safeguard against the limitations of space that is a product of the interdisciplinary nature and broad scope of this project. I do not have the space to satisfactorily delve into the debates that permeate moral psychology and to establish and defend one particular theoretical perspective. By drawing only on those aspects that are held in general consensus I rely on the community of inquiry and systems of peer review within the field of moral psychology for the soundness of my arguments. However, as will be described below, the field of moral psychology holds certain conceptual biases that complicate their implications for debates with groups that hold conflicting moral presuppositions (most pressingly in this dissertation, fundamentalists) (Richardson & Slife, 2013).

Just as I will not rely upon one particular theory within moral psychology, as discussed above, neither will I rely upon one particular moral theory. “Morality” has been interpreted in various ways in philosophy and moral psychology, and each of these has led to different conceptions of moral development and education for morality (for review, see Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). The studies of moral development I rely upon to make my arguments use the term “moral” to refer to a number of outcomes, including: pro-social behaviour (i.e., behavior that benefits others [see Schroeder & Graziano (2015) for a discussion of how *pro-social* has been defined in developmental research]), altruism (i.e., helping behaviour that is intrinsically motivated via

internalized norms or sympathy and whose ultimate goal is the wellbeing of the other), facial expressions of concern, self-reported empathy and sympathy, and evermore universal and inclusive moral justifications that take into consideration a wide range of perspectives. Except for the final outcome in the list, which tends to be couched in the Kohlbergian tradition with its Kantian presuppositions, such outcomes are very general markers of moral development and functioning insofar as they do not subscribe to a particular moral theory. Outcomes are not deemed “moral” because they maximize utility, promote a life governed by Kant’s categorical imperative, foster a specific interpretation of the virtues, or reflect the commitments of any particular religious ethic. Rather, these outcomes reflect two general topics that have dominated research in moral psychology: care/harm and fairness/cheating (Haidt, 2012). Haidt has argued that this research agenda is overly minimal. While social liberals tend to focus on care/harm and fairness/cheating, social conservatives conceive of morality as not only care/harm and fairness/cheating, but also as loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/subversion. The benefits and drawbacks of limiting the research I draw upon to those studies that use the care/harm and fairness/cheating as primary indicators of morality have already been discussed above. In the final chapter I will discuss in detail how this more minimal understanding of morality limits the implications of this analysis for debates over educational aims.

### **Delineating Scope**

There are two primary subjects that this dissertation will not address. First, there exists substantial debate about the validity of methods and concepts in psychology. These debates seem particularly contentious between psychologists and



philosophers (for examples of the heated tone of some these debates, see Carr, 2002a, 2004; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2011; Richmond & Cummings, 2004; Welch, 2011). Due to my own disciplinary limitations and the need for establishing a manageable project, this dissertation will leave many philosophical and methodological stones unturned with regards to the methodological and conceptual presuppositions in the psychological studies I will employ. Although this is regrettable, I do not believe that it invalidates the project. The nature of interdisciplinary work is such that the researcher must put a certain degree of faith in the communities of inquiry and systems of peer review that produce the bodies of work cited. While the findings of such communities are always open for critique and revision, over 2000 years of philosophical reflections and over 100 years of scientific research on education for morality has certainly produced compelling insights and points of consensus which can reasonably stand as a basis for this project. This dissertation will take the findings of the studies it employs as tentative points of departure for the sake of making some headway on the question of the relationship between education for morality and education for autonomy.

Relatedly, the implicit or explicit moral theories involved in various studies and programs of education could be challenged. A deontologist will view education for morality differently from virtue ethic (e.g., Carr, 1996; Steutel, 1997), liberationist (e.g., liberation theology, Marxist; see Nash, 1997 for review), Buddhist (Vokey, 2001, 2011), or deep ecology (Naess, 1989; Naess & Jickling, 2000) perspectives, and each of these will have critiques of their own about the fundamental presuppositions of the works I cite. While each of these perspectives have important things to say about the issues I will address, I will not speak to these positions in any substantial way due to space

limitations. Rather, I will draw upon points of wide consensus, and discuss the implications of this limitation where they are most pertinent.

### **Implications for Debates Over Educational Aims**

I will use the outcome of my analysis to speak to three general categories of educational philosophy: liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist.<sup>5</sup> One way to make headway on debates over educational aims is to put forward an axiological argument for pursuing a given educational project. This is the most common form of argument found in educational studies (e.g., Freire, 1970/2000; Macedo, 2003; Nash, 1997; Noddings, 1984; Peters, 1966). However, an alternate and potentially productive argument can be drawn from elucidating feasibility constraints that apply to the educational initiatives cited by various theoretical perspectives. I will take this approach. The form of the argument I will present here – as directed at various contributors to the debates over educational aims – is not “We should A because of B”, but rather, “If you want A, then you also need B” or, depending on the outcome of the analysis, “If you want A, you cannot have B.” My hope is that, by identifying the conceptual and developmental factors that constrain the realistic set of options we have for pursuing autonomy and morality oriented education within pluralist liberal democratic contexts, this dissertation will help educational theorists as well as the wider public engage in more informed and productive debates over these educational aims. If these two educational projects are interdependent, then this will lend credence to philosophies of education that include both education for morality and education for

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<sup>5</sup> As will be discussed below, there exists a wide variety of perspectives under these three broad philosophical banners. However, some common core themes of each can be identified, and I will draw upon these in my analysis.

autonomy among their aims (as found in certain liberal and communitarian philosophies of education). However, if they are mutually incompatible, then the claim that we need to pursue education for morality and education for autonomy is problematic and bears further elaboration and qualification.

More specifically, with regards to communitarianism, over the last three decades communitarians have undertaken a multifaceted critique of traditional liberalism that has included methodological critiques of universalist, procedural accounts of justice; the prioritization of liberal rights over other goods; and what is seen as the individualistic liberal conception of the self (e.g., MacIntyre, 1981, 1988, 1991a; Sandel, 1982; Taylor, 1985, 1991). The outcome of this project will speak particularly to one of the primary themes in communitarian philosophy of education, namely, the claim that the liberal emphasis on autonomy has contributed to a breakdown of communal virtues and civility, and promoted relativism, apathy, and nihilism (Bell, 2012). My critique of previous accounts of education for autonomy and the subsequent analysis of the relationship of education for autonomy and education for morality will shed light on this communitarian concern. Insofar as the conditions of education for autonomy and education for morality are interdependent, this communitarian worry will have been shown to be based upon either liberalism's inadequate conception of these two educational projects and their interrelation, or arguably, in some cases, a communitarian misreading of liberal philosophy of education (White, 2003). However, if education for autonomy is found to be in conflict with education for morality, then concerns about the tension between education for autonomy and morality will be shown to be one that liberal theorists must address.

With regard to fundamentalist religious groups, such groups have historically seen education for autonomy as a threat to the survival of their tradition in general, and more specifically, a threat to the moral commitments of their children (Kunzman, 2009; Parsons, 1987; Rose, 1988; Sears & Carper, 1998). While one could make the case that this demographic shares with communitarians an emphasis on more communal virtues, the similarities between the two should not be overemphasized, as the communal motivation in fundamentalist groups tends to be much stronger, and more problematic for autonomy development. If education for autonomy and education for morality are shown to be in conflict, then the fundamentalist's strong division of education for autonomy and education for morality is a feasible educational philosophy. However, if these two educational initiatives are found to be interdependent, then the fundamentalist philosophy of education will have been shown to harbor a deep internal incoherence.

The above considerations are only a rough outline of the implications of this analysis for liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist philosophies of education, and does not address the important issue of the substantially different moral presuppositions that exist between these camps (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Hunter, 2000; Kunzman, 2009; Thomas, 1997). In the final chapter I will explore in greater detail how these differences influence the implications of my analysis for debates over autonomy and morality as educational aims.

## CHAPTER II

### A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION

The theoretical underpinning of philosophical analysis has a basis in the work of early 20th century analytic philosophers (e.g., Austin, 1961; Ayer, 1936; Carnap, 1935; Moore 1953; Russell, 1912/1956; Ryle 1971/2009; Wittgenstein, 1922/2004). While the theoretical issues around conceptual analysis have been the subject of wide debate, conceptual analysis has been and continues to be an important part of philosophy (Barrow, 1994). Conceptual analysis in particular played an important role in the work of analytic philosophers of education such as R. S. Peters, R. F. Dearden, Israel Scheffler, and Paul Hirst, and it is upon this tradition that I will draw in elucidating a conception of education that can be used to make progress on the problems this dissertation aims to address.

While conceptual analysis is often discussed as a “method”, there is something odd about labeling it as such as one can find a wide variety of activities undertaken under the banner. Robin Barrow (2011) puts the point well when he says,

conceptual analysis is not to be defined in terms of any particular procedures or methods. There are of course tricks of the trade...[but] what it is best to do is largely a function of the concept in question, but always the question of how to proceed is a matter of judgment. (p. 10)

While allowing for a variety of methods or procedures, Barrow cites the general goal of conceptual analysis as being the construction of a concept that is clear, complete, coherent, and compatible. Relatedly, Hirst and Peters (1970) describe conceptual analysis as examining “the use of words in order to see what principle or principles

govern their use” (p. 4). The immediate goal of conceptual analysis is “to get clearer about the types of distinctions that words have been developed to designate”, and is “a necessary preliminary to answering other philosophical questions” (pp. 8-9). Speaking to this notion of conceptual analysis as a means to further other philosophical ends, Israel Scheffler (1973) argues that conceptual analysis is “a careful explication of our original concept, aimed at the distillation of a more precise counterpart, and finally, an examination of what consequences result for education theory from rewriting it with such newly achieved precision, or possibly, from failure to attain additional clarity” (p. 16). Peters (1983) argues that this activity must take place within the context of a specific problem, without which “this conceptual analysis...is scholastic” (p. 53). Hirst and Peters (1970) make the further distinction between strong and weak approaches to conceptual analysis. Whereas the strong approach attempts to elucidate the logically necessary and sufficient conditions that constitute a concept, the weak approach only aims at elucidating a limited set of logically necessary conditions. Relatedly, Jerrold Coombs and Le Roi Daniels (1991) identify three forms of conceptual analysis (concept interpretation, concept development, and conceptual structure assessment), while Jonas Soltis (1978) identifies an alternate set of approaches to conceptual analysis.

As seen above, conceptual analysis has been characterized in a number of different ways. In order to provide a more specific account of the method I will employ in this paper I will review Peters’ own methodological struggles and make explicit a tension therein. I will then provide an account of the method I will employ based upon the fundamental tension identified in Peters’ work.

## Methodological Tension in the Work of R. S. Peters

As already noted above, Peters stresses the importance of having a problem to situate a conceptual analysis in order to make the analysis meaningful and not just an “academic” endeavor. I submit that the context of a wider problem is necessary not only to give purpose to the analysis, but also to provide the basis for establishing the appropriate level of generality/specificity of a concept as it is used in an academic work. Establishing the level of generality/specificity can be a problem given the wide range of uses that can be found of a given concept. For example, “education” is sometimes used in as broad a sense as “education as child rearing”, and other times in as specific a sense as Peters’ (1966) early analysis of the term, which stipulated three necessary conditions of education. The generality/specificity issue will be central in this dissertation. In order to provide an account of education that can be accepted by the various parties of interest in the debate over educational aims, I must employ a concept of education that is sufficiently general so as to be acceptable to all. An overly specific account of education whose elements presuppose the framework of one party will be viewed as problematic by the other, effectively shutting down a productive discourse. For example, reading into the concept of education the concept of personal autonomy (rather than personal autonomy being a *goal* of education) would run afoul of those who object to the prioritizing of autonomy over other goods (e.g., *Mozert v. Hawkins*), as well as those who object to autonomy on moral or conceptual grounds (e.g., Hand, 2006; Swaine, 2012). In contrast, to read into the concept of education the idea of inculcation of students into a view of the good life, such that it will be difficult for them to choose to abandon or resist such a view later in life, will be objected to by liberal

theorists who are concerned with personal choice over various views of the good (e.g., Brighouse, 2006; Callan, 1988, 1997).

Reviewing two general approaches to the question of generality/specificity in conceptual analysis can help to demonstrate how the problem informs the nature of an analysis. In his critique of Peters' method, John Woods (1973) exemplifies an approach that relies on a strict reading of conceptual analysis as a purely descriptive enterprise of elucidating meanings found in common usage:

It is of the utmost importance, for evaluating the success of any putative piece of linguistic analysis, to determine whether the words analyzed occur with their standard meanings...as customarily used and understood by fluent speakers of the language...Linguistic analysis is designed to reveal what a word does mean and not what the word should be made to mean. (p. 30)

Such an understanding of conceptual analysis would answer the generality/specificity question with: "We should aim for the level of generality or specificity found in its common use." However, this is problematic given the difficulty in identifying a "common usage" for many terms. Peters (1973) acknowledged this problem in his later work, observing the exceptionally wide range of uses "education" and concluding that the concept is inherently a "very fluid one".

The second general approach to conceptual analysis is less strictly tied to common usage, and it is this approach that Peters (1983) adopts:

I don't take it to be the philosopher's job, with a concept like 'education', to formulate hard and fast, necessary and sufficient conditions which must



always be satisfied if the word is to be used correctly. The point of approaching the concept as I did can be expressed as follows: We have developed certain ways of talking in which we use the word 'education' rather than 'training'. There are clear examples of when we would use one rather than the other: the stock example which I give is the difference between sex education and sex training. Now, given that a way of talking has emerged to mark such a difference, the point of doing what I did is to get clear about the distinctions that lie behind the words. Really, the main point is to become clearer and clearer about the contours of the concepts which have emerged. (p. 44)

The degree to which this later methodological position contradicts Peters' early position stated above is an open question. What is clear is that Peters' later method is less focused upon establishing necessary and sufficient conditions as discovered in "common usage". Rather, while it is certainly related to common usage, it is clarity about the "contours of the concepts that have emerged" that is primary. However, there remains some ambiguity in Peters' distinction between the strict approach espoused by Woods and his own focus on clarity of the "contours of the concepts", for Woods might reasonably respond that identifying necessary and sufficient conditions is *exactly how* we clarify concepts.

I suggest that the solution to the above issue can be found in Peters' discussion of *differentiation*. By differentiation Peters seems to mean the process of introducing evermore finely tuned concepts. The status of differentiation is somewhat unclear in

Peters' work. Commenting on the development of his work over time on this issue, Peters (1983) says that, in his earlier work:

It was admitted that other people may not have developed this more differentiated type of conceptual structure, but it was maintained that it is important to make these distinctions even if people do not use the terms in a specific enough way to mark them out. (pp. 54-55)

However, in his later work Peters seems ambivalent towards the use of differentiation:

...it could well be that the older use of 'education' is widespread...it may well be that many people still use the word 'education' to cover not only any process of instruction, training, etc., that goes on in schools but also less formalized child-rearing practices such as toilet training... (pp. 55)

Elsewhere he acknowledges, "perhaps I did not appreciate how widespread the older use of 'education' is" (Peters, 1972b, p. 10). The implication here is that the prevalence of a less differentiated account of education somehow makes his more differentiated analysis problematic insofar as it does not hold true to common usage. This problem prompted him to shift his analysis away from education and toward the "educated man" as a way to narrow the set of conceptual issues involved, thereby providing a more specific analysis that could better inform educational theory and practice (Peters, 1972a). However, regardless of these considerations, Peters (1981b) proceeded to give another, arguably a more modest, analysis of education, once again based upon how "we" think of education. I will discuss this later analysis below.

To summarize the implications of the two perspectives above for the generality/specificity issue: In the first case (i.e., Woods), the generality/specificity of the analysis is dictated by the generality/specificity found in common usage. In the second case (i.e., the version of Peters' work that focuses on differentiation), the generality/specificity issues is settled partly in reference to some form of "common usage", and partly by reference to the demand for greater specificity as found through an exploration of the different kinds of practices under consideration (as seen in Peters' example of the need to differentiate between sex education and sex training).

I will employ a method more aligned with that of Peters than that of Woods. First, I hold that the difficulty of identifying a workable "we" makes more stringent forms of analysis (e.g., that endorsed by Woods) problematic. Even in the relatively small world of western educational scholarship there is wide debate over the concept of education. Thus, while the level of generality/specificity can be informed by a given history of usage, it cannot be solely based thereon. I submit that it is the problem one wishes to address that should supplement preexisting usage in dictating the degree of generality or specificity for which one should aim. In this sense I hold with Peters' observation that analysis should be conducted in relation to a given problem.

I suggest two general principles that will guide my conceptual analysis, which will be called, alternatively, conservative and progressive (in their most general senses). The conservative principle I will label the *principle of continuity*, which states that the analysis should draw upon existing forms of usage within the communities within which the given problem is situated. For example, one of the concerns of this dissertation is the debate between liberals and those who hold more conservative

philosophies. As such, the analysis of education I provide must be such that my use of *education* is intelligible and acceptable to each of these groups. Without such continuity, the analysis will be incomprehensible to the communities in question and ineffective in dealing with the chosen problem. This conservative principle is more in the spirit of strict interpretations of linguistic analysis.

The progressive principle I will call the *principle of differentiation*. This principle states that an analysis should seek to expand upon a history of usage if and only if the level of ambiguity of existing usage is inadequate for dealing with the problem at hand. For instance, imagine we were to find that a given tradition does not differentiate between *education* and *training*. At the same time, within this tradition we find practices that correspond with the distinction made between these two in the field of philosophy of education. In order to make the necessary inquiry here, one would have to effectively divide the more general concept of education, into two concepts of more specificity (i.e. *education* and *training*) in order to ensure a clear discourse around these two practices, thus increasing differentiation. This act is not born solely out of a given history of usage, but rather out of a motivation for a level of conceptual differentiation that can effectively deal with the problem at hand. While this approach might seem to fall outside the bounds of “conceptual analysis”, it does have precedence in the field (e.g., the account of concept development in Coombs & Daniels, 2001).

Situating these two principles as the primary methodological guides presents two distinct advantages. First, the principle of continuity helps to guard against radically revisionary uses of concepts that are so alien from common usage that they do little more than muddle existing discourse and alienate the groups to which a scholar

may wish to speak. Second, the principle of differentiation helps to ensure that we do not become enslaved to a morally questionable pre-existing discourse, or a discourse that effectively inhibits progress on a given problem. This has been an object of critique leveled against strict forms of linguistic analysis that “leave everything as it is” insofar as they are purely descriptive of existing usage and merely reproduce ethically dubious linguistic biases (e.g., Adelstein, 1971; Martin, 1981; Roemer, 1981).

Below, I will review Peters’ (1981b) later analysis of education. I will argue that this conception is pragmatically suitable given the problems addressed in this dissertation. I will employ a conceptual analysis to demonstrate how the conception of education provided here satisfies the principle of continuity and the principle of differentiation, and that this conception of education can effectively differentiate between education and other related concepts chosen for their particular relevance in upcoming chapters: socialization, indoctrination, and development.

### **The Politics & Ethics of Conceptual Analysis**

Before moving on, a brief qualification of the enterprise of conceptual analysis is warranted. It should not be assumed that the method described here constitutes a simple neutral description of objective facts about the world. First, the method is based upon a problem chosen by a scholar who has a normative agenda. Secondly, by prioritizing the principle of differentiation, I effectively place clarity of discourse over and above the conservation of a tradition. Thirdly, if a primary purpose of language is the communication of ideas, then conceptual clarity holds appeal, as clarity seems a prerequisite for effective communication. But, as work on speech acts has demonstrated, communication of ideas is not the only function of language. Language is

a versatile phenomenon and can be used to various ends, the least of which might be the communication of conceptual content that stands in one-to-one relation with the words spoken. One might even actively dissuade clarity for any number of reasons: a scholar might (unfortunately) attempt to construct an air of profundity through the use of obscure jargon, a marginalized group might intentionally choose to use language that is inaccessible to outsiders as a way to defend their culture from hegemonic forces and retain a sense of cultural identity, or a tradition such as Zen might use paradox to interrupt conceptual thinking and bring the practitioner to non-dual states of awareness. The demand for clarity of language is the demand that the function of language be seen in a certain way, and the ethical status of this demand is an open question. It is all too easy for unacknowledged biases, interests, and power plays to sneak into seemingly innocent calls for “clarity”. Commenting on this, Patti Lather (1996) observes that

to speak so as to be understood immediately is to speak through the production of the transparent signifier, that which maps easily onto taken-for-granted regimes of meaning. This runs a risk that endorses, legitimates, and reinforces the very structure of symbolic value that must be overthrown. (p. 526)

While clarity in inquiry and discourse is undoubtedly important in many contexts, the above reflections should act as a word of warning to any scholar who undertakes conceptual analysis under the guise of a supposedly neutral call for clarity.

## **R.S. Peters' Conceptual Analysis of Education**

Over the course of his approximately 30-year career R. S. Peters dedicated substantial time to a conceptual analysis of *education*. His first analysis was presented in the 1966 publication *Ethics & Education*. Here, he provided an analysis of education as a process of initiation that meets three basic criteria: (a) something worthwhile is being intentionally transmitted in a moral manner; (b) knowledge, understanding, and a cognitive perspective of some breadth which are not inert, but shape the way in which the individual perceives and interacts with the world and others are being promoted; (c) there is wittingness and voluntariness on the part of the student.

Peters' analysis sparked wide debate, and it is a testament to this work that it continues to be the subject of debate to this day (e.g., Beckett, 2011; Carr, 2003; Cuypers & Martin, 2011; Warnick, 2007). His method was said to be guilty of covertly reading into the concept of education a particular set of normative assumptions (Woods, 1973). From a Marxist perspective, this was said to perpetuate and normalize linguistic biases of the dominant middle-class culture (Adelstein, 1971). His criteria of worthwhileness was said to be contradicted by those who see education as a corrupting influence (Peters, 1983), or by those who have historically been disempowered (women and minority groups) and for whom formal education has largely been an alienating enterprise that does little more than perpetuate their subjugation (e.g., Barrow, 2011; Warnick, 2007). Furthermore, it was argued that his prioritizing of the intrinsic worth of education over the extrinsic worth was intellectualist (Pring, 1994, 1995). The second criterion (knowledge, understanding and wide cognitive perspective) was said to be overly rationalistic and neglectful of aesthetic, emotional,

spiritual or religious aspects of life (Cooper, 1973). The criterion of wittingness and voluntariness was said to be incoherent insofar as “if you start out committed to transmitting what’s worthwhile to kids in such a way that the *kids* will become committed to it, you’re inevitably going to violate their ‘wittingness and voluntariness’” (McClellan, 1976, p. 20). Finally, his synthesis of these criteria into a conception of “education as initiation” in the second chapter of *Ethics & Education* was said to be overly conservative and perpetuate existing sexist institutions (Martin, 1981; Roemer, 1981).

In his 1973 article “Aims of Education – A Conceptual Inquiry”, Peters addressed many of these critiques, and acknowledges that the concept of education is “a very fluid one” and that its diversity of usage is greater than he may have initially acknowledged. Peters tempers his early analysis, arguing that the criteria he initially suggested for the concept of education were not necessary and sufficient conditions of the concept of education, but rather a reflection of the values of modern pluralist democracies. In one of his final book-length publications, *Essays on Educators* (1981b), he once again explores the concept of education, relegating the more controversial aspects of his early analysis out from under the umbrella of education proper, and into the category of educational aims that are promoted in, and are the product of, modern western democracy. However, he also asserts that, although the concept of education is inherently contestable, it is not completely so; we cannot coherently call anything we like education. At the very least, education has something to do with learning – “a process of mastering something or coming up to some standard as the result of *experience*” (p. 33) – but not just any kind of learning. Pointing to modern western



socio-historical contexts, Peters identifies the industrialization of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a key factor in the development of the education/training distinction, which helps elucidate the specific kind of learning *education* signifies:

It came to be realized that it would be a benefit if the average man could read, write and perform elementary calculations. Many skills and roles, too, required a modicum of specialized knowledge if they were to be performed efficiently. What is now called 'training' became widespread, often backed up by religious instruction to 'gentle the masses'. (p. 33)

*Training* often indicates "knowledge and skill devised to bring about some specific end" (p. 33), whereas "education" is often used to denote "beliefs, attitudes and outlook of a person *qua* person and not just in his capacity as a skilled man or the occupant of a specific role" (p. 33).

The question then arises, what does developing the human *qua* human entail? Peters rightly, I think, warns that "developing the whole man" cannot mean that education somehow builds the person from the ground up. Rather, Peters holds that "education surely develops a person's *awareness* by enlarging, deepening and extending it" (p. 33).<sup>6</sup> While Peters does not go into detail about why he chooses to place awareness at the centre of his conception of education, it seems he does so because it is a more general concept than *knowledge* or *understanding*, and thus can incorporate a wider range of uses of education and educational aims:

Downie and Tefler, for instance, maintain that knowledge of various kinds of is the distinguishing feature of an educated person. I myself, in previous

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<sup>6</sup> For the sake of brevity I will refer to these three qualities simply as *awareness-promoting*.

writings, assigned a similar role to all-around knowledge and understanding.

But this is manifestly contestable, even within our own society. Many people, for instance, think that forms of awareness such as the aesthetic and the religious ought to be developed; but to talk of 'knowledge' in these spheres is scarcely appropriate....to confine education to the development of knowledge is to impose an unwarrantable restriction on it. (p. 35)

For Peters, placing awareness at the centre of education provides a conceptual breadth that is lacking in *knowledge* and *understanding*, a point I will defend below.

The focus of this awareness expansion, Peters claims, "can only be the human condition" (p. 34). While Peters does not explicitly state why this *must* be the focus, if education is taken in the above sense of educating the person *qua* person, then the human condition seems a natural choice for the general focus of education. In turn, Peters argues that the human condition comprises three primary aspects: (a) "features of the natural world that impinge on man and those that he shares with the natural world as part of the kingdom of nature" (p. 34); (b) the interpersonal world we inhabit, including elements such as human affection, hate, dominance and dependence, and friendship and loneliness; and (c) the economic, social and political world, including poverty and affluence, authority and violence, crime and punishment, consensus and dissent.

### **Satisfying the Criteria**

Above I have expanded upon Peters' later analysis of education to posit education as the expanding and deepening of the human condition, understood through its natural, interpersonal, "economic, social and political". This conception of education

must meet three criteria to be satisfactory. It must (a) satisfy the principle of continuity, (b) satisfy the principle of differentiation, and (c) be capable of effectively dealing with the problem at hand. This dissertation aims to address to what degree education for morality and education for autonomy are conceptually and developmentally compatible, and use the results of this analysis to inform debates between liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist philosophies of education. With regards to this conceptual analysis, this problematic requires: (a) the conceptual resources to differentiate between education, socialization, indoctrination, and development, and (b) an inclusive account of education that is not fundamentally objectionable to the primary parties involved in debates over the educational aims of morality and autonomy. Demonstrating that an awareness-based approach to education satisfies the principle of differentiation will show that it can differentiate between various education-related terms. Demonstrating that it satisfies the principle of continuity will show that it is properly inclusive and can act as a point of consensus from which to address debates over educational aims. Finally, I will argue that an awareness-based approach can help to ensure a more inclusive approach to education that does not fall prey to the same charge of bias as a knowledge or understanding-based approach – one of Peters’ primary critiques of previous analyses of education.

### **Satisfying the Principle of Continuity: Inclusivity**

As discussed above in relation to Peters’ work, awareness-promotion is a fundamental, if implicit, aspect of how we often think of education. First, education seems to be centrally concerned with awareness-promotion insofar as the greater one’s obliviousness, the less likely we are to label that individual as “educated”. Secondly,

that awareness-promotion is at the core of how we presently think about education can be seen in the absurdity of saying that someone has been educated, but their awareness has not changed, or it has become more limited. Of course, our awareness is not a unitary quantity that can be said to increase or decrease in any simple way. One's awareness of one aspect of the human condition might deepen, while awareness of other aspects might stagnate or grow shallower. This is an inevitable byproduct of our limited time and energy. While one might argue that Peters made a mistake, and that it is knowledge, and not awareness that is at the centre of education, I will argue below that this is not the case, and that an awareness-based approach has benefits in addressing the problems of this dissertation.

With regards to the relation of content (i.e., the human condition) to the principle of continuity, it is widely acknowledged in the conceptual literature on education that we often understand education as being primarily concerned with non-trivial aspects of life (e.g., Barrow, 2011; Hirst, 1974; Peters, 1966; Scheffler, 1973; Soltis, 1978). And, as already noted, insofar as education is concerned with the human *qua* human, it will focus on the core aspects of the human condition. These observations are reflected in our hesitation to label as educated someone who merely has training in a skill, with little or no awareness of wider issues regarding the human condition. I will not delve into the question of just what depth or breadth of awareness of the human condition is necessary for one to be considered educated. However, Hirst's (1974) comments on the aim of liberal education seem compelling: "liberal education...will thus be composed of the study of at least the paradigm examples...This will be sufficiently detailed and sustained to give genuine insight" (p.48). Although

Hirst's "paradigm examples" and "genuine insight" are interpreted in a rationalist sense, an awareness-based approach would provide a wider interpretation of these terms (e.g., it may include a paradigm example of deep immersion into a moment of aesthetic awareness). Still, Hirst's general insight that the aim of education is not necessarily doctoral level expertise, but rather a thorough introduction to various content, seems to be a pragmatic necessity as well as in keeping with the awareness-based approach's emphasis on awareness of the human condition, which consists in multiple pertinent areas of awareness.

While the above reflections provide some evidence that awareness-promotion of the human condition is fundamental to how we often think of education, the "we" involved in this dissertation is not a faceless "we", but rather a spectrum of liberal to conservative thinkers. Does the above conception of education cohere with how groups within this spectrum tend to speak about education?

The fact that the account of education here is a product of the work of Peters is a testament to the fact that it accords with liberal sensibilities. However, a brief review of how the conception of education I offer compares to another liberal theorist's conception of education can further elucidate its continuity with the wider liberal discourse. John Wilson (2003) proposes a concept of education as "a serious and sustained programme of learning, for the benefit of people *qua* people rather than only *qua* role-fillers or functionaries, above the level of what people might pick up for themselves in their daily lives." (p. 105). While this analysis may look very different from the analysis I have presented, it holds many of the same core notions. First, "serious" is included to draw attention to the fact that education is commonly used to

denote that something non-trivial has been learned. Furthermore, such efforts are “sustained” insofar as learning directed at serious issues is necessarily an activity with a certain duration over time. Surely, awareness of the human condition falls into the category of “serious”, and the complexity of the project of expanding one’s awareness is one that could (and many would say should) continue throughout one’s life. Secondly, education is about learning, and directed at people *qua* people. Both of these were presented as preliminary considerations for the concept of education as awareness expansion of the human condition. Finally, Wilson claims this process occurs at a level above “what people might pick up for themselves in their daily lives”. This too can be said for the analysis I have offered. For surely one could become aware of various elements of the human condition through the day-to-day activities that promote learning. However, directed and sustained effort is necessary to attain a substantial level of depth and breadth of awareness of the complexities of the human condition.

Given the above, any apparent oddity of the present account of education is born out of its level of generality. This level of generality necessitates a conception of education based upon new concepts (i.e., awareness and the human condition with its related elements). While this new analysis may look radically different than previous analyses, below I will demonstrate that it is not necessarily in tension with common liberal approaches to education, as the focus of these analyses (i.e. knowledge and understanding) can be subsumed under the more general “awareness”, as can other commonly cited educational aims, such as skills and habits.

Education as awareness-promotion of the human condition has precedence in conservative thinking on education as well. For example, historically, some of the most

vocal opponents of education for autonomy have been conservative religious groups (e.g., *Mozert v. Hawkins*; *Wisconsin v. Yoder*). Such groups often base their objection on a concern for ensuring that their children do not develop what they see as mistaken views of the human condition (e.g., as being bound by divinely ordained objective ethic, that humans are tainted by original sin and in need of salvation, and divine revelation as necessary for knowledge of good and evil) (Kunzman, 2009). Such concerns reveal a view of education as promoting students' awareness of the human condition, but their conception of the human condition differs substantially from that espoused by many liberal democratic theorists. While these competing perspectives on the human condition will result in very different educational practices and agendas, the underlying view of education as being about awareness-promotion of the human condition hold for both camps. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

### **Satisfying the Principle of Differentiation**

The aim of this section is to explore to what degree this conception of education can successfully differentiate *education* from the related concepts of *socialization*, *development*, and *indoctrination*. The final goal of this is a conceptual geography of education-related terms that can be used to clarify the degree of conceptual and developmental compatibility between education for morality and education for autonomy, and to facilitate a more informed debate between opposing views on these educational initiatives.

**Socialization.** The relationship between education and socialization was muddled early on in the work of the popular French sociologist Emile Durkheim who defined education as “a methodological socialization of the young generation” (as cited

in Brezinka, 1994). In effect, Durkheim did not differentiate between education and socialization. There has been debate over whether it is appropriate or important to make a distinction between education and socialization (for a review, see Egan, 1983). A common way to make the distinction between education and socialization is to claim that socialization is primarily about making people more alike, whereas education is about making people more unique (e.g., Biesta, 2010; Egan, 1983). Under this approach, learning a language, local etiquette, modes of livelihood and the like would be considered socialization, whereas the unique styles and ends to which one exercises these socialized activities would be a product of education.

Does this popular understanding of the distinction hold given the analysis of education provided above? It seems likely that, if education is primarily about expanding and deepening awareness of the human condition, then the particularities of each individual (e.g., particular histories, temperaments, interests, abilities, and immediate social and material resources) would shape the particular depth and breadth of awareness reached, and a unique awareness of and relation to each of the various aspects of the human condition would result. For instance, one may attain a profound depth of awareness of the social, economic, and political aspects of the human condition, but very limited awareness of the natural or ecological aspects of the human condition. By contrast, socialization is not about expanding awareness of the human condition per se, but rather familiarizing the individual with the systems of symbols and behaviours of a given society in order to allow the individual to participate in those systems. Of course, socialization can contribute to education, for education takes place within communities and in order to participate in those communities one must by



proficient in its basic norms. On the other hand, if socialization becomes an end in itself, above and beyond education, we are faced with a unique practice, one that often falls under the title of indoctrination, and it is to that I will now turn.

**Indoctrination.** The concept of indoctrination has arguably received as much attention in the analytic philosophy of education as the concept of education, and analyses of indoctrination have focused on elucidating the “core” of indoctrination. The reviews of these debates have been clearly summarized by Winch and Gingell (2008) and Woods & Barrow (1989), and I will review and synthesize their reviews here. To begin, content-driven conceptions of indoctrination (Flew, 1966; Gregory & Woods, 1970; Gribble, 1969; Peters, 1966; Wilson, 1964) hold that what constitutes indoctrination is bringing someone to hold as true something that cannot be demonstrated to be true (the examples often given of such a topic is moral or religious doctrines). A second approach holds that indoctrination is primarily about the use of non-rational methods used to induce beliefs in students (Martin, 1967; Scheffler, 1973). A third approach is an outcome driven approach that sees indoctrination as being primarily about the end-product, namely, a closed-mind not open to alternate viewpoints (Beehler, 1985; Kleinig, 1982). A final approach holds that it is intention that characterizes indoctrination. Indoctrination is taking place insofar as one is aiming to get someone to believe a given proposition regardless of evidence (Snook, 1972).

While I will not engage in a detailed review and critique of these debates, what seems common to all of the above conceptions of indoctrination is the lack of ability or willingness to critically explore reasons or grounds for beliefs. Taking the inability or unwillingness to explore reasons for a given belief as the primary concern over

indoctrination, how does indoctrination compare to the analysis of education provided above? At the most general level the two are in obvious tension: if education is about expanding and deepening awareness, then indoctrination's inhibition of a student's ability to assess the reasons behind a given belief inhibits the student's awareness of the nature and validity of that belief, and is thus incompatible with education. However, as is commonly observed, the nature of human development is such that young children lack the rational capacity to assess the reasons behind beliefs that are important for the well being of the child (Aristotle, 2009; Peters, 1981b). This may seem to make indoctrination in the early years inevitable insofar as it is important for young children to hold certain beliefs before they have the ability to assess the reasons behind those beliefs. However, when some degree of such early socialization or indoctrination is necessary, it is necessary precisely to the later development of the capacities that grasp the reasons behind beliefs. For instance, it might be necessary to tell the child that it is wrong to harm others. The child may have no idea *why* it is wrong to harm others, but holding this belief will facilitate harmony in the child's social life and the child's ability to participate in the educational communities necessary to develop rational reflection. The lesson to be taken away from this investigation is that, when dealing with issues of education or indoctrination, one must take the long view to properly assess when a given practice falls under the former or the latter based upon whether the practices expand and deepen awareness of the human condition in the foreseeable future.

**Development.** Although analytical philosophy has dedicated less attention to the concept of development, it is no less ambiguous than socialization and education. Brezinka (1994) argues that development is used in psychological literature in a way

that implies the unfolding of a natural process; a “maturation process...that takes place in the absence of training and experience” (p. 22). Although similar, Lawrence Kohlberg’s account of development offers a more positive role for experience in development. Kohlberg’s (1981) cognitive-developmentalism draws upon the Webster definition of *to develop*: “to make active, to move from the original position to one providing more opportunity for effective use, to cause to grow and differentiate along lines natural of its kind; to go through a process of natural growth, differentiation, or evolution by successive changes” (quoted in Kohlberg, 1981, p. 84). From this initial definition Kohlberg emphasizes the fact that development implies an “internal standard of adequacy governing development” towards “greater differentiation, integration, and adaptation” (p. 84). This internal standard is apparent insofar as children prefer thinking at the next higher stage and, when reasoning through moral dilemmas, move naturally up in Kohlberg’s moral development scheme. Overall, the movement is towards ever more coherent and effective conceptual schemes in dealing with moral dilemmas. Kohlberg claims that development occurs “under normal conditions of stimulation”. In this way it seems that, contra Brezinka’s conception of development, Kohlberg holds that there is no guarantee that cognitive development will naturally occur if children are left to go about their lives as they see fit, developing naturally like a flower. Rather, one needs to have gone through a very specific and rigorous process of working through moral reasoning for oneself. Kohlberg’s work has been heavily critiqued over the years (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Locke, 1980; for review and responses to these critiques, see Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999), and the tradition continues in the work of neo-Kohlbergian scholars (e.g., Rest et al. 1999). However, it is enough

for the present purposes to note Kohlberg's basic conception of development, and what is necessary for its promotion.

The common element of each of the views of development described above is the idea of a teleological unfolding or movement according to some inner tendency of a given organism. The question is one of agency, that is, the degree to which sustained conscious effort must be applied to facilitating that movement. For example, rudimentary physical development does not take conscious effort on the part of the individual, but a high level of moral development takes sustain conscious effort. The former, agent-less concept of development will not be the focus here, as the main concern of this dissertation is the use of *moral development* which is a form of the latter, agent-centred view of development. The question then is: What is the relation between the agent-centred concept of personal development and education?

Given the account of education given above, it may be tempting to equate education with human development given that the human being has inherent tendencies towards awareness. Given this, seeing education as the expanding and deepening of awareness would seem to be equivalent to development insofar as it is a process of unfolding or maturation of a natural human tendency. However, equating education to human development presupposes that awareness is *the* human potential. But that is far from clear. It could very well be that there are other human potentialities. It has been argued that the "will to power" is *the*, or at least *a*, fundamental human motivation (Nietzsche, 2006). In that case human development might be understood primarily as the development of power rather than awareness. Of course, one might argue that awareness and power are inherently connected, and the

unfolding of one implies the unfolding of the other. This may or may not be so, depending not least upon how we conceptualize power. The point here is only that equating human development with education presupposes that *the* human tendency is towards awareness of the human condition. Given this, it could be said that a qualified version of development, namely *awareness* development, comes closer to the concept of education. But even in that case we would have to add the focus of the human condition.

Given the above, it can be said that education is the deepening and expanding of awareness of the human condition, while human development is the unfolding of a given range of potentialities within the human creature. However, proving what does and does not qualify as an innate tendency is not an easy task. This makes *human development* a highly contentious concept. Still, the concept of development can be helpful in discussing various aspects of education in which we are seeking to foster a characteristic in which there is strong evidence for there being a natural human tendency towards (e.g., via cross-cultural or neurological studies).

### **Awareness as a Conceptual Basis for Integrative Approaches to Education**

Previous conceptions of education in the analytic tradition have centred on the concept of knowledge (e.g., Hirst, 1974; Peters, 1966; White, 1982). Within western epistemology, various forms of knowledge have been posited. Knowing by acquaintance involves direct interaction with a person or object. There is also propositional knowledge: *knowing that* something is the case. Finally, there is procedural knowledge, or *knowing how* to do something. While there are ongoing debates over the nature and interrelation of these various conceptions of knowledge,

and the term “knowledge” is used in various ways in general parlance (e.g., I know Mr. Doe; She knows how to fix the problem), the majority of uses of *knowledge* in philosophy imply propositional knowledge (Hetherington, 2012), and more specifically, this rationalist view of knowledge has strong precedence in analytic philosophy of education. Hirst (1974) argues, “it seems to me important not to confuse knowledge with other states, particularly states of perception, awareness and feeling” (p. 57). Peters often refers to “knowledge and understanding” with no differentiation between the two and his use of *knowledge* is clearly the propositional form: knowledge and understanding implies “some kind of a conceptual scheme to raise this above the level of a collection of disjointed facts...some understanding of principles for the organization of facts” (p. 30). And Peters explicitly states that he thinks it a mistake to call a state of religious or aesthetic awareness *knowledge*.

*Understanding* holds similar rationalist connotations in the analytic tradition. Peter Lipton (2004) claims that *understanding* is simply “knowledge of causes”. While there is some debate over the relationship between understanding and knowledge and whether understanding is, in fact, a form of knowledge (Grimm, 2006), Lipton’s position reflects our common use of the term. We often claim to understand something when we can tell an accurate causal story about that thing. This rationalist view of understanding can also be found throughout the works of R. S. Peters and Paul Hirst. As seen above, Peters uses understanding and knowledge interchangeably, and in a rationalist sense. Hirst (1974) argues that understanding depends on “concepts and categories”, it demands “argument and justification”, and depends upon the “appropriate language in which that understanding is expressed and communicated” (p.

79). Thus there is a “necessary relationship between language and understanding” (p. 79), and “mastery of a form of understanding or thought is essentially learning how to play a complex game of terms” (p. 81).

The rationalist conception of knowledge or understanding at the centre of analytic philosophers of education effectively transfers this rationalist connotation to educational theory and practice. Focusing on awareness as the fundamental concept in education helps to ensure that we include in our concept of education valuable states of awareness that do not qualify as rationalist states of knowledge or understanding. As noted above, Peters (1981b) argues that one example of such a state is a state of aesthetic awareness, which he argues should not be considered a form of knowledge, but is nonetheless an important aspect of the human condition. While knowledge by acquaintance might be able to incorporate these modes of awareness, the general rationalist presuppositions that are commonly understood to hold for knowledge stand to confuse the issue, especially in the translation of theory to practice in which those not well-versed in specialized philosophical terminology will be interpreting and applying educational theory.

But might an awareness-based approach lead to biases of its own, and fall prey to the same fault as knowledge-based approaches? I believe that an awareness-based approach to education can avoid these pitfalls, and incorporate a wider range of valuable states. First, *awareness* can incorporate propositional knowledge insofar as one can said to be “aware that X”. Secondly, an awareness-based approach can both incorporate and help guard against the potential dangers of two other commonly cited educational aims: skills and habits. An awareness-based approach to education will

incorporate skills and habits insofar as they are both important for awareness expansion. Specifically, an awareness-based approach would seek to develop those skills and habits that facilitate awareness-promotion of the human condition. While I will not here give an in depth investigation of what such skills and habits are, some obvious examples would be teaching and learning related skills, and relatedly, the habit of pursuing awareness expanding activities, and the habits which facilitate the healthy interpersonal relationships in which such activities take place.

An awareness-based approach to education can help guard against the dangers of educational practices that aim at the development of skills and habits. Skill-based approaches to education tend to fall prey to the dangers of instrumental rationality, dealing only with efficient means and avoiding questions of ends (Johnson, 1998). A conception of education that is based on awareness of the human condition will emphasize awareness and investigation of ends, as such questions are fundamental to questions regarding the human condition. With regards to habits, although educational climate and processes will inevitably influence the development of habits (Purpel & Ryan, 1976), an awareness-based approach to education will seek to make students aware of this process, which is the first step in the being able to resist such processes if they should be found to be harmful or unjust. In this way the greater generality of an awareness-based conception of education acknowledges a wider range of valuable states, and helps guard against some of the dangers of commonly cited educational aims.



## A Picture of Awareness

To get a clearer picture of what awareness and awareness-promoting education looks like I will consider the question: “How does one become aware that racism is happening in the classroom?” To answer, I will use the example of a discussion that took place during a philosophy for children session I facilitated with elementary school students. During this discussion, one student argued that First Nations people lost control over their land because they were lazy and lacked the hard work ethic of white settlers. Furthermore, he argued, that same work ethic *entitled* the settlers to the land.<sup>7</sup> My awareness of this position as racist begins with my five senses and concentration, as I listen closely to both the content and tone of what is being said. My awareness of and reaction to this content is further influenced by a host of factors. Memories are aroused in me of First Nations friends and their struggles and hard work in the face of oppressive social conditions. These memories lead to empathic reactions that stand as emotional cues that highlight in my awareness the fact that an unjust, race-based characterization has been made, and an intuitive negative reaction to the characterization is aroused. I then employ critical thinking in carefully exploring the arguments offered by the speaker, and find them both lacking in evidence as well as employing problematic lines of reasoning. Finally, my self-awareness as a white, economically and socially privileged doctoral student who has recently moved to British Columbia raises my awareness of my own impact on race relations within B.C., and I use imagination to explore how my own unacknowledged racist biases might play

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<sup>7</sup> I will forego a detailed discussion of what is meant by “racism” here, and take for granted that this example constitutes an obvious example of racism.

a role, if not in that particular classroom encounter, then in my general day-to-day life in British Columbia.

In addition to the function of these awareness-promoting capacities, there are a host of skills, habits, knowledge and values that assist in arousing my awareness of racism in the above example. I must have the emotional regulation to ensure that empathy functions in an awareness-promoting way, and does not become self-focused distress. I must have some knowledge of the history of race relations in British Columbia. I must have the humility to acknowledge the potential existence of my own racist biases. Finally, my valuing of justice and my opposition to racism serves to further orient my sensitivity to these issues, thus cuing my attention to justice and race-based issues and promoting my awareness of them.

The above description of my own emerging awareness of racism in this situation is surely oversimplified, and awareness could be roused in a variety of different ways. Nevertheless, this example illustrates the complexity of the processes through which one may become aware of racism, the various forms it takes, and how it is expressed. Rather than a “knowledge that” approach, which might focus primarily on conceptual knowledge about the history of race relations in British Columbia, an awareness-based conception of education would explicitly acknowledge that deep awareness of racism is the result of the complex interactive functioning of a host of awareness promoting capacities, skills, habits, values and knowledge. An awareness-based conception of

education would seek to engage and develop the various elements described above in relation to race issues in the classroom and in the wider community.<sup>8</sup>

### **Concluding Comments**

I have offered a conceptual analysis of education based upon a critique and expansion of Peters' later work. I have used this new conception to differentiate education from socialization, development, and indoctrination. I have argued for the benefits of an awareness-based conception of education given the problems this dissertation aims to address.

I want to stress that the aim of looking at education through the lens of awareness is not to offer a new framework for organizing curriculum. For example, this approach is not inherently in tension with Hirst's (1974) organization of curriculum around his typology of knowledge. Although it is outside the scope of my concerns to explore the issue here, it is possible that the development of awareness would best be served if such efforts were incorporated into these disciplinary structures. My aim is rather to outline the general contours of the concept of education that can be accepted by the various groups involved in debates over educational aims. This is necessary in order to identify *education* for autonomy and *education* for morality rather than mere socialization, development, or indoctrination. But also a conception of education that can incorporate into it the wide array of practices, combating overly minimal and rationalist views of education that can obscure the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality.

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<sup>8</sup> I would like to thank Bryan Warnick for the comments and questions that prompted me to include this section.

In the following chapter I will expand upon Peters' conception of awareness by outlining nine fundamental awareness-promoting capacities. This added degree of specificity will offer a framework within which to explore the relationship between education for morality and education for autonomy.

## CHAPTER III

### NINE AWARENESS-PROMOTING CAPACITIES

Peters' conception of education as awareness-promotion of the human condition can be given more specificity by identifying basic, cross-cultural awareness-promoting capacities and their related developmental conditions. If education is about awareness promotion, then it necessarily involves developing those basic capacities through which we become aware of various forms of content. Elucidating these capacities and their developmental conditions will advance my dissertation objectives in a number of ways. First, it will enable me to more clearly identify whether or not a given program or practice is educational (i.e., insofar as it develops rather than hinders these capacities). Secondly, as will be seen in Chapter Five, a detailed picture of education as awareness-promotion will help clarify the question of the compatibility of education for morality and education for autonomy, as well as play an important role in mediating between various parties in the debate over educational aims. Finally, examining the development of cross-cultural awareness capacities will enable me to distinguish them from culturally bound methods of awareness expansion. This allows me to make the concept of education more specific without inviting divisiveness by attempting to universalize what are context-dependent methods of awareness-expansion.

I want to address two general issues before I begin. First, I will focus on general, "basic" awareness promoting capacities, and not those capacities specifically related to morality or autonomy because my concern at this point is giving greater specificity to an awareness-based conception of education, rather than greater specificity to education for morality or education for autonomy (although I will turn to those issues

later). Secondly, while I will focus on awareness capacities in this chapter, awareness-promoting education seeks to promote awareness *in fact*, which will include not only the development of awareness-capacities, but also the tendency and inclination to employ them. I do not have time to delve into this motivational and habitual aspect of education here, although it will come in periodically through my review of literature on the capacities. Regardless, it should be assumed throughout this discussion that awareness-promoting education would advocate not only the development of the capacities, but of the tendency to employ them in ways that expand one's awareness of the human condition.

Secondly, awareness in relation to education is awareness characterized by veridical content. States of awareness that are not characterized by content that reflects aspects of the human condition cannot be said to be directly educational. For example, the belief that one is radically independent, and not reliant upon larger ecological and social systems, clearly reflects a lack of awareness of an important aspect of the human condition. Of course, not all examples are so clear-cut. For example, more subjective issues, such as the veridicality of awareness marked by a positive aesthetic judgment, the nature of such judgments, and whether a particular instance of such a judgment is a mark of education, is an open question. I do not have the space to undertake investigate this issue. My claim is only that the nine capacities discussed below *can* expand our awareness, not that they necessarily do, and that it is part of education to work towards such accuracy. It is often necessary to employ a variety of more culturally bound methods to substantiate the content of various states of

awareness aroused by these capacities, although degree to which this is feasible will vary. More will be said about this below.

### **The Nature of the Capacities**

The capacities I will posit have three characteristics. First, they are psychological functions of which humans are capable. To call these capacities “psychological” is not to draw a hard and fast distinction between the psychological and the social. While it is clear that human neurobiology facilitates certain psychological functions, the particular manifestation of those functions is mediated by environmental and social conditions (Narvaez & Gleason, 2013; Narvaez, Gray, McKenna, Fuentes, & Valentino, 2014). For example, when below I speak of language as a psychological capacity, by this I only mean that, if the proper conditions are met, human psychology is such that it is capable of language. It is not meant to imply that language is not also a social phenomenon. Language is both socially constructed, and one’s linguistic abilities only develop within social contexts (Fromkin et al., 1974). In short, while the terms “psychological” and “social” are used throughout this dissertation, varying degrees of interdependence between the psychological and the social should be assumed throughout.

To frame these capacities as psychological also raises the question of whether the “capacities” are seen as process or product. One could differentiate between the physiological and psychological processes, and the given outcomes of such processes. For example, one could point towards the physiological and psychological processes involved in empathy, or experience of empathy itself. While this differentiation may be fruitful for developmental research, for my purposes I use “capacity” in a general sense.

That is, a capacity is merely a psychological phenomenon that holds awareness-expanding potential which is exhibited by most humans; in other words, the great majority of humans are, given certain basic conditions, capable of exhibiting these capacities. For example, we would acknowledge that most humans have the “capacity” for imagination, but not for telekinesis. This general use incorporates both the series of physiological and psychological processes that underlie a specific manifestation of a capacity, as well as the outcome of such processes.

The second characteristic of these capacities is that, while more culturally specific methods of awareness expansion depend upon them, the reverse does not hold. For example, it is arguable that, in order to engage in the scientific method – a culturally bound method of awareness expansion of the measurable aspects of experience – one must be able to employ such capacities as concentration, memory, and imagination. In contrast, one can develop and employ these basic capacities without application or knowledge of the scientific method.

Finally, the capacities are cross-cultural. To claim that these capacities are cross-cultural does not mean that every culture will value these capacities in the same way, or that they will be developed to the same extent in all cultures. Relatedly, there are clear cases in which an individual might severely lack one or more of these capacities (e.g., the lack of empathy observed in people who suffer from autism [Gillberg, 1992]). However, we tend to see this lack of empathy as not in keeping with wider patterns of human development. The point here is that, by and large, humans have a tendency to exhibit the capacities I will cite below, and deficiencies in these capacities have a negative influence on one’s ability to be aware of various forms of content.



## **Capacities v. Methods**

There are cultural and political reasons to include the development of these capacities in the concept of education, but not include culturally bound methods of awareness expansion – although the application and teaching of such methods can certainly be part of a specific socio-historical manifestation of education. First, culturally bound methods of awareness expansion might only have that effect within a given culture, and any attempt to export them to socially alien contexts might deprive them of their awareness-expanding function. For example, an attempt to implement meditation practices (e.g., basic mindfulness practice) in fundamentalist Christian populations might be met with strong social and psychological resistance. Even if such a fundamentalist willingly takes on a meditation practice, his or her personal history might result in an intuitive sense that such a practice is a product of eastern religions and thus fundamentally in tension with the Christian tradition, thus negating the person's ability to deeply engage with the practice and reap any awareness-promoting benefits. In such a case an alternate method would be needed. There is also the problem of intelligibility. Culturally bound methods of awareness-promotion are often couched in culturally specific concepts, forms of rationality, as well as ontological and epistemological presuppositions. This might make it difficult if not impossible to employ such methods in foreign social contexts in which the systems of meaning that provide the rationale for such methods and make them intelligible are absent.

The second difficulty regards our inability to come to agreement on which culturally bound methods should be included in our concept of education. To argue that we should include culturally bound methods of awareness-promotion in our concept of

education is to invite a level of specificity to the concept of education that is unhelpful for making headway on debates over educational aims. What would we say to the Christian who argues that prayer is a primary method through which we become aware of the human condition? Or the indigenous Peruvian who argues that drinking the psychoactive brew ayahuasca is a primary method of awareness expansion? Are we to concede that schools should include both these practices if they are to be truly educational? Such a position is untenable in a pluralist liberal democracy.

While various culturally bound methods of awareness expansion might indeed be important, and even necessary, methods for expanding awareness of certain areas of the human condition, the above considerations problematize including such methods in the concept of education proper, and thus must be relegated to the realm of educational methods and aims whose feasibility and appropriateness must be debated within specific socio-historic contexts.

### **Identifying the Capacities**

Consider the following scenario:

*I am sitting on a bench near the beach, taking in the ocean and enjoying the day. A young woman is walking along the sidewalk, and as she approaches I notice she is talking excitedly on the phone. As she approaches I hear that her voice is quivering and panicky and see a look of distress on her face. As she passes I feel distress and wonder about her story, what might have caused her this pain, and what my role may be in this situation.*

What are the basic capacities that allow me to become aware of the various elements of this encounter? First, there are perceptions: the sight, sound and smell of the ocean; the

feeling of the wood grain of the bench; the sound of the woman's voice and the vision of her facial expression. It is through the *five senses* that I become aware of these elements. Secondly, there is my own internal experience: thoughts, emotions, and sensations. At the most general level, my ability for *self-awareness* allows me to be acutely aware of the continual stream of this content. I am aware of how my mood changes from relaxed and pleasant to distress, and I am aware of the thoughts this arouses. The capacity for *memory* allows me to become aware of past experiences that I draw upon in my attempt to interpret the situation. The capacity for *imagination* also plays an important awareness-promoting role. As will be discussed below, memory is an imaginative act both in the sense that conscious memory takes place in one's imagination, as well as memory being a creative imaginative act in which one creatively reconstructs a vision of past experience. Through imagination I also construct and thereby become aware of various possibilities about why she might be upset, as well as construct and become aware of various ways things might be for her in the future. My capacity for *critical thinking* allows me to explore and become aware of the conceptual connections involved in my thought process. For example, I can become aware of whether the line of reasoning I draw upon in my speculations about her state and its potential cause are valid (as informed by whatever psychological and sociological knowledge I might hold at that time). Finally, in addition to there being the external world and my internal world, there is the inner world of the woman. The five-senses make me aware of cues that indicate the quality of her inner state. Such cues quickly and unconsciously prompt my *empathic capacity*, and I begin to feel distressed. This

both highlights the inner state of the other in my awareness, and offers clues as to the quality of that state.

Thus far I have posited the five-senses, memory, imagination, critical thinking, empathy and self-awareness as key awareness-promoting capacities. However, three more capacities are evident in the above account. First, regardless of which one of these awareness-promoting capacities is functioning, the ability to sustain that functioning in a disciplined way is important for awareness. If I merely noticed for a brief moment the woman, my awareness of her inner state would be severely compromised. In contrast, my ability to *concentrate* on the woman increases my awareness of her inner state. Secondly, my capacity for *intuition* informs what aspects of the situation I become aware of, and makes certain interpretations intuitively compelling and noticeable. Finally, conceptual thought is mediated by my capacity for *language*. That is, through language I construct and become aware of possible states of affairs of the woman, and explore the probability of their validity. More importantly, through linguistic capacities I can, if appropriate, speak with the woman in order to increase my awareness of her inner state. This information-sharing function of language holds for all areas of content (inner, outer, and the inner world of the other) as the ability to share information about each of these areas is one key way in which we expand our awareness of them.

I have identified nine awareness-promoting capacities (the five-senses, memory, imagination, critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, concentration, intuition, and language), and a more detailed description of each will be given below. However, this brief phenomenological inquiry has a number of limitations. First, its aim was not to

give a detailed account of the processes involved in making me aware of various content; surely the review was very rudimentary and much has been left out or possibly inaccurately described. For example, while I focused on a specific capacity in relation to a given content area, in the great majority of cases all nine capacities function and interact in complex ways to influence one's awareness of a given area of content. The nature of this interrelation is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The point was only to identify the basic awareness-promoting capacities. The method I employed to identify these capacities was based on an exploration of my own experience, and there is the possibility that I might have overlooked some basic awareness-promoting capacities, although if there are more such capacities than I have listed here, I admit that I cannot imagine what they might be. Secondly, I use this approach merely as a heuristic device to begin to outline awareness-promoting capacities, and not as an accurate ontological description. For example, one could argue that each individual has access only to the contents of their experience, and the "external world" and the "inner world of the other" are, from the first person perspective, only inferred. Or more generally, one could point to the longstanding philosophical debates over the subject/object dichotomy and the nature of the self. The above description of my experience was meant to merely highlight those capacities I employ in becoming aware of various elements of experience, and is not meant to take a stance on these ontological and epistemological issues.

### **Awareness-Promoting Capacities & Their Developmental Conditions**

In this section I will define each of the capacities, outline their awareness-promoting potential, and review their developmental conditions. Due to the breadth of

this task, I will rely on comprehensive reviews of developmental literature done by others, rather than reviewing the developmental literature myself. I will focus on those points of wide consensus in each respective field, as there is not space to delve into the debates around the more controversial aspects. The aim of this method is to provide an outline of the basic developmental conditions and practices involved in an awareness-based concept of education that has a solid foundation in the developmental literature.

### **The Five Senses**

**Awareness-promoting function.** It is through the five senses that we become aware of our surroundings. This facilitates awareness of both external objects, as well as their various relationships. The senses can also serve to promote our awareness of the inner state of others through perceptual cues (e.g., sight of a sudden grin or the sound of a burst of laughter). Furthermore, empathy – an important other-awareness promoting capacity – is cued by content taken in through the five senses. Finally, the five senses can raise awareness of our inner world. For example, observing the quality of one's work can raise one's awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses in various skill sets and psychological characteristics.

**Development.** The five senses have come into educational thought in various forms. The Montessori approach has long emphasized the importance of developing the senses (Hainstock, 1968/1997). Arts-based (Amorino, 2009), museum-based (Anderson, DeCosson, & MacIntosh, forthcoming), and medical (Bardes, Gillers, & Herman, 2001) education have focused on the important role of the senses in learning, aesthetic appreciation, and efficacious application of skill. Furthermore, the empiricist tradition has highlighted the senses insofar as they are the primary means through

which we come to knowledge (Chambliss 2009). The curricular implication of this philosophical presupposition has often been a focus on the importance of first-hand experience (Dewey, 1938; Mosier, 1951). While works such as these make a number of pedagogical suggestions for engaging the students' senses, there has been little empirical research done on how best to develop one's ability to apply the five senses in an intentional, focused and excellent manner.

Regardless of a lack research in this area, a few general comments can be made. First, teachers, caregivers, and other community members should model and praise the disciplined use of the senses. Secondly, teachers should use materials that engage the senses (e.g., engagement with art or the exploration of wilderness areas), as well as teach explicit methods for employing one's senses in a disciplined and intentional way (e.g., Brown, 1983). Finally, the wider culture should encourage and value the employment of one's senses. The social implication of this is a cultural ethos that emphasizes the value of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting for oneself, rather than simply relying on the accounts of others.

### **Critical Thinking**

Another fundamental awareness-promoting capacity is our capacity for critical thinking. This capacity could be addressed under *thinking*, *logic*, or *reasoning*, but I will here address it under Harvey Siegel's (1988, 2007) "reason assessment" conception of critical thinking. Although there are ongoing debates over the nature and value of critical thinking (e.g., Burbules & Berk, 1999; Gardner & Johnson, 1996; Mason, 2008; Quinn, 1994), I believe addressing this aspect of awareness-promotion under this rubric has a number of advantages. First, I am concerned here specifically with those

capacities that promote awareness. If we understand thinking as the ability to produce thoughts, then there is nothing about this general capacity that marks it as awareness-promoting. Someone could have random, repetitive, neutral, or even awareness-restricting thoughts. For this reason I choose to focus on critical reasoning, as a more acutely awareness-promoting capacity, insofar as it indicates a form of thought structured around logical and epistemological constraints and norms.

Secondly, while logic is a part of this awareness-promoting capacity, it is not the whole of it. Awareness of the logical relationships between concepts and claims is not simply the product of familiarity with the principles of formal and informal logic, but includes familiarity with the concepts and standards within the field under investigation. And, while *reasoning* denotes a process of offering or assessing reasons, such assessments might fall prey to any number of errors (e.g., incompleteness, logical fallacy, etc.), thus the need for criticality. Finally, awareness-promotion requires not only basic capacities, but also the motivation and tendency to use them. Because of this, awareness-promoting education will seek to develop not only the ability to assess reasons and logical relations, but the tendency to do so; a motivational aspect that is included in Siegel's account of critical reasoning via his conception of critical spirit. Although critiques of the theoretical foundations that underlie Siegel's work have been offered (e.g., Cuypers, 2004; Ellett, 1998; Garrison, 1999), his account of critical thinking both satisfies the conditions cited above, and the main elements of Siegel's account are largely points of consensus in the field (Siegel, 1997), and thus it is suitable for the purposes of this dissertation.



According to Siegel (1988), critical thinking involves two primary components: (a) reason assessment, and (b) critical spirit. In reason assessment the critical thinker must be able to assess reasons and their ability to warrant beliefs, claims and actions properly. Therefore, the critical thinker must have a good understanding of, and the ability to utilize, both subject-specific and subject-neutral (logical) principles governing the assessment of reasons. (p. 38)

What constitutes “proper” reason assessment? Although there are differing approaches to reason assessment (e.g., causal, inductive, deductive), Siegel (1997) argues that holding across these is a “unitary epistemology: reasons are good reasons if (and only if) they afford warrant to the claims or propositions for which they are reasons” (p. 32). A brief look at tradition-specific versus universal reason assessment standards bears this out. While it is clear that the respective presuppositions of a given tradition will influence its theory of rationality, and thus what is judged as a good or bad reason within its particular normative framework (MacIntyre, 1988), there are certain cross-cultural standards of reason assessment (Evers, 2007; Siegel, 2007). The most obvious examples of such cross-cultural account of a “good” reason are the rules of logic. For example, the inability of the premises of a circular argument to validate the conclusion is not culturally variable. Of course, a given cultural group might *believe* that the premises logically justify the conclusion, but they would be mistaken. Nonetheless, two qualifications are necessary. First, the implications of logical validity will be understood differently from culture to culture. For example, the Christian doctrine of original sin “impacts upon epistemology by determining how reason and evidence is

viewed. If one believes in original sin, one believes that the mind is compromised from birth and is therefore incapable of rational appraisal of evidence and reasons” (Bacon, 2010, p. 1083). While anyone holding this position will likely devalue the implications of logical incoherence, holding rather to what is held as divinely guided tradition, they cannot coherently deny that a logically valid reason is *logically* good, only that this reason does not convincingly negate their position due to our epistemological limitations. Relatedly, logical coherence is only one aspect of reason assessment, and a judgment of a “good reason” could be based upon any number of other standards (e.g., congruity with accepted wisdom, feasibility, comprehensiveness, empirical support, etc.) (Vokey, 2001). While this issue could easily bear further commentary, the main point here is that the question of what constitutes a “good reason” is here left open to enquiry and debate rather than presupposed in a given theory of rationality. More will be said about this in Chapter Four.

The second element of Siegel’s (1997) account of critical thinking is critical spirit: a complex of dispositions, attitudes, habits of mind, and character traits....the disposition to seek reasons and evidence in making judgments and to evaluate such reasons carefully in accordance with relevant principles of reason assessment; attitudes, including a respect for the importance of reasoned judgment and for truth, and a rejection of partiality, arbitrariness, special pleading, wishful thinking, and other obstacles to the proper exercise of reason assessment and reasoned judgment; habits of mind consonant with these dispositions and attitudes, such as habits of reason seeking and evaluating, of engaging in due consideration of principles

of reason assessment, of subjecting proffered reasons to critical scrutiny, and of engaging in fairminded and non-self-interested consideration of such reasons and character traits consonant with all of this. People who possess the critical spirit *value* good reasoning, and are disposed to believe, judge and act on its basis. (pp. 35-36)

From the perspective of awareness-promoting education, this character aspect of critical thinking is necessary in order for critical thinking to actually be used on a regular basis to promote awareness.

**Awareness-promoting function.** If the primary function of critical thinking is reason assessment, then that process will raise one's level of awareness of a given set of reasons, one's awareness of supposed conclusions, and whether or not the reasons offered warrant those conclusions. Insofar as our claims reflect various states of affairs of self, other and the external environment, this critical thinking can raise one's awareness of these areas of awareness. For example, if someone argues that a car is unfit for the roads, and your analysis via critical thinking of that argument, drawing upon technical knowledge (subject-specific aspect) and the logical status of the argument (subject-neutral element), results in you concluding that the argument is sound, then your awareness of the state of the car has effectively been expanded.

**Development.** By far the most detailed and comprehensive account of education for critical thinking is the Delphi Report (Facione, 1990) which summarized the combined efforts of a panel of 46 experts – the majority being philosophers, followed by education scholars, and a few researchers in computer science, behavioural science,

physics and zoology.<sup>9</sup> First, the skills and habits which constitute critical thinking should be modeled by teachers and administrators, as well as wider community members. Secondly, students should be encouraged to practice these skills and habits. Curiosity, objections, questions, and the ability to point out problems with the teacher's position should all be encouraged. Thirdly, developing critical thinking should include "making the procedures explicit, describing how they are to be applied and executed...and justifying their application" (p. 15) – a recommendation that has some empirical support (Marin & Diane, 2011). Teachers can also help students to "elaborate, transfer and generalize these skills to a variety of contexts" (Facione, 1990, p. 18). Finally, because an excellent critical thinker is one that can apply critical thinking in a variety of contexts, and directed at a variety of subjects, a liberal education that provides students with a wide knowledge base will further facilitate critical thinking. Finally, Siegel (1997) argues that some knowledge of epistemology is an important element of critical thinking. Although he gives a number of reasons for including epistemology as a key ingredient of education for critical thinking, two are particularly pertinent. First, epistemology is necessary to understand the content of critical thinking pedagogy and why it is important. Secondly, "being critical about critical thinking requires examination of the epistemology underlying it" (p. 24). In this way education for critical thinking remains critical itself, and avoids degrading into a kind of indoctrination into critical thinking methods.

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<sup>9</sup> Recent work in the philosophy for children movement is also an excellent source of information on the theory and method behind education for critical thinking (e.g., Haynes, 2002; Lipman & Sharp, 1978; Trickey & Topping, 2004).

While the Delphi Report and Siegel recommend methods for developing critical thinking, there is little in this work regarding the wider social contexts that contribute to the development of critical thinking. However, such social contexts can be deduced from the methods espoused. Namely, encouraging curiosity, objections, questions, and the challenging of authority figures when their positions seem problematic means that critical thinking will likely suffer in authoritarian contexts. Education for critical reasoning should take place in a liberal, democratic and egalitarian climate that values the ideas of the individual and promotes sharing those ideas and exposing them to critical scrutiny of the community. Furthermore, Darcia Narvaez and colleagues (2013) review research which suggests that conditions that constitute what she calls humanity's evolved development niche (including maternal responsiveness, breastfeeding, touch, and maternal social support) promote cognitive development (including intelligence, auditory comprehension, and verbal expression). While these outcomes are not synonymous with critical thinking, they certainly play a role in critical thinking, and such research gestures towards the importance of these early childcare practices for cognitive development. Finally, addressing the burgeoning field of philosophy for children, Ghazhinejad and Ruitenberg (2014) compellingly argue that, in authoritarian contexts, it is especially important to develop the practical wisdom to know when and how to engage critical thinking; this is important as expressing a critical voice in authoritarian contexts could endanger the child's wellbeing.

There is not space here to give a more detailed review of all that is involved in education for critical thinking. Additional research has argued for the importance of awareness of natural and social contexts (Chan & Yan, 2007), importance of student-

centred instruction (Crenshaw, Hale & Harper 2011), and the importance of clear expectations for students, engagement in argumentation, an understanding of epistemic activity and psychological knowledge on the part of the teacher (MacLellan & Soden, 2012). The list of work on the education for critical thinking could go on. However, I have attempted to outline the most basic and widely accepted aspects.

## **Empathy**

While there is no shortage of definitions of empathy (Batson, 2009), Nancy Eisenberg (2002) offers a definition that touches upon the core elements of the concept: “an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another’s emotional state or condition, and that is similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel” (p. 135). Empathy then is a *feeling with* rather than a *feeling for* the other. In contrast, the closely related construct of sympathy is understood as often developing out of empathy, but consisting of “feelings of sorrow or concern for the distressed or needy other” (Eisenberg, 2002, p. 135). Personal distress, on the other hand, is defined as an emotional response that “stems from the apprehension of the other’s state...however, it is a self-focused, aversive emotional reaction” (p. 135).

**Awareness-promoting function.** One of the primary functions of empathy is its ability to foster awareness of the other. If one employs metacognition to recognize the sources of one’s empathic emotion, then the empathic affective experience is understood to be a reflection of the inner experience of the other (Anderson & Keltner, 2002; de Vignemont, & Singer, 2005; Lamm, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2010). Furthermore, this kind of awareness is qualitatively different than mere cognitive attribution of an emotional state to another. A thought about the other’s emotional state is

phenomenologically distinct from an empathic experience of that emotion. The experiential, affective nature of empathy contributes to what has been called empathy's salience effect: empathy's ability to "make salient another's particular emotions, concerns, reasons, interests, and considerations in such a way that they are relevant and important to the empathizer, so that she is motivated to respond to these concerns" (Oxley, 2011, p. 78). The empathic experience acts as a cue that directs one's attention to those aspects of the other's situation that may have otherwise been overlooked.

A central aspect of mature empathy is the capacity for role-taking. The awareness-promoting function of empathy varies according to the type of role-taking at play. In self-focused role-taking one imagines *oneself* in the position of the other. To do this one first considers the details of the other's situation, thus increasing one's awareness of the facts of that situation. One then imagines oneself in that context and has an affective reaction. Finally, one infers that one's cognitive and affective responses to this imaginative exercise are similar to the other's.<sup>10</sup> If such inferences are accurate, then self-focused role-taking raises one's awareness of the quality of the inner state of the other.

Self-focused role-taking has a number of drawbacks. First, because one is placing oneself in the other's position, one projects one's own history and psychology onto the other, thus negating the other's uniqueness (Lather, 2009; Oxley, 2011; Todd, 2003). This might not be as much of a problem when the empathizer and target are relatively homogeneous, but it becomes more of an issue when substantial differences exist

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<sup>10</sup> There is disagreement about how similar the observer's reaction must be to the target to be considered empathic; some argue for a high level of similarity (Eisenberg, 2002), while others argue merely for "feelings that are more congruent with another's situation than one's own" (Hoffman, 2000, p.30).

between the two parties – a pressing concern in pluralistic contexts. Secondly, self-focused role-taking may lead to what Martin Hoffman (2000) has labeled “egoistic drift”, in which the empathic experience is so strong that one’s attention moves away from the needs of the other towards one’s own distressed state. By reorienting one’s attention away from the other one negates one’s awareness of the other. Although the concept of egoistic drift has some intuitive appeal, there is debate over whether such a phenomenon actually occurs, or whether personal distress becomes aroused through a separate mechanism (Batson, 2011).

Other-focused role-taking expands upon self-focused role-taking by incorporating the specific history and psychology of the other in the imaginative act. One imagines what it is like to *be the other*. Again, after this imaginative act one infers that one’s inner reactions are roughly parallel to the targets. Because this mode of empathic arousal incorporates more knowledge about the other it is likely that such an approach will be less prone to inaccuracies born out of naïve projections of one’s own psychology and history onto the other. Of course, empathy’s awareness-promoting potential is not born of simple introspection regarding one’s empathic experience. Empathy must be supplemented by other awareness-expanding activities such as having conversations with the other, reading up on relevant histories, etcetera (Oxley, 2011). However, the idea is that empathy can help us to become more aware of other-oriented content, both the quality of the other’s internal state, the needs of others (Snow, 2000), as well as likely future states and behaviours of the other (Anderson & Keltner, 2002; de Vignemont & Singer, 2005; Gordon, 1995).



Empathy can also facilitate self-awareness. Part of mature empathic role-taking is the recognition of those aspects of the empathic experience that are mere projections of the self onto the other. “What I feel in place of the Other is what I and I alone have projected”<sup>11</sup> (Todd, 2003, p. 62). As such, empathy can provide us with an “opportunity to learn about ourselves in relation to others”. For example, Batson (2011) argues that our feelings of sorrow with a friend who lost his job can convey the degree to which we value his welfare. Finally, from our empathic position “in the shoes of the other” we can, to a degree, look back at ourselves through the eyes of the other. Stephen Darwall touches on this point when he says that empathy in the second-person standpoint “works to bring others’ views inside our perspective so that they can be part of our own critical reflection” (quoted in Oxley, 2011, p. 82).

Empathy can also facilitate inferences about the external environment (de Vignemont & Singer, 2005). We infer facts about the environment through the reactions of those around us. For example, seeing someone pull a hand back and grimace after brushing up against an unfamiliar plant makes us aware of the danger of that particular species.

Finally, empathy cannot be separated from the act of interpretation, and the degree of empathic and interpretive accuracy is variable. However, research has shown the reality of empathic accuracy (Chismar, 1988; Davis & Kraus, 1997; Eisenberg, Murphy & Shepard, 1997; Hoffman, 2000; Ickes, 1997; Levenson & Ruef, 1992) and its responsiveness to development through educational initiatives (Schonert-Reichl, 2011).

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<sup>11</sup> This in no way takes away from empathy’s other-oriented awareness-expanding function; if the specific content of one’s projections are accurate, then empathy has indeed contributed to one’s awareness of the inner state of the other.

**Development.** In *Bringing Up a Moral Child*, Michael Schulman and Eva Mekler provide a summary of those practices that facilitate empathy development – a list that is consistent with the general body of literature on the subject (Eisenberg, 2004).

- Draw children’s attention to other people’s feelings. Ask them to imagine how they would feel in the other person’s place.
- Let children know the impact of their actions on the feelings of others, including you.
- Explain why people feel the way they do.
- Make clear (or encourage children to discover) what actions can be taken that would be more considerate.
- Let children know that you expect them to be considerate, and make sure that they know that it is important to you.
- Let children know that you understand and care about their feelings, and try to offer a way for them to get at least some of what they want — if not now, then in the future.
- Help children understand other people’s feelings by reminding them of similar experiences in their own lives.
- Help children resist the influence of people who discourage or ridicule their empathic feelings.
- Give children approval when they are considerate, and show disappointment when they aren’t.
- Share your own empathic feelings with children.
- Point out examples of people who are empathic and those who are not, and communicate your admiration for kindhearted people.

- Emphasize the good feelings that come from caring about other people.
- Model sympathy and prosocial behavior, including supportive, sensitive parenting.

(p. 87)

Two major reviews of the developmental literature on empathy give similar accounts (Davis, 1994; McDonald & Messinger, 2011). First, providing a warm, positive environment, modeling sensitivity to others' needs and emotions, and talking about emotions (e.g., prompting the child to label emotions and discuss causes and consequences of emotions) all facilitate empathy development. Secondly, there is evidence that secure attachment to caregivers promotes empathy development. Relatedly, maternal responsiveness and shared positive affect between parent and child has been shown to correlate with empathic responses to others' distress.

Martin Hoffman (2000) offers similar recommendations for the development of empathy. However, he also offers a number of unique recommendations. First, he argues that people will be more likely to empathize with another's emotion if they have had some experience with that emotion. Thus, an education that seeks to develop one's empathic tendencies should provide students with opportunities to experience a wide array of emotions. Secondly, Hoffman offers a more detailed account of induction as a disciplinary tactic that promotes empathy. In induction, caregivers

- (a) call attention to the victim's distress and make it salient to the child, thus tapping into the child's empathic proclivity...by activating any or all of his or her empathy-arousing mechanisms and producing empathic-distress, and
- (b) point up the role of the child's action in causing that distress. This

creates the condition for feeling empathy-based guilt, which is a feeling of intense disesteem for oneself for wrongfully harming another. (p. 151)

This form of discipline requires that the caregiver apply the proper amount of pressure to the child to ensure the child processes the content of the induction, but does not overwhelm the child by arousing fear or anger. Finally, Hoffman argues that caregivers must take special precautions to combat in children self-serving attributions of responsibility in which one blames the victim.

Empathy is prone to various biases that must be skillfully handled in educational efforts to develop empathy. Familiarity bias is a form of empathic bias in which we tend to have stronger empathic reactions towards our in-group, friends, and those similar to us (Hoffman, 2000). This form of bias can blind us to the states of others who are different from us. In addition, empathy is prone to a “here-and-now” bias in which one’s empathic reactions tend to be biased towards those who are immediately present. To combat these biases, Hoffman recommends (a) stressing cross-cultural commonalities in order to facilitate empathic responses with those who are initially seen as different; (b) looking beyond the situation to see how those not in the immediate area, or those at a later date might be effected; (c) advocating “multiple empathizing” in which the child is encouraged to imagine a stranger as a known loved one (e.g., one’s mother). These methods are meant to use empathic bias “not as the seed of its own destruction but as the seed of its own moderation” (p. 298).

Finally, Hoffman (2000) argues that there is a danger of empathic over-arousal which is “an involuntary process that occurs when an observer’s empathic distress becomes so painful and intolerable that it is transformed into an intense feeling of

personal distress, which may move the person out of the empathic mode entirely” (p. 198). Because of this, Hoffman argues that emotional regulation is an important part of empathy, and as such, efforts to develop empathy should include the development of emotional regulation. The practices and social conditions that contribute to emotional regulation will be discussed below.

## **Imagination**

The nature of imagination is as widely disputed as the other capacities that have been discussed thus far (Glover, Ronning, & Reynolds, 1989). Most of these debates take place in the context of a search for measures of imagination and creativity, and as such tend to offer reductionist, behavioural accounts of imagination. Furthermore, identifying what we mean by imagination is complicated by the diversity of everyday usage (Dexter, 1943). However, the *OED* describes imagination as “The faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses; the ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful”. This general definition serves as a basis upon which to demonstrate the awareness-promoting function of imagination.

**Awareness-promoting function.** First, imagination makes possible awareness of possible future states, as we imaginatively piece together various content into novel forms that might come to be. Relatedly, imagination can enable one to imagine oneself, the world, and others, differently, thus facilitating the ability to come to ever more nuanced and accurate awareness of each of these. Finally, imagination plays a vital role in other awareness-promoting capacities. Looking ahead, insofar as memory, critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, intuition and language involve “forming new ideas,

or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses”, imagination plays a role. More specifically, a recent review of neurological studies on the interrelation between memory, imagination, and prediction provides support for the claim that they rely on a common neurological system (Mullally & Maguire, 2013). Studies of this kind provide some indication of the close relationship between memory, imagination, and awareness of potential future states. Relatedly, central to empathy is the ability to attribute the source of one’s internal state in the state of the other (Anderson & Keltner, 2002; de Vignemont, & Singer, 2005; Lamm, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2010), which is an imaginative act in which one forms a conception of the inner state of the other. An in-depth investigation of imagination’s relation to the other awareness-promoting capacities is beyond the scope of this chapter. The point is only that it one of its primary awareness-expanding functions is the way in which it facilitates other capacities.

**Development.** In a review of research on education for creativity, Daniel Fasko, Jr. (2001) cites a number of traits that contribute to creativity, including: tolerance of ambiguity; willingness to surmount obstacles and persevere; willingness to grow, take risks; courage of one’s convictions and belief in oneself; and metacognition about creativity. He also argues that wider social conditions that facilitate creativity include learner-centred pedagogy that includes problem-based learning that focuses on novelty in authentic learning tasks. Hennessey and Amabile (1987) cite five methods that negatively impact creativity: (a) have children work for an expected reward, (b) set up competitive situations, (c) have children focus on expected evaluation, (d) high levels of surveillance, and (e) set up restricted-choice situations. Rather, education for creativity

should focus on intrinsic motivation and motivation to excel born out of interest in solving novel problem situations, brainstorming, freedom to explore various solutions, as well as practice in formulating stimulating problems. Finally, exposure to various traditions and lifestyles facilitate one's ability to imagine oneself otherwise (MacKenzie, 2005).

A more complete account of education for creativity was given by Robert Sternberg and Wendy Williams (1996), which included: modeling creativity, building self-efficacy, questioning assumptions, defining and redefining problems, encouraging idea generation, allowing time for creative thinking, instructing and assessing creativity, rewarding creativity, encouraging sensible risks, allowing mistakes, identifying and surmounting obstacles, developing self-regulation and the ability to delay gratification, modeling creativity, collaborative creative projects, imagining other viewpoints, and seeking stimulating environments.

## **Memory**

Consensus has grown in the scientific study of memory on the accuracy-oriented conception of memory (Koriat, Goldsmith, & Pansky, 2000). This approach sees memory as the perception of past events; past events are, to a degree, re-experienced in the mind's eye. However, this inner awareness of past events is not purely passive; rather, it is an active process of imaginatively reconstructing past events that are then perceived by oneself in conscious awareness. There are also various forms of memory, including long-term, short-term, and working memory (Squire, Knowlton & Musen, 1993). I do not have the space here to go into each of these in detail, rather I will speak

in more general terms of the awareness-promoting potential of memory, and those conditions and practices that facilitate its development.

**Awareness-promoting function.** Memory is a key capacity through which we not only become aware of past experiences, but also construct a life narrative through which we discern overarching patterns in our experience (Fivush, 2011). Memory can also help us to become aware of others, our external world, and our selves insofar as through memory we can become aware of causal conditions of various states of affairs. Of course, there is the ever-present possibility of error in memory. Because of this memory might necessitate additional methods of corroboration, but this does not negate the general awareness-promoting function of memory (Schacter, Chiao, & Mitchell, 2001). While this research provides some insight into memory, the complexity of the phenomenon makes study of it particularly problematic, and the results of these studies continue to be debated (Roediger, 2008).

**Development.** Teaching simple mnemonic devices, as well as the modeling and valuing of memory within a community, are obvious routes to developing students' capacity for memory. Tracy Alloway (2011) provides evidence for the centrality of working memory in IQ, behaviour, and reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as the relation of poor working memory to various disorders, including reading and mathematical disorders, dyspraxia, ADHD, and autism spectrum disorder. She reviews conditions and practices for developing working memory. First, she argues for the development of meta-awareness skills, for such skills are necessary to skillfully and regularly apply mnemonic devices. Alloway argues that developing meta-awareness skills involves regularly asking students: What did you do? Why did you do it? How



will it help you? When can you use this again? Such questions prompt students to become more aware of the processes involved in both the excellent use of memory, as well as times when memory breaks down, and how to effectively engage with these processes in order to facilitate the excellent functioning of memory. Alloway also recommends facilitating deeper engagement with material via thinking aloud and talking with others. These recommendations are in line with research on childrearing practices and memory development. For example, there is substantial research demonstrating that maternal reminiscing style is a strong predictor of autobiographical memory (Fivush, 2011). Elaborative mothers “ask many open-ended questions that both provide some information for the child and encourage the child to recall additional information”, and they “integrate their children’s responses into the ongoing narrative to weave together a story that includes multiple narrative components such as the who, what, when, and where of the event...as well as narrative evaluation (“Was that fun?”)” (p. 566). Finally, Marilee Sprenger (2007) argues for a number of key developmental conditions for memory, including the important role of attention, visualization, proper exercise, diet and rest, low stress, and placing knowledge in context.

## **Intuition**

The importance of intuition has been the subject of debate as far back as ancient Greek and Chinese philosophy, and recent psychological research has focused on the prevalence and importance of intuition (see Evans, 2010; Myers, 2010). With such a substantial history, it is not surprising that it has been subject to a wide variety of interpretations (Noddings & Shore, 1998). I do not have the space here to review the wide array of interpretations. Instead, I will rely here on Robin Hogarth’s (2010)

description, review and synthesis of scientific research on intuition and its development, which is arguably the most comprehensive to date. Furthermore, Narvaez, whose work I will employ in later chapters, draws upon Hogarth's work. Relying on Hogarth's research in this section will facilitate conceptual and developmental continuity on the topic throughout the following chapters.

While there is no shortage of different interpretations of intuition (see Epstein, 2010; Pust, 2012), Hogarth (2010) argues that the point of commonality between these various interpretations is that intuitions "are reached with little apparent effort, and typically without conscious awareness. They involve little or no conscious deliberation" (p. 339). This definition is similar to the Daniel Kahneman's (2011) influential account System 1, or "thinking fast" which "generates impressions, feelings, and inclinations" which "operate automatically and quickly, with little or no effort, and with no sense of voluntary control" (p. 105), which is contrasted with System 2, which is "associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration" (p. 21) and effortful computations. Intuition is a kind of immediate sense of being aware of a given state things that is not the result of a conscious process of inquiry. However, intuition is not synonymous with insight. Rather,

insight is a form of intuition. However, the term *insight* is typically reserved for those moments when people suddenly realize that they can "see into" the structure of problems....[it] typically occurs when people are not consciously engaged in problem solving and is accompanied by a strong conviction of certainty (p. 254)

In contrast, intuition in general is not necessarily characterized by a strong conviction of certainty. While one may have an intuition, one might be uncertain as to how to interpret that intuition. As the awareness-expanding function holds for this broad conception of intuition, rather than only for one specific form of intuition (i.e., insight), it is this concept I will employ.

**Awareness-expanding function.** We can have intuitions about external, self, and other-oriented content. However, the claim that intuition can promote awareness in these areas rests on the epistemic reliability of intuition. Hogarth (2001) points to the difficulty of assessing the overall accuracy of intuition. However, he argues that certain conditions can promote intuitive accuracy, and given that intuitive functioning is more the rule than the exception when it comes to our day-to-day functioning, it is important that we take measures to improve intuitive accuracy. This issue will be addressed below in regards to the development of intuition.

While accurate intuition expands awareness, intuition can also serve to constrain awareness. For example, it is possible that an intuition is so strong that it leads to a rigid adherence to the content of the intuition to the point of making it resistant to alteration in the face of counter evidence and conscious reasoning processes (e.g., “I don’t need to look at the evidence, I *know* he’s guilty. I knew the second I looked at him!”). This is particularly problematic given the human tendency towards bias and prejudice (Evans, 2010). Such dangers must be checked by more explicit inquiry (Myers, 2010), as well as by establishing conditions that facilitate accurate intuition (Hogarth, 2010).

**Development.** Hogarth argues that intuition is “a kind of expertise that is acquired through experience and thus specific to a particular domain” (p. 99). One does not develop a general, context-less “intuition”. Rather, intuition develops in a given field, and such development demands extensive experience in the domain in question. In order to develop accurate intuitions experience in a given domain must take place in what Hogarth calls a “kind learning environment”. Kind learning environments are characterized by appropriate feedback, and promote learning the right lessons through experience. In contrast, in “wicked learning environments” feedback is misleading and the right lessons are not always learned. Hogarth also argues for the importance of a number of key abilities and habits that serve as a check on our intuitions, including: developing the habit of seeking feedback from others to test our initial intuitive responses; developing mindfulness and the ability to think twice about intuitive reactions (what he labels as “circuit breakers”); emotional intelligence; and the willingness to accept and work through conflicts in choice situations. Hogarth makes one final recommendation that education practices should aim to make the general characteristics of the scientific method intuitive. This consists of instilling habitual modes of observation, speculation, testing, and generalization.

### **Self-Awareness**

Self-awareness is the capacity through which we become aware of our inner space of thoughts, sensations and emotions. It is a complex phenomenon (drawing upon two highly mysterious phenomena: the self and consciousness) and the conceptual work around its investigation is equally so (see Ferrari & Sternberg, 1998). Self-awareness has been defined simply as attention focused on some aspect of the self

(Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). The related notion of mindfulness has been defined as non-judgmental, non-discursive awareness of one's perceptions, sensations, thoughts, and emotions (Evans, Baer, & Segerstrom, 2009). A more active conception of self-awareness is employed in self-regulation theory (SRL) (Carver & Scheier, 1998). In SRL, self-awareness is a state that involves an awareness of potential discrepancies between one's current state and some currently held standard, thus motivating efforts to minimize the discrepancy. Self-consciousness, on the other hand, is understood as a trait version of the state self-awareness (Evans, Baer, & Segerstrom, 2009). Thomas Natsoulas (1998) provides some insight into this matter through a four-part description of self-awareness:

- 1) One witnesses potential evidence about oneself.
- 2) One has inner awareness of this witnessing.
- 3) One has occurrent awareness in thought of one or more features of one's character or personality.
- 4) One brings self-witnessed evidence to bear in the judging of this feature or these features. (p. 29)

The concept of self-awareness has been critiqued on the grounds that it presupposes the existence of a unique "self" that exists through time, and that it holds certain dangers when espoused as an educational aim (Warin & Muldoon 2009). Regardless of the nature of the self, one's inner world is a unique arena that can only be accessed first hand via self-awareness; whether or not the content of the awareness is interpreted as an independently existing "self" is a separate question.

**Development.** Meditation practices that develop mindfulness (as defined above) have been shown to contribute to awareness of one's perceptions, sensations, thoughts, and emotions (Farb, et al. 2007; Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975; Hargus, Crane, Barnhofer, & Williams 2010). It is reasonable to suppose that such practices can also contribute to self-awareness insofar as mindfulness produces awareness of one's current state, and it is from this awareness that one can then move on to assess whether one's current state meets certain standards. Of course, this more normative "mindedness" can itself be promoted by explicit encouragement of this process by teachers and caregivers, as well as proper support and acceptance so that children will not be overly fearful of uncovering and addressing discrepancies between self and a given set of standards.

The above developmental conditions address mindfulness of the content of consciousness in a given moment. However, there is also "public self-consciousness" as awareness of another person's perspective of oneself, or as being aware of oneself as a "social object" (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Awareness of oneself as a social object cannot arise in the abstract, rather it only comes about through specific content. For example, one becomes aware of oneself as a social object insofar as one sees one's particular upbringing, socio-historical and psychological conditions as contingent facts that make up one's identity and how others perceive that identity. Colleen Vojak (2003) argues that understanding one's self requires "at the very least, a broad awareness of (and a neutral disposition toward) a variety of worldviews, some of which have played a role in the development of "self"" (p. 418). Vojak does not go into much detail as to why she thinks this is so. However, I think her claim that awareness of a variety of

worldviews contributes to self-awareness seems to touch on an important point (although I am less sure of her claim that such awareness must be marked by neutrality). One cannot come to public self-consciousness in a vacuum, but rather one must have knowledge of the diverse manifestations of social and psychological forces that construct a self in order to become aware of the contingency of one's self as the product of a particular socio-historical situation, which involves awareness of socio-historical situations outside those the immediate particular tradition. Could someone who was only exposed to one strict interpretation of Christianity be able to come to a robust self-knowledge understood as a sophisticated understanding of the way the Christian framework influenced one's identity? It is doubtful. As Brian Warnick (2012) observed, "Human beings tend to think in terms of examples and models....What something exemplifies, what we notice and what is salient about a thing, depends in large part on the field of comparison that surrounds it. We think in terms of differentiation..." (p. 420). In order to gain a more robust public self-consciousness, one would have to, to a certain degree, gain some distance from one's primary framework. But what distance could be gained if one's world only extended to the edges of the one's native framework? The pedagogical implication of this is that one must be exposed to alternate positions in order to have a space from which to look back and gain the kind of perspective that is constitutive of public self-consciousness.

### **Concentration**

Simply, attention "selects the relevant bits of information from the potential millions of bits available" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007, p. 31), and concentration is the ability to maintain focus on an object of attention for an extended period of time.

**Awareness-promoting function.** The primary awareness-promoting potential of concentration is its ability to sustain one's attention on a complex phenomenon long enough to become aware of its various aspects via the application of appropriate methods. In this sense, concentration is important for the functioning of each of the other awareness-promoting capacities, as well as culturally bound methods of awareness-promotion. For example, a child with severe ADD might well be capable of critical thinking, but the inability to *sustain* the reasoning process to its completion effectively negates the potential awareness expanding function of reasoning.

Research in positive psychology further demonstrates the importance of concentration for awareness-promotion. The ability to concentrate is a central factor in achieving "flow" states (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). In such a state, one is attentive to the minutia of the activity as one's awareness is totally immersed in the activity. If the activity is one that expands awareness (e.g., science, meditation, philosophy, and so forth), then concentration can be said to contribute to a cyclical pattern of awareness expansion: concentration leads to awareness of the particulars of the awareness expanding activity, that in turn facilitates excellence in that activity, which further expands and deepens awareness. As such concentration is a particularly vital capability for expanding and deepening awareness.

The literature on concentrative disorders (ADD and ADHD) provides some insight into the importance of concentration for expanding and deepening one's awareness. Reviewing research on the effects of ADHD, V. A. Harpin (2005) paints a bleak picture, including academic difficulties, social skill problems, strained relationships, difficulty holding a job, increased risk for car accidents, substance abuse



and low feelings of self-worth. While the psychological and social complexities involved with a ADD and ADHD diagnoses makes it difficult to decipher to what degree the negative effects are the direct product of the inability to concentrate, the nature of these disorders and the formidable list negative effects is nonetheless suggestive of the important role of concentration in being able to become aware of and effectively act on pertinent aspects of one's life.

**Development.** Three avenues for developing concentration are worth noting. First, as with the other capacities, it is likely that modeling on the part of teachers and caregivers, as well as the promotion and valuing of the ability to concentrate would promote its development in students. Secondly, providing students with opportunities to enter into flow states will likely contribute to the development of concentration. In his pioneering work on the subject, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2007) describes the flow state as consisting of

a sense that one's skills are adequate to cope with the challenges at hand, in a goal-directed, rule-bound action system that provides clear clues as to how well one is performing. Concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems.

Self-consciousness disappears, and the sense of time becomes distorted. An activity that produces such experiences is so gratifying that people are will to do it for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it...

(p. 71)

The pedagogical value of such a state for the development of concentration is in its wedding of inherent enjoyment with intense concentration. The enjoyment makes the

concentration-developing activity self-promoting. Csikszentmihalyi points out the social conditions that facilitate the development of flow in children: (a) *clarity*, children need to know what is expected from them and receive clear feedback about their actions; (b) *centering*, children need to feel that teachers and caregivers are interested in what and how they are doing, and this interest is driven by an intrinsic valuing of the quality of the child's experience and not for some other instrumental end; (c) *choice*, children feel they have choice of activities; (d) *commitment*, children feel sufficiently safe and comfortable in order to "set aside the shield of his defenses, and become unselfconsciously involved in whatever he is interested in" (p. 88).

Finally, there is evidence that contemplative practices can contribute to the development of concentration (e.g., Kaplan, 2001; Slagter et al, 2007; Tang et al., 2007). Antoine Lutz and colleagues (2008) found evidence that the practice of "FA Meditation" (the sustained focus of attention on an object of meditation) not only results in an increase in concentrative abilities, but that such heightened states of concentration are accompanied by markedly *less* effort on the part of the meditator, which indicates a potentially unique benefit of using FA Meditation for developing concentration.

## **Language**

**Awareness-promoting function.** Language's communicative efficacy is one of the most powerful tools for awareness-expansion. Through language we can share information about the human condition, and enter into traditions of enquiry with all their related epistemological, ontological and axiological norms. There is also evidence that language both influences thought (Ervin-Tripp, 1967) and affects perception (Klemfuss, Prinzmetal & Ivry, 2010). Language also functions in relation to other

awareness-promoting capacities. Language is the basis for critical thinking. It allows us to label and organize our perceptions into various categories, facilitating critical thinking on the relations between these perceptions. Language influences memory (Bristow et al. 1999; Loftus & Palmer, 1974; Lum, Gelgic, & Conti-Ramsden, 2010), and empathy insofar as we use language to inform our interpretation of the external cues offered by the other, as well as the empathic experience itself. While I cannot delve into these interrelations here, the point is merely that language plays an integral role in other awareness-promoting capacities.

**Development.** Reviewing research on how social contexts support language development, Erika Hoff (2006) cites two general conditions upon which language development is based: opportunities for communicative experience and a language model. More specifically, language development is fostered when children are given frequent opportunities to engage in communication with expert speakers that are adult-produced, child-directed, and use rich vocabulary and complex linguistic structures. In contrast, directive communication has been shown to have a negative relation with the development of grammar and vocabulary. It is hypothesized that this is in part due to the nature of directive communication: it tends to be short, does not provide new information, and does not engage children in discourse and questioning. Finally, language development is facilitated by a safe, secure environment in which children feel supported in engaging in dialogue with expert speakers (Crosser, 2008), and in which there is substantial maternal responsivity (Landry, Smith, Miller-Loncar & Swank, 1997).

## **An Emerging Picture of Awareness-Promoting Education**

While the above work is far from comprehensive and has been painted in very broad strokes, it nonetheless lends some specificity to the awareness-based conception of education outlined in Chapter Two. Such an education would seek to develop the nine fundamental awareness-promoting capacities (the five senses, memory, imagination, critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, concentration, intuition, and language) and thus would incorporate their related developmental conditions and childrearing and formal educational practices. To summarize the research cited above: first, an awareness-based conception of education includes environments that are warm, supportive, safe, stable, trustful and respectful, are marked by a willingness to share, offer opportunities for choice, and are democratic, libertarian, and egalitarian. Furthermore, the environment should be marked by tolerance for ambiguity, a focus on cooperation over competitiveness, a lack of excessive surveillance, a focus on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivations, and a valuing of sensible risks and allowing mistakes. With regard to pedagogy, awareness-based conception of education includes liberal education, highlighting cross-cultural similarities (while still acknowledging difference), practice in perspective-taking (especially as directed towards absent others), the opportunity to experience a wide array of emotions, mindfulness practices, practice at questioning assumptions, defining and redefining problems, idea generation, engagement in dialogue with fluent and expert speakers of a given language or languages, and the modeling by teachers of the nine capacities. Finally, it includes caregiving practices such as inductive disciplinary practices, dialogue about emotion, shared positive emotions, stress on taking responsibility for one's actions, elaborative

parenting styles, being cared for, and the avoidance of authoritarian and directive language. Table 1 displays the various elements in a clear and concise form.

Admittedly, the above list of conditions and practices that are part of an awareness-based conception of education is only the briefest and most general overview. However, there does seem to be a high degree of harmony between these conditions and practices. For example, environmental conditions need to be warm, caring, democratic, libertarian and egalitarian. Such conditions are in line with practices such as questioning assumptions, idea generation, and engagement in dialogue rather than authoritarian and directive language. In contrast, authoritarian and hierarchical contexts likely hinder the practices of questioning assumptions and engaging in open idea generation and dialogue. This harmony between the social conditions and educational and childrearing practices lends some credence to the idea that the development of the nine awareness-promoting capacities is feasible and not developmentally incoherent, and in turn the developmental feasibility of an awareness-based conception of education.

One convenient way of thinking about the above account of education is education as the development of *excellent perceivers* of the human condition; education aimed at developing students who are able to efficiently and accurately become aware of the relevant content, and particularly that content which reflects the human condition. Familiarity with such content will no doubt come, in part, through engagement with the various histories of thought that have delved into issues of the human condition. In this way liberal education is likely an important part of awareness-expansion. Liberal education was also an educational initiative that was

cited as important in developing a number of awareness-promoting capacities. Liberal education and exposure to various traditions will both familiarize students with content related to the human conditions, as well as facilitate the development of certain capacities such as critical thinking, imagination and self-awareness.

One of the most important points to take away from this chapter is that developmental research reveals the seemingly innocuous call for developing common awareness-promoting capacities as morally and politically loaded. The warm, caring, democratic, egalitarian, and libertarian conditions, the limiting of coercion and surveillance, and fostering sensible risks, tolerance for ambiguity, and allowance for mistakes facilitate the development of our basic perceptive capacities. As will be seen in the following chapters, although there are definite differences between various secular and religious conceptions of morality that complicate the issue (Richardson & Slife, 2013), the evidence cited in this chapter nonetheless has implications for the relationship between education for morality and education for autonomy, as well as debates over these educational aims.

Table 1. Developmental conditions of the nine awareness-promoting capacities

Capacity	Developmental Conditions		
	<i>Social Context</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Caregiving Practices</i>
Critical Thinking	Trustful; Respectful; Willingness to share experiences; Democratic; Libertarian; Egalitarian	Practicing critical thinking skills and developing related habits; Encouraging curiosity, objections & questions; Making procedures explicit, describing how they are applied, and justifying their application; Assistance in critical thinking across domains; Study of epistemology; Liberal education; Modeling & valuing of CT	Maternal responsivity; Touch; Maternal social support
Intuition		Extensive experience in particular domain(s); Regular feedback; Focus on learning the right lessons; Development of emotional intelligence and the ability to investigate the validity of intuitions, including making the principles of scientific method habitual	
Empathy	Warm & supportive environment	Stress cross-cultural similarity; Practice in taking perspective of absent parties; Provide opportunity to experience a wide range of emotions; Modeling & valuing of empathy	Inductive disciplinary practice; Talk about emotions; Shared positive emotions; Stress taking responsibility
Memory	Low stress	Teaching mnemonic devices; Development of meta-awareness skills (including asking "What did you do?" "Why?" and "How will it help?"; Thinking aloud and talking with others; Developing concentration & visualization; Placing knowledge in context; Modeling & valuing of excellent memory	Elaborative parenting style; Exercise; Proper diet

Capacity	Developmental Conditions		
	<i>Social Context</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Caregiving Practices</i>
Concentration	Safe; Stable; Opportunities for choice	Meditation; Clarity about what is expected and clear feedback; Modeling & valuing of concentration	Maternal responsivity; A sense that caregivers & teachers are interested in what and how they are doing, & such interest is born out of an intrinsic valuing of the child's experience
Imagination	Tolerance of ambiguity; Lack of competitive situations; Less surveillance; Wide choice; No expected reward (intrinsic motivation); Sensible risks; Allowing mistakes	Practicing questioning assumptions, defining/redefining problem, idea generation; Exposure to alternate traditions and ways of being; Modeling & valuing of imagination	
Language	Safe & secure environment	Practice with fluent speaker who engages and questions; Modeling & valuing of linguistic excellence	Maternal responsivity; Avoidance of authoritarian /directive language
Self-awareness	Warm & supportive environment	Exposure to alternate traditions and ways of being; Meditation; Modeling & valuing of self-awareness	
Five-senses	Valuing of experiencing things for oneself	Use of materials that stimulate the senses; Teach explicit methods for applying the senses in a deep and disciplined way; Modeling & valuing excellent use of the senses	



## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION FOR AUTONOMY

The aim of this chapter is to provide an integrative account of the core psychological elements of autonomy, and the social conditions and childrearing and educational practices that contribute to autonomy development. One of the obstacles to giving an integrative account is the multifaceted nature of autonomy. Autonomy is a complex phenomenon that is made up of equally complex parts, each of which holds its own set of developmental conditions. The task, then, is to provide an integrative account of education for autonomy, while still finding a reasonable method of delineation. To do this, I will first review Callan's conception of autonomy, and argue that it is particularly productive for the purposes of this dissertation. However, there is a dearth of developmental literature on this form of autonomy. To deal with this problem, I will identify the psychological aspects that constitute personal autonomy. As there has been substantially more research on the development of these psychological conditions than on autonomy proper, this will provide me with a framework upon which I can investigate the social conditions, child-rearing and formal educational practices that constitutes education for autonomy. Thus, I will provide an account of the developmental conditions of autonomy through a synthesis of the developmental conditions of its parts.

The account of education for autonomy that I will provide here will limit itself to a descriptive synthesis of the psychological components of autonomy and the conditions of their development. One could think of this chapter as a collage of existing research, pieced together to form a more comprehensive picture of education for

autonomy. One limitation of this approach is that the substantial breadth will limit the depth in which I can engage certain issues. Specifically, I will not engage in a detailed theoretical or methodological critique of the scientific work upon which I draw. I will attempt to minimize the risk of this approach by drawing upon summaries that review the current state of the field in relation to the various areas of development, and more specifically, those points that stand as general areas of consensus – thus relying on the system of peer review in each given field, and avoiding those issues around which there is still substantial uncertainty.

A second danger lies in the conceptual diversity that abounds both between and within disciplines. For example, there are a number of different interpretations of autonomy. In response to this problem I will clarify terms whenever necessary, and where different interpretations exist across studies I will address this difference and justify in what way that study may or may not inform the present discussion.

### **Minimalist Accounts of Education for Autonomy**

As a central theme in the enlightenment project, the nature, value and educational implications of personal autonomy have been the subject of much debate. There is general agreement that the term refers to some form of self-governance – a meaning derived from the etymology of the word, *autos* (self), and *nomos* (law) or -*nomy* (a system of rules or laws). However, beyond this basic understanding, the precise nature of autonomy is highly contested. This conceptual confusion can be seen in the number of different categorizations that exist of how autonomy has been conceptualized. One broad categorization divides substantive versus procedural accounts of autonomy (Dryden, 2010). Another categorization, prominent in the

empirical study of autonomy, divides autonomy into personal, motivational and intrapsychic varieties (Chirkov, 2011a). Within philosophy of education, Jodi Nickel (2007) differentiates between belief, action, interest, purpose, and social autonomy. Aharon Aviram (1995), working in the same field, argues that there are three primary models of autonomy: rationalist, voluntarist and rational-voluntarist. Further complicating this already muddled picture, some scholars use alternate terms that mirror conceptions of autonomy, such as freedom, free will, or individuality, while others have argued that these concepts are neither identical to, nor necessary for, autonomy (e.g., Cuypers, 2010; Dearden, 1972; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000; Meyers, 1992; White, 2003). This conceptual diversity leads to differing accounts of what education for autonomy consists of, and its relation to education for morality.

The wide variety of “autonomies” in the literature makes any general discussion of the topic difficult. However, I suggest that philosophers of education have tended to focus primarily on the rational and knowledge aspects of autonomy. Furthermore, philosophers of education in this field have often claimed, and to a large extent rightly, that the specifics of what education for autonomy actually consists of to be the purview of psychologists, sociologists, and educators. These two factors have resulted in only cursory descriptions of education for autonomy that offer a shallow and somewhat haphazard account of the “central” elements of education for autonomy. A brief review of some descriptions of education for autonomy by some leading figures in the field will illustrate this point.

Working within the analytic tradition, R.S. Peters (1973/1998) argues that there are three criteria that are commonly taken to be constitutive of personal autonomy:

authenticity, rational reflection, and strength of will. For Peters, authenticity refers to a condition in which one's code of conduct is not merely "adopted in any second-hand way" or motivated by extrinsic reasons such as praise and blame or reward and punishment. Rational reflection consists in one being aware that rules are alterable, reflecting upon them in light of more general principles, and consequently coming to identify with a certain code of conduct. Rational reflection implies a "broad rationality" understood as rationality that meets the standards of a given community of inquiry (Cuypers, 2010). In this way Peters' conception of autonomy is decidedly communal as one can only be broadly rational after being initiated into the "public heritage" of knowledge and standards of inquiry. Finally, strength of will refers to the capacity to adhere to one's code of conduct in the face of external and internal counter-pressures. Peters acknowledges that, while these three criteria are each debatable, they nonetheless are often part of what we mean when we talk about autonomy.

Based on his conception of autonomy and drawing heavily on the work of Piaget and Kohlberg, Peters (1973/1998) argues that education for autonomy consists of: a warm and stable environment devoid of domination, threats and falsities; high levels of "cognitive stimulation"; a lack of indoctrination; development of a sensitivity to experiences and principles that form the groundwork for rules; development of reasoning abilities in relation to normative judgments; an atmosphere of discussion and criticism where rules are presented in a non-arbitrary way; lack of authoritarianism; democratic participation; and knowledge of history and literature that provides the substance which informs deliberation. Some of these elements Peters delves into in detail, others he only mentions. Peters acknowledges the limited nature of his

description of education for autonomy. For example, he acknowledges that much could be said about how one develops the “sensitivity” cited above, an issue I will argue is an important one for understanding the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality.

Like Peters, R.F. Dearden (1972) explores the concept of autonomy from the perspective of analytic philosophy, employing a conceptual analysis of common uses of the term. Dearden argues that a person is autonomous “to the degree that what he thinks and does in important areas of his life cannot be explained without reference to his own activity of mind...his own choices, deliberations, decisions, reflections, judgments, plannings or reasonings” (p. 453). Also like Peters, Dearden employs the concept of “broad rationality” in his conception of autonomy insofar as the “activities of mind...constitutive of autonomy are essentially linked to the idea of reason...Implicitly or explicitly there will be criteria which pick out...the considerations which we take into account” (as quoted in Cuypers 2010, p. 195). This criterion does not apply to each specific instance of thinking and action. Rather, the point is that this criterion holds *at some point* in a person’s history for a given commitment. One does not have to re-interrogate one’s commitments every time one acts. In addition, while autonomy does not necessitate general knowledge about the world (one can be mistaken, but still autonomous), autonomy does require accurate self-knowledge, as the greater awareness we have of our actual beliefs, emotions and habits the more we can take an active, conscious roll in their development.

Dearden (1972) argues that educational for autonomy will include introducing the student to Hirst’s “forms of understanding”, including: scientific, mathematical,

historical, aesthetic, and ethical; self-knowledge; allowing for mistakes; an emphasis on individuals as responsible and self-determining and not the mere products of external forces; emphasize and value motivational independence; and helping children to express their feelings and opinions. Like the philosophers discussed thus far, Dearden's primary focus is on knowledge of various traditions of thought, and the ability to engage in critical appraisal of these views and choose that which one finds most satisfactory.

John White (2003) defines an autonomous person as "one who determines how he or she should live according to their own, unpressured, picture of a worthwhile life" (p. 147). He argues that such a conception does not imply a lack of social attachments and commitments, constant reflection on options, or overwhelming self-interestedness. White argues that the way an individual employs concepts is dependent upon public criteria, hence autonomy cannot mean that the individual is radically atomistic. He writes, "to a very great extent the thought I put in is influenced by the thinking of others, as expressed in the commonsense wisdom of my community and the insights of writers and philosophers" (White, 1982, p. 52).

White (1982) argues that education for autonomy includes: socio-economic conditions marked by adequate material provisions, health and educational services, good working conditions and leisure opportunities; a community ethos free of authoritarianism and an emphasis on autonomy; non-hierarchical, democratic organizational structures; modeling of autonomy by teachers; an enlarging of the content of education that is voluntary rather than compulsory; knowledge of what one's well-being consists in and knowledge of means and obstacles to well-being; understanding of basic goods; dispositions such as courage, patience, will-power and a

good temper which are needed to sustain one's personal projects. White gives only a partial and reluctant description of what education for autonomy will consist in insofar as he sees this largely as the domain of administrators, psychologists, and sociologists. As such, we once again have only a shallow account of what education for autonomy consists of, but it is once again marked by an emphasis on reasoning and choice, with a lesser emphasis on the personal (i.e., dispositions) and social conditions (i.e., economic and political) that facilitate one's ability to pursue a given view of well-being.

More recently, Harry Brighouse offers a particularly rationalist conception of personal autonomy. He writes: "Broadly speaking, the capacities involved in critical reflection help us to live autonomously...methods for evaluating the truth and falsehood, or relative probability, of various claims" (as quoted in Warnick, 2009, p. 100). For Brighouse, merely possessing these skills is enough to constitute autonomy, one need not necessarily have the inclination to use them. The key function of autonomy is that it allows one to "make and act on well-informed and well-thought out judgments about how to live their own lives" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 14). Although Brighouse's conception is rationalistic, he argues that it is not individualistic. He acknowledges that humans are "deeply social beings" – our individual interests are bound up with others and rational reflection occurs within specific social contexts.

Brighouse (2000) argues that education for autonomy includes: traditional content-based curriculum; an ethos that encourages "genuine and serious engagement" between children; development of critical thinking skills; ability to identify fallacious arguments; knowledge of various religious and non-religious moral views (partly achieved through pluralistic schools); ways religious and non-religious thinkers have

dealt with moral disagreement and the alteration of one's moral views. While Brighthouse briefly mentions other aspects of education for autonomy (e.g., safe and emotionally stable contexts), his focus is overwhelmingly on the development of reasoning skills and exposure of students to alternate moral views.

Dearden's (1972) comment about education for autonomy points towards an area within the scholarship on education for autonomy that is lacking to this day.

To pursue such an ideal as an education aim of course requires knowledge of the methods, curricula and patterns of organization which will best promote it....Certainly there is a wide field here for psychological and sociological commentary....We may expect some surprises. (p. 462)

There has not been an integrative account of education for autonomy. Rather, accounts have tended to focus on what are argued to be the most basic aspects of education for autonomy. This tends to result in an emphasis on exposure to various worldviews and traditions of thought, and the development of critical thinking skills, with a lesser consideration of caregiving and broader educational practices, the emotional or perceptual capacities, or community ethos. In this chapter I will address these various elements, and thus give a more integrative and detailed account of education for autonomy.

### **Autonomy in the Work of Eamonn Callan**

For reasons I will discuss below, I will employ Eamonn Callan's (1988, 1994, 1997) conception of autonomy for the purposes of this dissertation. Central to Callan's account of autonomy is the concept of "interests". Callan understands this in a technical sense in which an interest includes: depth of mental engagement; inclination to make



positive value judgments about the object of interest; a part in a “coherent pattern of mental activity, composed of intermittent feelings of interest and inclinations to act in ways which sustain those feelings” (Callan, 1988, p. 28); and robust commitment to the interest, characterized as a “strong evaluation” upon which other likings are judged. Finally, the possessor must see his or her interests as having intrinsic value. The concept of intrinsic value is philosophically complex (e.g., Vokey, 1999) and Callan does not provide a detailed discussion of the nature or importance of intrinsic value. However, if we are to view interests as those which are somehow lying at the foundation of our motivational structure, then it would seem that as we dig down to that foundation we will ultimately find values that do not rest upon any deeper values, but upon which all others rest. Interests are particularly important in that they are definitive of who we are in that the meaning of our lives largely depends upon them. Imagine what it would be like to lose all your interests. You would no longer be the same person, except in superficial respects, because your interests give your life a sense of significant continuity. (Callan, 1988, p. 30)

Reason enters the picture through how interests are shaped, the way they influence decisions and conduct, and the interaction of interests with other propensities; all of these are subject to the influence of reason. Callan applies two general criteria that autonomy-promoting reason must meet. First, reasoning must be guided by realism – or the “controlling of the self in that “spirit of truthfulness”” (p. 30). Without realism we are prone to self-deception which is

just a way of losing control of one's life....The individual who deceives herself about her interests or her natural affinities, for example, is surrendering to a mental tendency which, by its nature, is largely unavailable to conscious control, and the frequency with which one surrenders to it will weaken the capacity to resist in the future. (p. 37)

Michael Hand (2006) has critiqued Callan's inclusion of realism as part of autonomy. Hand argues that the person free to lose himself in fantasy is actually more autonomous; such a person's beliefs are not bound by evidence and argument. This objection might at first glance seem to have merit. If a large part of autonomy is about choosing to pursue that life which seems best to oneself, could not one see a life of fantasy to be best? For example, might the autonomous person come to see reality as a harsh and cruel place, and choose instead to live in a fantasy which paints reality in a kinder light? The problem with Hand's critique is that it does not address Callan's actual argument for realism: that surrendering oneself to fantasy and self-deception undermines one's capacity for conscious control. First, self-deception is particularly vicious insofar as the habit of self-deception can spread to the acknowledgment of the fact that one is self-deceiving in the first place. That is, one will self-deceive about one's state of self-deception. Thus, even if one comes to wish to pursue realism, the habit of self-deception might hinder one's ability to do so. Secondly, self-deception undermines one's ability to recognize whether or not a form of life is satisfactory or not. To self-deceive one must ignore the very evidence and argument that lies at the basis of claims regarding the satisfactory or unsatisfactory state of a form of life. Finally, self-deception deteriorates one's ability to skillfully pursue one's chosen form of life. To ignore facts

about the self, the world, and others is to rob oneself of the ability to skillfully act in pursuing that life which one sees as best. One must acknowledge the reality of an unsatisfactory state, the reality of whatever obstacles might stand in the way of change, and the resources needed to move forward on the problem.

The second key concept linking interests and autonomy via reasoning is independence of mind. The necessity of independence of mind for autonomy becomes apparent once we acknowledge what Callan calls “social desire”, or the strong desire to elicit “from others favorable attitudes and feelings and avoid the unfavorable ones” (p. 38). Given this desire, autonomy implies that such social desire is controlled so as not to override the pursuit of one’s interests. Both through negatively influencing reflective processes and through decouple one’s immediate motivational structure from one’s guiding interests.

The above description of autonomy was taken from Callan (1988). Callan (1997) elaborates upon this understanding of autonomy, which is presupposed in his notion of political virtue. Here, autonomy requires “that we be capable of asking questions about the value of any particular end with which we currently identify and able to give a thoughtful answer”, and that we are able to “reject ends currently constitutive of identity should we come to see them as worthless” (p. 54). Further on he argues that

I am autonomous to the degree that I have developed powers of practical reason, a disposition to value those powers and use them in giving shape and direction to my own life, and a corresponding resistance to impulses or social pressures that might subvert wise self-direction. (p. 148)

It is clear from Callan's work that he sees autonomy as addressing both ends and means. We should be able to reject "ends...we come to see as worthless", and involves "powers of practical reason", which, although not necessarily synonymous with instrumental reasoning, surely includes reasoning about means. The claim that autonomy includes the ability revise ends that are partially constitutive of identity is one that bears expansion. Callan (1994) stresses that his conception of autonomy differs from "reflective autonomy" in which the primary focus is "disengaged assessment of reasons". Rather, the self is constituted by substantive attachments, and one's reasoning is "harnessed" to these attachments. Callan (1994) distinguishes between revocable and irrevocable attachments. Revocable attachments are those that, although partly constitutive of my identity, I can conceive of altering such attachments if conditions demand it. Irrevocable attachments, on the other hand, are those attachments that I can never imagine altering or abandoning. Revocable commitments can be altered through our reflective powers, but this process is not undertaken from a "view from nowhere", but rather in light of other commitments that are constitutive of our identity. In this way the self is "revocably encumbered". With regards to irrevocable commitments, Callan argues that, while certain commitments will seem to us irrevocable, we must not forget our fallibility, and remain open to the fact that some day we might come to view what were once seen as irrevocable attachments as problematic. In this way irrevocable attachments are never put wholly outside the realm of critical reflection in light of other attachments.

Finally, Callan understands autonomy to include certain dispositions that “pervasively affect our lives”, rather than mere skills (e.g., critical thinking). Autonomy includes not only a set of skills, but the habits and dispositions that support the regular use of such skills. As such, education for autonomy “is an alteration of character rather than a mere expansion to a repertoire of capacities” (p. 227).

### **Advantages of Callan’s Account of Autonomy**

There are a number of advantages to Callan’s approach to autonomy for the purposes of this dissertation. With regards to the psychological components, it explicitly acknowledges both the intellectual and motivational aspects of autonomy. Much of the literature on education for autonomy focuses on the importance of reasoning. However, we would not think of someone as fully autonomous if they lacked the ability to establish coherence between their rational processes and their motivational structure. For example, a drug addict might explore and endorse all the reasons not to use drugs, yet still be powerless to stop using one in the face of strong desire for the substance. It would be odd to claim that such a person is autonomous in the same way as someone who is more able to effectively link motivation and avowed interests. Callan’s explicit acknowledgement of the motivational aspect helps to keep the complexity of autonomy at the forefront of our attention, and protects against an easy but misguided equating of autonomy with merely intellectual processes.

The second advantage of Callan’s conception of autonomy lies in his conception of the autonomous self. Communitarians have criticized the classical liberal account of autonomy insofar as it is said to presuppose an individual self as prior to the social (e.g.,

Sandel, 1982; Taylor, 1985). Emphasis on autonomous choice is said to set up a consumerist notion of selfhood in which one can freely choose social commitments. In contrast, communitarians argue that the self is inherently encumbered with the social commitments in which one is embedded and which construct the self. In response, some have argued that interpreting liberal accounts of autonomy as implying a completely unencumbered and asocial self is mistaken (e.g., Callan, 1997; White, 2003). Callan (1997) argues, and I think rightly so, that autonomy

does not demand that we can detach ourselves from all our ends. The requirement is only that we be capable of asking about the value of any particular end with which we currently identify and able to give a thoughtful answer to what we ask. (p. 54)

The autonomous self is one that can rationally reflect on and revise commitments in a piecemeal way by critiquing some commitments in light of others. This is a much more realistic account of the self than a radically asocial conception of the self, on the one hand, or a self that is whole at the mercy of social influence and incapable of cultural self-critique and revision of fundamental interests, on the other.

Throughout my description of Callan's work is a lack of specificity about a theory of rationality. Callan uses phrases such as "wise self-direction", "powers of practical reasoning", "good reasons" and "thoughtful answers", but does not offer a theory of rationality that describes just what these phrases specifically mean. Rather than a failing, I hold that this lack of specificity is a strength in pluralist liberal democratic contexts, and holds to the spirit of the call for autonomy. A conception of autonomy should not presuppose a theory of rationality, rather such questions are themselves left

open, to be subjects of reflection and debate. To presuppose a theory of rationality would be to unduly limit what is seen as potentially acceptable belief content of an autonomous individual. In this sense, the call for autonomy is a general call for reflective powers guided by realism and independent mindedness, and the motivation and tendency to employ such powers. The very question: “What constitutes a *good* reason?” stands open for debate. This does not mean that this question is addressed from a “view from nowhere”, but rather that it is explored systematically from various perspectives. How have various traditions answered this question? On what grounds do their answers rest? And what methods were employed to reach those answers? While this level of generality leaves this conception of autonomy theoretically adrift in regards to rationality, it simultaneously holds to the spirit of the call for autonomy as a call for a space in which to make inquiries and draw conclusions on these important questions.

### **Types of Research on Autonomy Development**

In attempting to elucidate the psychological and social conditions and practices that facilitate autonomy development one might turn to the substantial body of literature on self-determination theory (SDT). However, autonomy as understood in self-determination theory differs from the conception of autonomy espoused here. Defining autonomy from the SDT perspective, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci (2004) state “To the degree that one’s behavior is organized in accord with abiding values and interests, rather than being controlled or entrained by forces alien to them, it is experienced as autonomous” (p. 450). In short, SDT investigates *motivational* autonomy (Chirkov, 2011a). To see how this differs from the account of autonomy used

here imagine someone whose behaviour accords with his or her interests and values, but whose interests and values are merely the product of early indoctrination. By SDT's conception of autonomy, this person would be autonomous insofar as he or she experiences behaviour as according with his or her interests. However, Callan's conception of autonomy requires that one is able to give reasons (guided by realism and independence of mind) for the interests one holds – a task the indoctrinated would have a difficult time undertaking. Thus, this person is not autonomous by the conception of autonomy employed in this dissertation.

The motivational autonomy researched by SDT is not the only conception of autonomy which stands as the focus of scientific research. Valery Chirkov's (2011a) definition of psychological autonomy comes much closer to autonomy espoused by Callan.

First, it is the ability of a person to be aware of and reflect on his or her own thoughts, desires, urges, motives, and emotions, to understand their origins, mechanisms, and consequences, and then through rational decisions, to either endorse and follow them, or to postpone, or to reject. Second, it is the capacity of an individual to be aware of and reflect on the different social and cultural constraints, pressures, and forces.... Third, autonomous persons establish in a self-determined fashion their own life goals, criteria for their happy and good lives, and the moral standards, which they rationally decide to pursue.... These goals and rules are created based on the individuals' awareness of their needs and capacities, by taking into consideration the needs and goals of other people as well as the necessities and demands of



communities....they are able to imagine and infer other people's desires, goals and intentions and use this understanding of other people's minds to make rational decisions of how to deal with these people and how to proceed with their own course of actions....succinctly, psychological autonomy can be characterized by three conditions: mindfulness, reflection, and rational choice. (p. 611)

While Chirkov's description of autonomy touches upon many of the elements that are commonly discussed in relation to autonomy in philosophy of education, its complexity is one reason why there is a lack of scientific research on the developmental conditions of this form of autonomy. Still, drawing on neurological and cognitive sciences, Chirkov offers some insight into the nature of autonomy and the conditions that facilitate its development, and this work will be drawn upon in the following pages.

In addition to scientific studies on the development of autonomy, there are ongoing debates within the philosophy of education on the conditions that facilitate autonomy development. There are limitations to this approach as questions regarding the development of autonomy are primarily empirical, rather than philosophical questions. Nonetheless, philosophical work in this field has provided important insights – particularly in regards to the relation between individual and the social in regards to identity – and I will draw upon this literature as needed.

## **Education for Autonomy**

### **Identity**

In Callan's view, it is our interests that give shape and direction to one's identity. Working from a feminist perspective, Marilyn Friedman (2003) offers a similar

interest/identity-based approach to autonomy that has greater specificity and can help focus the following developmental considerations. First, Friedman identifies two conceptions of identity. Perspective identity is based in a person's viewpoint, their deeper wants, desires and cares. In contrast, trait-based identity is based in "identifiable human kinds", such as gender, race and ethnicity. I hold with Friedman that it is perspective identity that is important for autonomy. "Living autonomously is a matter of behaving or living according with what matters to someone, not of living in accord with characteristics of hers or categories applied to her that she does not particularly care about" (p. 11).

Secondly, Friedman stresses that, for one to be autonomous, one's identity must be sufficiently stable in order to make substantial enquiries into how one should formulate one's will, and carry out projects based on those enquires.

Her perspective must be relatively stable and enduring across a range of situations and a stretch of time, although it may certainly undergo change...When someone acts from such a relatively stable, enduring (though revisable over time) orientation of concerns that she tends to carry from one situation to the next...a person is self-determining, or autonomous. (p. 13)

Callan (1988) alludes to this issue as well: "meaningful lives may be shaped by rather untidy motivational structures. But there is a point at which looseness of structure becomes no structure at all, and with this loss there is also a collapse of meaning" (p. 33). One could never move forward on the process of will-formation if one's interests were in constant flux, making any coherent judgments and sustained projects

impossible. On the other hand, this identity cannot be stable to the point of rigidity, for autonomy presupposes that one's interests can be altered in a piecemeal-type way.

In addition to the stability/malleability of the identity, there is a question of the content of that identity. Delving into issues of content can be problematic in the context of autonomy, for one can quickly fall prey to reading into *autonomy* overly strict content. An education for autonomy that functions under such a conception of autonomy would unduly limit the range of ways of being that students might conceivably come to embrace. On the other hand, education for autonomy cannot leave the question the content of identity wholly unanswered, for one can imagine a person with an identity that is reasonably stable and malleable, yet who we would hesitate to label as autonomous. Someone might have a reasonably stable set of interests, but lack any desire to question and give a thoughtful answer to their value. This is not a case of rigidity or malleability, but rather apathy. What is lacking in the above case is what has been called *critical spirit* the literature on critical thinking. As discussed in Chapter Three, Siegel (1997) describes critical spirit as

a complex of dispositions, attitudes, habits of mind, and character traits....the disposition to seek reasons and evidence in making judgments and to evaluate such reasons carefully in accordance with relevant principles of reason assessment; attitudes, including a respect for the importance of reasoned judgment and for truth, and a rejection of partiality, arbitrariness, special pleading, wishful thinking, and other obstacles to the proper exercise of reason assessment and reasoned judgment; habits of mind consonant with these dispositions and attitudes, such as habits of

reason seeking and evaluating, of engaging in due consideration of principles of reason assessment, of subjecting proffered reasons to critical scrutiny, and of engaging in fairminded and non-self-interested consideration of such reasons and character traits consonant with all of this. (pp. 35-36)

Critical spirit counteracts the apathy described above, and helps ensure one's identity is autonomy-conducive.

Here, I use Siegel's two-part conception of critical reasoning as a safeguard against apathetic identity, which is contra autonomy-facilitating identity; below I will also argue that critical thinking plays an important role in maintaining realism. But, while critical thinking is often seen as an important part of education for autonomy, could this form of critical thinking, including critical spirit, be in tension with education for autonomy? If so, it would appear that education for autonomy holds a deep incoherence insofar as a central element, critical thinking, runs counter to its stated purpose. If I would be arguing for education for autonomy, the concern here would be moral and political. However, given that I am merely positing here that education for critical thinking is part of education for autonomy, the primary concern is epistemological bias. The concern is as follows: if education for autonomy is primarily about holding informed interests based in realism and independent-mindedness, and – as discussed in earlier – reason plays a key role in mediating these two characteristics, the question arises as to what degree the epistemological premises of education for critical thinking unduly influences one's "independent mindedness". The issue here is the theory of rationality employed. Does the account of critical reasoning employed here presuppose a specific theory of rationality? If so, does it not insinuate into the

supposedly “autonomous-facilitating” reasoning process these presuppositions? And does this unduly taint the reasoning process?

Siegel (1987, 1988) argues that his account of critical thinking presupposes only a very general epistemological “absolutism” under which a wide variety of epistemological positions can be subsumed. Siegel’s absolutism holds that knowledge claims can be critically assessed in non-question-begging ways by employing criteria that, although they act as guiding standards, are nonetheless fallible and open to criticism and alteration. Siegel argues for absolutism in the context of a critique of epistemological relativism. While I do not have the space to unpack the wide ranging debates on epistemological absolutism, relativism, and pluralism, the key point is Siegel’s claim that this absolutism provides only the most general framework within which to engage in reasoned debate – the claim that such debate can hold epistemological merit, and not simply be arbitrary assertion and counter assertion devoid of any non-question begging standards of evaluation – and this leaves open a variety of epistemological positions. Thus including critical spirit in the concept of autonomy leaves open a wide range of epistemological views that the autonomous person might come to embrace, and provides the possibility for the autonomous person to pursue realism and independent mindedness via critical reasoning processes that answer to epistemological standards, rather than mere assertions which, arguably, are less likely to ensure realism and independent mindedness due to the lack of standards for critical assessment.

**Development.** To summarize, an autonomy-conducive identity possesses a balance of stability/malleability, and is characterized by a critical spirit. The conditions

that facilitate the development of critical spirit have already been discussed in Chapter Three. I will here discuss the development of an appropriate degree of stability/malleability of identity.

***Stability.*** As has been stressed by communitarian critiques of liberal theory, an individual is “parasitic on society for...the way that she thinks of herself as an individual” (Mulhall & Swift, 1992, p. 15). Our interests are shaped by the particular community or communities in which we are immersed. As MacIntyre (1981) argues, “the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity” (p. 205). If identity is “parasitic” on the community in which it is immersed, then it is likely that a reasonably stable community would contribute to the development of a reasonably stable identity. The notion that a stable community facilitates the development of a stable identity is backed up by research in developmental psychology where there is relative consensus that “a stable, structured social environment in which role models are provided is an important resource for identity development (Koepke & Denissen, 2012, p. 74). There is further evidence for this in the field of moral development. The judgment-action gap that was observed in relation to Kohlberg’s research on moral development led psychologists to look for another variable that might account for moral action (Walker, 2004). Gus Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) posited identity as a key mediator of moral action. As described by Robert Atkins, Daniel Hart and Thomas Donnelly (2004), the development of moral identity occurs through social relationships and social institutions. A review of outcomes research (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005) on character education programs revealed the importance of such efforts to be coordinated throughout the child’s various social

spheres – school, home, and wider community – for effective outcomes. Such results make sense if we see moral identity as a key aspect of moral development, and identity development as being a product of a stable social environment in which role models exhibit coherent and consistent behaviour. Without such consistent and coherent social structure students will receive mixed messages that will likely destabilize identity development.

***Malleability.*** One of the reoccurring claims by those who advocate autonomy is that exposure to various worldviews is necessary for autonomy development (e.g., Brighouse, 2006; Warnick, 2012). Such exposure is not meant to socialize students into any one of these traditions or ways of being, nor is it meant to bias students against any of these traditions. Rather, exposure aims to introduce students to various traditions and ways of being as potentially meaningful forms of life students might pursue. While such exposure is not undertaken in order to proselytize, it is not completely directionless exposure, as it is marked by an emphasis on adherence to realism and independent mindedness as guided by critical thinking.

Catriona MacKenzie (2000) addresses the exposure issue specifically in regard to identity. She argues that one's cultural imaginary and the ability to "imagine oneself otherwise" is a key aspect of autonomy. First, "the repertoire on which we draw in our imaginary self-representations is mediated by the available cultural repertoire of images and representations" (p. 294). If so, and an autonomy-conducive identity is one that has a degree of malleability, then it stands to reason that an education for autonomy would provide a substantially wide "cultural repertoire of images and representations" in order to ensure the self has an array of options that such

malleability requires. MacKenzie argues that a curtailed cultural point of view serves to “narrow the range of repertoires on which we can draw in our imaginative projects and so to curtail our imaginative exploration of alternative possibilities of action, emotion, belief, and desire” (p. 144). An overly constrained cultural imaginary results in an overly constrained self-imaginary, and thus an overly rigid identity. Thus, exposure to other points of view is a key method through which we introduce malleability into identity.

Not all scholars believe that exposure to alternative traditions is a necessary component of education for autonomy (e.g., Burt, 2003; MacMullen, 2004; Resnick, 2006). For example, Shelly Burt (2003) observes that debates and alternative interpretations exist within any given tradition, and these constitute a sufficient basis for independent, non-subordinate thinking that she equates with autonomy. But, such intra-tradition diversity fails to offer radically different alternatives to the fundamental ends of the tradition, thus hindering the potential for criticism of those ends. Responding to this issue more generally, Warnick (2012) observes, “not all questions are asked within all traditions. I suspect that no one tradition has all the tools (or internal tensions) required to formulate all the important ethical questions” (p. 421).

Burt further claims that, within comprehensive education, children are often exposed to alternate conceptions as means for demonstrating how those alternatives are mistaken. However, I agree with Warnick (2012) that these forms of exposure to difference are insufficient for autonomy as it is conceived here: “Teaching about a ‘false doctrine’ with the intent of discrediting it gives no reason for students to engage with



differences deeply or imaginatively, to contemplate competing ideas in their strongest forms” (p. 421).

For the reasons reviewed above, I hold that exposure to alternative worldviews is an important part of developing a properly malleable identity. However, important questions remain: at what age do students need to be exposed to alternate traditions, how many and which traditions, and to what depth?

When should exposure take place? Ian MacMullen (2004) argues that the importance of early immersion into a context of cultural coherence provides a compelling reason to support religious elementary education that complements the religious and moral message the student receives at home. More specifically, he argues that students from devoutly religious families should not be methodically exposed to difference during the elementary years. While the precise benefits and drawbacks of an elementary education that minimizes exposure to diversity are open questions, surely exposure reasonably early in a child’s education is an important part of autonomy development. However, it would be difficult to argue that exposure at the elementary level is *necessary* for autonomy. Such a claim would ignore the fact that many people who have been strictly raised in a given tradition often do, at a later date, engage in cultural self-criticism and substantially revise their interests. Given this, it seems likely that exposure in post-elementary education would provide sufficient grounds for the development of autonomy. However, as was shown in Chapter Three, exposure to difference contributes to the development of other core capacities that are important parts of education (e.g., self-awareness, imagination, empathy). These other

developmental functions of exposure might problematize the argument for a strictly uniform culture during the elementary school years.

Which traditions should children be exposed to? While these questions must be responsive to context (intellectual and emotional characteristics of students, resources teachers and administrators, pressing current events, etcetera), a few general comments can be made. First, assuming that there is insufficient time within the school year to address the myriad traditions that have existed, if education is directed at the elements of the human condition that are particularly relevant for a given place and time (as discussed in Chapter Two), then it seems reasonable that addressing those traditions that have the greatest implications for a given moment in history be addressed. It is arguable that knowledge of an esoteric and short lived ancient Greek cult is less important for 21<sup>st</sup> century north American students than knowledge of, for example, contemporary forms of Islam and Christianity, or knowledge of traditions that have particularly acute critiques particularly pressing issues of today (e.g., environmental degradation or consumerist culture). The main point here is that the traditions that should be emphasized are those that have potentially the greatest impact in raising students' understanding of their current socio-historical situation, as well as those traditions that might offer insights into how to move forward on contemporary problems.

To what depth should such exposure delve? It is reasonable to suppose that full appreciation and understanding of a tradition cannot be attained without deep immersion into the language and practices of that tradition. Education for autonomy is not meant to provide such deep immersion into multiple traditions. This is both

antithetical to the education for autonomy, as well as impractical. Rather, education for autonomy is meant to merely make students aware of the existence of various traditions, and provide them with the basic abilities necessary (as described in this chapter) to make further inquiries into these traditions if they so choose. Depth is limited to intellectual acquaintance with the beliefs, practices, and history of various traditions. While students may observe a tradition's practices, either on video or in person, they are not given firsthand, participatory experience with traditions due to the widespread separation of church and state laws in many western countries.

To summarize, it stands to reason that exposure to difference facilitates the development of a malleable identity. Exposing students to alternate ways of life in a manner that acknowledges them as potentially legitimate courses they may pursue introduces and emphasizes the very possibility of being otherwise. Such exposure to difference reveals students' interests as contingent facets of identity that are potentially amenable to alteration, provides one with a range of options of interests, as well as prompting students to imagine themselves otherwise. While the range and depth of exposure will vary given specific contexts, it seems that students should be exposed to those traditions that are particularly important for expanding and deepening their awareness of their socio-historical context, as well as those traditions which speak particularly to the unique problems of the day.

The above discussion reveals an inherent tension in the development of autonomy-conducive identity. This tension consists in being raised in a reasonably stable set of norms and beliefs – the function of which is to imbue upon the student a reasonably stable identity – while also engaging in practices (i.e., exposure to

difference) that, to a certain degree, threaten to destabilize one's identity in order to ensure that the initial stability does not become rigidity. In this sense education for autonomy includes finding the proper balance between immersing a child in a given tradition, and exposing that child to alternative traditions and ways of being. As will be seen below, the theme of balance continually reoccurs in this analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality.

### **Self-Regulation**

While the autonomous person's ends are those for which the individual can give reasons that are guided by realism and independence of mind, in order to effectively pursue such ends one must be able capable of influencing what Callan (1988) calls one's "motivational structure". One must be able to harness one's motivations to the ends to which one ascribes. This approach holds some intuitive appeal. As the above addict example of the drug addict suggests, we would hesitate to call someone autonomous if they lacked control over their motivational structure and were at the mercy of the incidental ebbs and flows of thought, emotion, and habit.

Research on social emotional learning (SEL) can shed some light on the development conditions of this aspect of autonomy (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; CASEL, 2013a). SEL "is the process of acquiring the competencies to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively" (Schonert-Reichl, 2007). SEL encompasses five general competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2013a). While this wide-ranging agenda and the degree to which existing programs

effectively promote these ends has fallen under some critique (e.g., Carr, 2002b; Hoffman, 2009; Maxwell & DesRoches, 2010; Noddings, 2006), there is evidence that the practices I will cite under the banner of SEL contribute to the development of self-regulation and the related concepts of emotional regulation and emotional intelligence (see CASEL, 2012 for review). As such, this research can inform our understanding of education for autonomy given the concept of self-regulation included in autonomy.

Before reviewing the developmental conditions of self-regulation, some conceptual clarification is in order with regards to self-regulation, emotion regulation, and emotional intelligence. The complexity of these concepts results in somewhat of a conceptual quagmire in the literature. Self-regulation is understood as “control, direction, and correction of one’s own actions in the process of moving toward or away from various goals” (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003, p. 133). This includes “ability to manage one’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in the service of goals” (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). This understanding of self-regulation is in line with the kind of self-regulation that is necessary for autonomy, insofar as it is the ability to effectively pursue one’s interests via a degree of control over multiple processes (e.g., thoughts, emotions and behaviours). Given the above understanding of self-regulation, it seems to be a broader concept than emotion regulation, which refers to the “process of initiating, maintaining, modulating, or changing the occurrence, intensity, or duration of internal feeling states and emotion-related physiological processes” (Eisenberg & Zhou, 2000, p. 167). Although self-regulation would surely include emotional regulation, it is broader insofar as it also includes the regulation of thoughts and behaviours, not merely emotions. Similarly, emotional intelligence is understood as a complex

phenomenon consisting of knowing one's emotions as they happen, managing emotions (i.e., emotion regulation), motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others (empathy), and "handling relationships" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; for review, see Goleman, 2006). Given the above, emotional regulation is a sub-skill within emotional intelligence. Furthermore, the concepts of emotional intelligence and self-regulation seem to overlap insofar as both include emotion regulation. However, emotional intelligence also includes elements that seem outside the purview of self-regulation, such as recognizing emotions in others and "handling relationships" understood as "in large part, skill in managing emotions in others" (Goleman, 1994, p. 43). Furthermore, while "motivating oneself" (an element of emotional intelligence) would seem to be closer to the above description of self-regulation, Goleman (1994) describes "motivating oneself" as "marshaling emotions in the service of a goal" and "emotional self-control". So "motivating oneself" here seems to be a form of emotional regulation directed at a goal, and thus a more limited concept that is one aspect of self-regulation, which also includes the regulation of thoughts and behaviours.

**Development.** The burgeoning field of social-emotional learning offers a plethora of programs and practices that include in their agenda the development of emotional and self-regulation (see CASEL 2012 for review). Nicholas Yoder (2014) reviewed the SEL "SElect" programs (evidence-based SEL programs that meet a set of criteria established by CASEL) and identified ten common teaching practices that promote students' social-emotional competencies:

- Student-centered discipline: students are self-directive, they have a say in what happens in the classroom, they share in the development of classroom values, and

the classroom is run according to consistent and logical rules

- Teacher language: encouragement, stating what the student did and should do, focus on methods for self-monitoring and self-regulating
- Responsibility and choice: democratic classrooms, students have meaningful input on classroom values and activities
- Warmth and support: warmth and support from teachers and peers
- Cooperative learning: individual and collective accountability, students monitor group and individual progress
- Classroom discussions: teachers ask open ended questions, ask students to elaborate, focus on building upon one-another's thoughts
- Self-reflection and self-assessment: teachers ask students to assess their own work, encourage students to think how they can improve and meet goals, emphasize when and how to seek help and where to search for resources
- Balanced instruction: balance between active and direct instruction
- Academic press and expectations: implementation of meaningful and challenging work and academic expectations
- Competence building: teachers help develop social-emotional competencies by modeling, providing students the opportunity to practice these competencies, giving feedback, and coaching

As noted above, a wide variety of outcomes are claimed under the rubric of SEL, but the specific focus here is self-regulation and the related concepts of emotional regulation and emotional intelligence. Disentangling which of these SEL elements are most strongly related to what outcomes is outside the scope of this dissertation.

However, this very general review gives us some idea of the kinds of practices that promote self-regulation.

Outside of the classroom setting, Ross Thompson (2013) reviewed the literature on the influence of the family on the development of emotion and self-regulation. Evidence suggests that abuse, chronic neglect, and environmental stress can lead to emotional reactivity and inhibit self-regulation. In contrast, a stable and supportive atmosphere that exhibits high amounts of positive emotion contributes to the development of emotion regulation. There is also evidence that the way in which caregivers and teachers approach emotions influences the development of emotional regulation. “Emotional coaching” caregivers are attentive to their own and the child’s emotions, do not feel emotions should be stifled, validate the child’s feelings, and teach the child about emotions, expression, and coping. “Emotion dismissing” parents ignore or belittle emotions, believe that caregivers must subdue negative emotions and teach children that such emotions are unimportant. Evidence suggests that “emotional coaching” facilitates the development of emotional-regulation. Attachment security also promotes the development of emotional-regulation insofar as secure relationships promote interpersonal emotional sensitivity, as well as feelings of trust that facilitate conversations about delicate emotional issues. Finally, caregivers who assist children with managing emotions (e.g., soothing, directing attention, attempts to alter child’s interpretation of an emotional situation) facilitate the development of emotion regulation (Florez, 2011).

The resource-intensive nature of these familial contributions to the development of self-regulation demand that wider social structures and relationships provide ample



support for parents. Parents need sufficient social and economic support in order to dedicate sufficient time and resources to the kinds of caregiving practices and conditions that contribute to the development of self-regulation. This raises questions of wider distributive and social justice issues in relation to the development of these capacities that cannot be addressed here.

## **Realism**

Callan (1988) identifies realism as the tendency to conduct oneself in the spirit of truthfulness. This call for realism is motivated by a concern over self-delusion, rather than claiming truthfulness with others as a primary component of autonomy. While Callan observes the importance of self-knowledge and strength of will in maintaining realism, he does not go into detail on what facilitates realism. As always, the valuing and modeling of realism on the part of caregivers and teachers will likely promote its development. Beyond those general developmental tactics, I argue that the nine awareness-expanding capacities discussed in Chapter Three play an important role in maintaining realism. Self-delusion is more difficult to sustain when one is aware of counterevidence to the deluded state. For example, a lack of empathy will likely make it easier for a callous person to maintain the delusion that he or she is caring and compassionate, as the cues offered by others of the negative effects his or her actions are having are overlooked. Of course, what becomes salient in our awareness, and how we understand the content of awareness, is influenced by our interpretive framework. Nevertheless, while “your theories or ideas affect what you see...your observation skills should enable you to question your own theories” (Hogarth, 2001, pp. 229-230). In this way the development of our awareness-expanding capacities will facilitate awareness

of cues that can serve to correct self-delusion born out of our interpretive frameworks. This inclusion of the nine capacities in part of education for autonomy is to be expected. Even if education for autonomy did not demand the development of these capacities for the means of maintaining realism, given that my conception of education includes the development of these capacities, and the subject at hand is *education* for autonomy, education for autonomy necessarily would include these capacities. The precise nature of the relationship between education for autonomy and education more generally will be discussed below.

The relation of some of these capacities (e.g., critical thinking) to autonomy, have been discussed at length in philosophy of education, while others have been largely neglected (e.g., imagination, see Mackenzie, 2005). Including each of these capacities in relation to autonomy serves two functions. First, it ensures a more comprehensive account of the psychological aspects of education for autonomy. Secondly, a large body of developmental research has grown around most of these capacities. Incorporating this research into the conversation on education for autonomy will help problematize over simplistic accounts of education for autonomy by provide a more complete account of the conditions that contribute to autonomy development. Since I have already covered these capacities and their related developmental conditions in Chapter Three, I will not discuss them all here. Rather, the conditions cited in Table 1 should be seen as part and parcel of education for autonomy. However, given that my connecting empathy with autonomy will play an important role in my account of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, and given the lack of precedence for this connection within the literature on the subject (Slote [2004] being

one exception), I want to take a moment to make a more direct case for empathy's contribution to autonomy.

First, given that autonomy is a complex phenomenon consisting of multiple psychological conditions and capacities, one's status as autonomous will be a matter of degree (Meyers, 1992). In line with this, my claim is that empathy can contribute to one's level of autonomy, not that empathy is necessary to be autonomous to a degree. I suggest that empathy contributes to autonomy in four primary ways: it facilitates (a) adherence to realism, (b) inquiry into the moral aspects of various accounts of the good life, and (c) the ability to live according to one's particular conception of the good. Finally, (d) empathy's connection with pro-social behaviour facilitates developmental conditions that foster autonomy development. Below I will provide a few examples provide a few examples of each.

Like the other awareness-promoting capacities, empathy facilitates fidelity to realism. In general, people hold a strong motivation for positive self-evaluation (Greenwald, 1980; Higgins, 1987). This creates a risk of self-delusion about the degree to which we live up to our standards as a means of maintaining a positive self-evaluation (Dunning, Heath & Suls, 2004). Empathic sensitivity can act as a powerful avenue through which we can perceive cues about how our behaviour affects others, thus making self-delusion about the morality of our behaviour more difficult to sustain.

Inquiry into various accounts of the good life, especially its moral aspects, is not merely a rational endeavour. First, inquiry is shaped by what one notices and what is seen as having importance. As discussed in Chapter Three, a primary epistemic function of empathy is its salience effect: its ability to "make salient another's particular

emotions, concerns, reasons, interests, and considerations in such a way that they are relevant and important to the empathizer, so that she is motivated to respond to these concerns” (Oxley, 2011, p. 78). The empathic intellectual and affective experiences act as cues that direct one’s attention to those aspects of the other’s situation that may have otherwise been overlooked. For example, one might be drawn to the sense of community and many of the moral principles espoused by Catholicism. However, empathic engagement with the LGBT community might raise one’s awareness of problematic aspects of what might have thereto been seen as an attractive vision of the good life.

Empathy also contributes to one’s ability to pursue a given conception of the good life, particularly with regards to its moral aspect. As seen above, empathy’s salience effect can raise our awareness of the state and needs of the other (Oxley, 2011). This, in turn, can facilitate our ability to engage with others in a way consistent with our beliefs. Empathy also facilitates self-awareness, another important aspect of maintaining fidelity to our conception of the good life. As discussed above, part of mature empathic role-taking is the recognition of those aspects of the empathic experience that are mere projections of the self onto the other. Such recognition highlights aspects of ourselves that can then be judged in light of the standards involved in our conception of the good life. Finally, from our empathic position “in the shoes of the other” we can look back at ourselves through the eyes of the other. Again, this self-reflection through the standpoint of the other might reveal aspects of ourselves that are usually outside our habitual first-person field of vision.

Finally, as discussed in Chapter Three, the development of autonomy is facilitated by caring and warm contexts. There is evidence that empathy is a mediator of pro-sociality (Eisenberg, 2004). Thus empathic caregivers would be more likely to establish caring and warm contexts, thus promoting the development of autonomy (Slote, 2004).

I have outlined four primary ways in which empathy can facilitate autonomy. I have kept my reflections on the function of empathy brief, for they have been discussed in Chapter Three, and I will return to them in the next chapter. Can someone who lacks empathy be autonomous? Certainly. I do not want to claim that those who lack empathy (e.g., those diagnosed with autism) cannot be considered as autonomous. Rather, autonomy is a matter of degree, and empathy can enhance autonomy in the ways discussed above.

### **Independent Mindedness**

Independent mindedness is the second major aspect of Callan's account of autonomy. Independent mindedness is necessary for autonomy given that, in general, we possess a desire to arouse favorable judgments from others and avoid unfavorable ones. Autonomy will sometimes require us to act in ways that will result in unfavorable judgments from others. As such, we must be sufficiently independent of mind in order to not to be unduly influenced by such judgments.

**Development.** Given that independent mindedness is largely the ability to persist in one's convictions in the face of social counter-pressures, research on factors that contribute to the resistance of peer-pressure can provide some insight into the development of independent mindedness. Researching substance abuse in seventh and

eighth graders, Joseph Allen et al. (2012) provides evidence that two primary factors influence one's ability to resist peer pressure. First, a relatively weak family base in which children lack autonomy in relation to their parents (e.g., tended to quickly recant their position during arguments with parent, acquiescing to parents' position) and where not properly supported (e.g., lacked parental warmth, positivity, and valuing of adolescent) was found to undermine one's ability to resist peer pressure. Secondly, those who lacked social skills in the face of peer pressure were more susceptible to its influence. The ability to employ one's social skills at the moment of peer pressure helps to ensure one can deal skillfully with the situation so that one acts in accordance with one's deeper convictions. As such, it is likely that a strong and autonomy supportive family base, a warm and supportive environment, and social skills contribute to the development of independent mindedness.

Allen's work is supported by Chirkov (2011a, 2011b). Drawing upon cognitive and neurological sciences, Chirkov argues that autonomy promoting communities ideally embody trust, respect toward people's privacy and individuality, tolerance to difference, feelings of equality, and willingness to share resources, ideas, feelings, and thoughts; in short, Chirkov argues that autonomy promoting culture is democratic, libertarian, and egalitarian. These conditions provide the social context in which inquiry can freely flow, and where students feel properly supported to take the risk of offering views that might contradict the majority view or the view authority figures.

## **Summary**

Education for autonomy consists in developing the ability to inform our interests and motivational structure via a reasonably stable identity and in-line with

independent mindedness, and realism. This will include the development of self-regulation, as well as development of the nine awareness-promoting capacities (with their related developmental conditions) as a means for ensuring fidelity to realism.

With regard to social contexts, stability, safety and support are continually cited as important. Also, political structures that are more democratic, egalitarian and libertarian rather than authoritarian and hierarchical are stressed. Other important social contexts include: tolerance of ambiguity, lack of competitiveness and surveillance, wide opportunity for choice, an emphasis on intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation, valuing sensible risks, allowing mistakes, and valuing experiencing things for oneself.

Making general recommendations for educational practices is difficult, as such practices must be responsive to the particular socio-historical situation of the community, as well as the psychological state of the student. Still, the preceding discussions offered a few general recommendations. First, exposure to various traditions and lifestyles was seen to contribute to a number of autonomy-related capacities, including: autonomy-conducive identity, critical thinking, empathy, imagination, and self-awareness. Certain forms of contemplative practice were shown to be a potentially beneficial practice insofar as it contributes to the development of concentration and self-awareness. Relatedly, methods for developing social skills, as discussed in relation to social-emotional learning, was important for maintaining independent mindedness. Stressing cross-cultural similarity, practice in taking perspective of others (especially absent parties), and providing opportunity to experience a wide range of emotions were advocated as central methods for developing

empathy. Practicing questioning assumptions, defining/redefining problems, and idea generation was said to facilitate the development of imagination. Practice with those fluent in a given language who employ complex linguistic structures and who prompt the child to engage in conversation contributes to the development of linguistic abilities. Finally, help with emotion regulation (e.g., soothing, directing attention, help with interpreting emotional situations, and emotional coaching) was said to contribute to self-regulation.

Finally, caregiving environments and practices that contribute to the development of various autonomy-facilitating elements include: a strong family base (relationships with parents marked by autonomy and proper support), inductive disciplinary practices, discussions about emotions, shared positive emotions, emphasis on taking responsibility, elaborative parenting style, a sense of being cared for and secure attachments, and an avoidance of authoritarian/directive language. Again, these cohere with the earlier call for safe, supportive, democratic, egalitarian, and libertarian social contexts. The conditions and practices involved in education for autonomy are summarized in Table II below.

### **Education v. Education for Autonomy**

There is a tendency in the history of philosophy of education to effectively equate education with education for autonomy insofar as education for autonomy is seen as synonymous with the individualization that is sometimes seen as lying at the root of the socialization/education distinction (e.g., Biesta, 2010). The way I have formulated education and education for autonomy might seem to lend itself to equating these two. It is true that these two projects will be mutually reinforcing insofar as both



education and education for autonomy include the development of the nine awareness-promoting capacities. Nevertheless, education for autonomy constitutes something more specific than education alone. While education is about expanding awareness of aspects of the human condition that are relevant for one's psychological and socio-historical context, education for autonomy is about an individual's active involvement in his or her adoption of interests and will-formation guided by realism and independent mindedness. It is conceivable that one might undergo practices that expand awareness of aspects of the human condition (i.e., education), while not necessarily developing autonomy in any substantial way. In thinking about this distinction I am reminded of a conservative Catholic friend who, although he dedicates time to expanding his awareness of philosophical, social, and scientific issues, he nonetheless remains steadfastly dedicated to the idea that the *ultimate* arbiter of truth is the Catholic Church. This dedication is not born out of serious and sustained inquiry into the validity of the tradition, but rather an uncritical acceptance of the tradition based in his early inculcation into Catholic doctrine. We can see here that his pursuit of education can be differentiated from his status as autonomous. Insofar as he continually expands his awareness of various aspects of the human condition, he is involved in education. But, insofar as he has relinquished his role in the activity of pursuing interest adoption and the formation of his motivational structure on important ontological, epistemological, and moral issues in favor of uncritically following the dictates of the Catholic Church, he is non-autonomous or heteronomous. Lucas Swaine (2009) defines the heteronomous person as one who can "recognize canons for drawing inferences and assessing evidence, they have capacities to decide and act, and they

formulate and pursue projects in rational ways”, but do so strictly within their particular *nomos*, never critically engaging the presuppositions of that framework (p. 186). This seems an apt description of my Catholic friend. While he engages with and applies the tradition in sophisticated ways, he has never critically engaged the tradition itself. Rather, he has always assumed the Catholic framework in which he was raised. This is not to say that one might not be a Catholic and be considered autonomous. If one has critically explored the Catholic tradition in light of realism and independent mindedness, and came to adopt the tradition as one’s interpretive framework, one could be said to have autonomously come to accept the dictates of the tradition as authoritative.

To summarize the education versus education for autonomy distinction: while education is about awareness expansion of various aspects of the human condition, education for autonomy is awareness expansion of one aspect of the human condition in particular: our ability to actively engage in adoption of interests and construction of our motivational structure in accordance with realism and independence of mind.

### **Conclusion**

Previous accounts of education for autonomy have provided only a basic outline of some of its primary elements. While these accounts vary, they all primarily focus on exposure to multiple worldviews and the development of the reasoning abilities necessary for inquiry and informed choice among these views. These accounts repeatedly stress the need for psychological and sociological research to provide a more detailed account of what education for autonomy entails. I have attempted to provide just that with a review of the developmental literature on the psychological elements of

autonomy. I have based this work on Callan's account of autonomy, which I argued provides a realistic account of the self, and stresses important aspects of autonomy such as realism, independent-mindedness, and self-regulation. I have expanded upon Callan's account of autonomy by arguing that realism is facilitated by the excellent functioning of the nine awareness-promoting capacities. This allowed for greater specificity in outlining the elements of education for autonomy insofar as there has been substantial research on the practices and conditions that facilitate the development of the awareness-promoting capacities, which can now be understood as important aspects of education for autonomy. This integrative account will have implications for how we understand the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, which in turn may provide for more informed debates over these educational aims, issues that will be addressed in the final two chapters.

Table 2. Education for Autonomy

Elements of Autonomy	Developmental Conditions		
	<i>Social Context</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Caregiving Practices</i>
Autonomy Conducive Identity	Reasonably stable social context	Liberal education; Developing critical spirit (e.g., practicing critical thinking skills and developing related habits; Encouraging curiosity, objections & questions; Modeling & valuing of critical spirit)	
Realism (Nine Awareness-promoting Capacities)	See Table 1; Valuing of realism	See Table 1; Modeling of realism	See Table 1
Independent Mindedness	Democratic, egalitarian & libertarian contexts; Warm, caring environment	SEL (see below)	Strong family base (autonomy in parental relationship; proper support)
Self-regulation	Warm, safe, supportive & democratic environment; Tolerance of various emotions; Encouragement and valuing of emotional regulation skills; Lack of overly stressful situations	Student-centred discipline; Cooperative learning; Classroom discussion; Encouragement and guidance in self-assessment and self-reflection; Balanced between active and direct instruction; Establishing meaningful goals; Modeling and providing students with the opportunity to practice SEL competencies, and giving feedback and coaching on methods for developing these competencies	Secure attachments; Exhibit positive emotion; Attentiveness to one's own and child's emotions; Assist children with managing emotions (e.g., soothing, directing attention, exploring alternate interpretations of a situation)

## CHAPTER V

### EDUCATION FOR AUTONOMY & EDUCATION FOR MORALITY

The aim of this chapter is to assess the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality in light of the integrative account of education for autonomy I provided in Chapter Four. This project is three-fold. First, I will investigate to what degree the psychological aspects of autonomy and their related developmental conditions also facilitate or hinder education for morality. Second, I will investigate to what degree education for morality negatively or positively impacts personal autonomy. Finally, in the process of undertaking the above two investigations, important elements of the conceptual relationship between autonomy and morality will be addressed. The goal of this chapter is to elucidate the degree to which these two educational projects are in/compatible. The outcome of this analysis will be used to identify feasibility constraints that will be used to inform debates over these two educational projects.

A key issue in this and the following chapter will be how morality is conceptualized. As discussed in Chapter One, research in moral psychology has focused upon care/harm and fairness/cheating value sets that tend to be the focus in liberal interpretations of morality, rather than loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation value sets that conservatives tend to include in their conception of morality (Haidt, 2012). While I will later discuss the implications of this for my arguments, for now it should be noted that when I speak of morality I primarily mean care/harm and fairness/cheating values sets – which I will refer to as merely “care” and “fairness” for brevity’s sake.

## **Education for Autonomy & Morality**

This section addresses the question: Does education for autonomy promote or hinder moral development and functioning? I will base my investigation upon the conception of education for autonomy advanced in Chapter Four, and review literature in moral psychology and philosophy of education which speaks to how each of the psychological elements of autonomy and their related development conditions and practices relate to education for morality.

### **Autonomy Conducive Identity**

**Stability & Malleability.** The importance of moral identity for moral functioning is well documented and widely acknowledged in the field of moral psychology (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Are there moral implication for an autonomy-conducive identity that has struck a balance between stability and malleability? Are there moral implications of an overly stable (rigid) identity or an overly malleable identity?

**Moral Risks.** A malleable moral identity holds two fundamental risks. First, an overly malleable identity is an insufficient base for prolonged and coherent projects – in this case, moral projects (Narvaez, 2009). A degree of stability in one's moral identity is especially necessary with regard to moral projects given their difficulty and complexity. An overly malleable identity might be an insufficient source of moral motivation and action in such circumstances. Secondly, a malleable moral identity leaves open the danger that the basic moral interests that partially constitute identity can be later abandoned in favor of inhumane or cruel interests.

The natural response to this problem might be to aim for more stability in identity. While greater stability would certainly safeguard against the above danger, stability must not become rigidity. In his account of the “burdens of judgment”, John Rawls (2001) described the difficulty of coming to definitive answers on complex moral issues. If we concede the point by acknowledging our fallibility as moral beings, then a rigid identity seems inherently problematic. The burdens of judgment make it so we must always hold out the possibility that we might come to find our interests as morally problematic (Callan, 1994). This would demand a change of fundamental interests, and thus a shift in our identity. There is also scientific evidence that suggests rigidity more generally defined can have a negative impact on morality. For example, rigid socialization into sex roles can contribute to personality disorders that are related to a range of morally problematic outcomes (Pantony & Caplan, 1991). From a neo-Kohlbergian perspective, rigid thinking is associated with lower level conventional moral thinking in which one refers to moral rules in moral decision reasoning, rather than a more inclusive consideration of principle’s and a broader range of perspectives, as well as moral insight (Narvaez, 2003). Finally, rigid identities are widely acknowledged as important contributing factors in international conflicts (Burke, 2007).

***Moral Benefits.*** The above reflections point towards the morally problematic status of overly malleable or overly stable identity. In contrast, a reasonably stable and reasonably malleable identity allows for a level of stability capable of supporting prolonged moral projects in what are often complex and adverse conditions.

Malleability, on the other hand, allows for moral revision should it be necessary, as well

as a greater openness to alternative viewpoints that can lead to moral insight and effective moral action. Malleability and stability have their risks, but the above philosophical and scientific reflections indicate that a reasonable balance must be struck between these two best promotes a moral life.

**Critical spirit.** While the form of autonomy conducive identity is one of balance between stability and malleability, its content is characterized by critical spirit. Recall, Siegel (1997) describes critical spirit as

a complex of dispositions, attitudes, habits of mind, and character traits....the disposition to seek reasons and evidence in making judgments and to evaluate such reasons carefully in accordance with relevant principles of reason assessment; attitudes, including a respect for the importance of reasoned judgment and for truth, and a rejection of partiality, arbitrariness, special pleading, wishful thinking, and other obstacles to the proper exercise of reason assessment and reasoned judgment; habits of mind consonant with these dispositions and attitudes, such as habits of reason seeking and evaluating, of engaging in due consideration of principles of reason assessment, of subjecting proffered reasons to critical scrutiny, and of engaging in fairminded and non-self-interested consideration of such reasons and character traits consonant with all of this. People who possess the critical spirit *value* good reasoning, and are disposed to believe, judge and act on its basis. (pp. 35-36)

What risks or benefits does critical spirit raise for the ability to pursue a moral life?



**Benefit.** Notwithstanding the different roles for reason assessment in various theories of moral philosophy and psychology, in general, if a mature moral life includes the ability to assess reasons for various moral positions, then surely critical spirit would facilitate this process. Secondly, the moral life is not lived in isolation, but rather in community, and is informed by the debates which occur both within and between different moral traditions (MacIntyre, 1988; Vokey, 2001). Such debates are fundamentally processes of reason giving and assessment. Critical spirit is an important part of engaging with various moral traditions. Even authoritarian traditions that hold their foundational presuppositions to be beyond the purview of rational inquiry and critique must still acknowledge the importance of reason assessment in one's day-to-day attempts to live according to the tradition (Talisie, 2009).

**Risk.** While critical spirit seems to be an important part of morality, critical spirit also poses a number of potential risks. First, moral functioning demands commitment. At some point in time criticality must be suspended, if even tentatively, and commitment to a specific moral stance embraced (Aviram, 1995). The questioning and uncertainty that is part and parcel of critical spirit must not hinder moral action. Secondly, moral inquiry is complex and easy answers are rarely, if ever, found. This complexity raises the likelihood that moral inquiry guided and motivated by critical spirit might very well lead to dead ends, with the individual not being able to conclude that any one particular view is superior. This result might, although by no means necessarily will, lead to an adoption of moral relativism, a specter that has been blamed for moral degradation in modern society (Hunter, 2000). Relatedly, there is a risk of alienation from the fundamental interests that lie at heart of our identity. Moral

exemplars and moral heroes often report little or no deliberation about their heroic moral act. Rather, such acts are born out of moral identity and intuitions (Callan, 1994). Arguably, critical reflection on this identity and intuition might alienate the individual from this moral orientation.

The degree to which the above risks make critical spirit morally problematic are debatable. The point is only that there are definite concerns about its potentially negative influence. However, the critical spirit is clearly an important part of leading a moral life, and as such cannot be ignored or discouraged. As with stability and malleability, balance is what is needed in relation to critical spirit. One must be appropriately critical in order to engage in moral issues rigorously and coherently, but this critical spirit must not be unbridled. Rather, it must function in such a way as to not undermine and immobilize moral action and commitment.

### **Independent Mindedness**

**Benefits.** Callan's (1988) justification for including independent mindedness as part of autonomy highlights a benefit of independent mindedness for morality. Namely, independent mindedness is necessary if we are to hold to our convictions in the face of social counter-pressures. Furthermore, independent mindedness facilitates one's ability critically assess one's own culture. This ability is vital to ensuring that one does not blindly reproduce potentially immoral and unjust aspects of one's culture.

**Risks.** Being independent minded to the point of being closed minded or stubbornly set in one's ways, to the exclusion of taking seriously other points of view, could be a great detriment to living morally. Others offer helpful outside perspectives that can serve as a check and balance on our potentially immoral beliefs and

behaviours. Furthermore, there are times where deferring to others who are in a better position to judge might be a reasonable method of promoting morality. For example, following the guidance of moral exemplars when one's self-guided attempts at moral development have failed.

As with identity, independent mindedness must be approached with an eye towards balance between stubbornness and over-susceptibility to popular opinion if it is to be an asset to moral functioning.

## **Realism**

Realism is the tendency and inclination to conduct oneself in the spirit of truthfulness, to not fall prey to self-delusion and other forms of bias. Realism itself intuitively plays a vital role in moral functioning. If morality is fundamentally about how one ought to live, then self-delusion regarding both moral standards and the degree to which one is meeting those standards is contrary to moral functioning (Kirsch, 2002). However, in Chapter Three I argued that the nine awareness-promoting capacities play a central role in promoting fidelity to realism, and as such their development will be an important part of education for autonomy. What is the relation of these nine capacities to moral development and functioning? Do these nine capacities and their related developmental conditions and practices also promote or hinder education for morality?

**The Nine Awareness-Promoting Capacities.** Eight out of the nine awareness-promoting capacities are what I will call *morally neutral*. By morally neutral I mean that they do not inherently promote morality. However, I will argue below that many of the conditions and practices that best promote the development of these neutral capacities

contribute to the likelihood that they will be employed morally. In contrast to the morally neutral capacities, empathy stands out as morally loaded capacity in that, while there are additional antecedents that mediate the relationship between empathy and pro-social motivation and behaviour, there is evidence that empathy increases the likelihood of pro-social motivation and behaviour.

**The Neutral Capacities.** The neutral capacities include critical thinking, intuition, memory, concentration, imagination, language, self-awareness, and the five senses. One might attempt to argue from a Kantian/Kohlbergian perspective that critical thinking necessarily promotes morality insofar as critical thinking naturally moves towards ever more universal and logically coherent moral positions, which is the very process of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981). However, critical thinking can also be used to engage in merely instrumental reasoning, a process devoid of inquiry about the moral status of the ends that guide it (Wallace, 2008). The remaining seven capacities are obviously morally neutral. One can have racist intuitions, use memory for vicious ends, use language to manipulate, use self-awareness to self-regulate during immoral tasks, and employ the five-senses to unjustly pry into the lives of others. More examples could be given, but the point should be clear, in and of themselves, these capacities do not inherently contribute to morality.

While these eight capacities do not inherently promote morality, they do have an important place in moral development and functioning. As discussed above, from the cognitive-developmentalists perspective, critical thinking is a primary activity associated with moral development. More generally, critical thinking is important for assessing moral reasons (Fasko, 1994). While there are substantial differences in how

intuition has been conceptualized in philosophical and psychological thought, the role of intuition in morality has been discussed since the ancient Greeks (Noddings, 1984), and has been widely acknowledged in contemporary moral psychology as a central aspect of moral functioning (Narvaez, 2008a). Autobiographical memory contributes to our identity, and in particular moral identity (Fivush, 2011), while childhood memories tend to arouse feelings of moral purity that influence moral behaviour (Gino & Desai, 2012). Concentration is important for morality insofar as our ability to maintain attention facilitates our ability to engage deeply with complex moral situation. There is also evidence that attention disorders have negative impact on moral socialization and moral judgment (Groman & Barzam, 2014). Moral imagination is a key factor in moral functioning (Pardales, 2002; Narvaez & Mrkva, 2014). Language is a primary medium through which moral traditions are sustained and evolve (MacIntyre, 1981), and conversations are a source of education for morality (Noddings, 1994). Self-awareness is a central aspect of self- and emotion regulation and self-assessment, all of which are important for moral functioning and development (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2004; Elias, Parker, Kash, Weissberg, & O'Brian, 2008). Finally, the five-senses are an important aspect of moral perception. While there are ongoing debates about whether such perception is has intrinsic moral worth (e.g., Murdoch, 1970) or only valuable insofar as it allows one to effectively apply moral principles (Blum, 1986). I will not get into the ethical status of moral perception here. While much could be said about the role of perception in moral functioning, I merely want to make the limited claim that the role of the five-senses play an important role in mediating empathy. While this is only the

briefest overview of a few of the positive moral functions these capacities have, it provides some idea of their importance for morality.

**Empathy: The Moral Capacity.** I have argued that although the eight neutral capacities play a role in moral functioning, they can also be used in morally dubious ways, and do not necessarily promote morality. In contrast, there is evidence that empathy has an inherently moral function. While different philosophical and psychology theories assign a different role to empathy, its place in morality is widely recognized (Oxley, 2011), the most widely regarded I will briefly review.

***Awareness-promoting function.*** In Chapter Three I outlined empathy's awareness-promoting functions, and will not rehash them here. Rather, I merely want to point out that empathy's ability to raise awareness of others and oneself and its tendency to motivate moral deliberation serves morally important information gathering functions from a number of theoretical perspectives (Morrell, 2007; Oxley, 2011). Snow (2000) argues that empathy falls within the scope of Aristotle's conception of *aesthesis*, the perceptive capacities that allow us to identify the particulars of a situation. Such perception is a vital element of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, which figures centrally in Aristotle's ethics. Relatedly, it has been suggested that empathy plays a key role in moral intuition and expertise (Vokey & Kerr, 2011). The other-oriented awareness-promoting function of empathy can be used to raise appreciation for and knowledge of the other's inner state, and thus be facilitates its consideration in moral deliberation. Modern sentimentalist ethical theories see empathy as the central human capacity from which ethical knowledge springs (i.e. David Hume, Adam Smith, Michael Slote). On the other hand, utilitarian and

deontological approaches posit a merely instrumental role for empathy, seeing its epistemic and behavioural functions as instrumental means to ends dictated by reason (Oxley, 2011). Of central importance for utilitarianism is empathy's role in making possible the knowledge of the other's inner state and hence the ability to evaluate and make interpersonal comparisons of utility (Goldman, 1995). There is also evidence that empathy leads to greater consideration of the short and long term consequences of one's behaviour for others (Sibicky, Schroeder, & Dovidio, 1995). For deontologists, empathy makes salient situations that call for one to exercise one's moral duty (Kant, 1797/2007). Oxley (2011) has also argued that contractual moral and political theories rely upon empathic deliberation (e.g., John Rawls, David Gauthier, John Harsanyi). If the notion of public justification (common in contractual theories) is understood as identifying principles that can be agreed upon from a wide variety of perspectives, then one identifies such principles from viewing them empathically, that is, through the eyes of others. Such an activity is central to these ethical and political projects as they are the means through which one de-biases one's deliberation. Similarly, Hoffman (2000) has argued that empathy is important for considerations of distributive justice insofar as it makes the other's needs salient as compelling reasons for the just distribution of goods.

***Empathy in moral development.*** Hoffman (2000) has proposed the most complete account to date of empathy's role in moral development. While Hoffman's theory is constructed out of anecdotes and inferences from studies dealing with related issues and is not the result of data derived from direct empirical testing of his

hypotheses, there is some evidence in support of his theory (Eisenberg, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2011).

Hoffman pulls from a substantial body of research to demonstrate the natural occurrence of early, pre-empathic processes such as mimicry, egocentric empathic distress (personal distress empathically aroused from the distress of another), and responses indicative of self/other overlap. These inclinations set the stage for and develop into empathy, which Hoffman defines as “an effective response more appropriate to another’s situation than one’s own” (p. 4), which in turn can develop into “sympathetic distress” understood as a feeling of compassion and a conscious desire to help. In turn, empathy aids in the development and internalization of other moral emotions such as empathic anger, guilt and feelings of injustice.

Hoffman (2000) cites certain practices that can facilitate empathic and moral development. While he admits that practices such as modeling pro-social behaviour, verbalizing empathic emotions, providing for children’s emotional needs, and allowing children to experience a wide range of emotions all play a role, he emphasizes the disciplinary technique of *induction* which stands as one of the mechanisms through which empathy is tied to moral development (see also Schonert-Reichl, 2011). During induction parents encourage the child to imagine the other’s perspective and distress, and to make clear the child’s role in causing the distress. Over time repeated inductions build up an inner “discipline-encounter script” which turns into an internalized norm of perspective-taking. Due to the empathy’s affective aspect, these norms become emotionally laden with empathic distress and guilt, becoming a “hot-cognition”. Once



this internalization is in place, there is no longer a need for an external agent to pursue induction, as the scripts and related emotions become automatic.

Another way in which empathy is related to moral development was posited by James Blair's investigation of pathological populations (as reviewed in Prinz, 2011). Blair's research on psychopaths led him to conclude that empathy is key in the development of the distinction between moral and conventional rules. Blair's developmental model posits that one's empathic experience of another's distress creates an inhibition signal in the observer that becomes associated with moral rules. This process loads moral rules with emotion. This process gives them an authority that conventional rules lack, as the breaking of conventional rules is not associated with the same kind of acute distress signals. Thus, for Blair, empathy is vital early in life, but once the emotion/moral rules connection is established, empathy is no less necessary as the moral rules themselves can arouse the motivating emotion.

As with empathy's awareness-promoting function, although there is ongoing debate about empathy's role in moral development, it is widely regarded to have some positive function in the process, even if the details of that function are still up for debate.

***Empathy in moral functioning.*** In recent years there has been a number of reviews of the research on empathy's relation to pro-social motivations and behaviours (e.g., Batson, 2011; Davis, 1994; Eisenberg, 2002; Hoffman, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2011). While there exists some conflicting evidence on empathy's relation to pro-sociality, the general consensus is that conflicting outcomes can in large part be attributed to conceptual and methodological issues, and that the larger pattern of

findings suggests a positive relation. This relationship is largely understood to be a function of empathy's role in mediating *sympathy*, which has robust scientific support as a mediator of pro-sociality. In addition to empathy's role in motivating pro-sociality, there is also evidence that it may mitigate aggression. In his review of research on this topic, Davis (1994) concluded that perspective-taking which is directed early on towards the potential target of aggression can reduce the arousal of aggressive behaviour. However, once aggression has begun, affective empathic responses to the victim's distress cues become the more effective at reigning in aggression. Finally, there is evidence that empathy helps to establish and maintain social bonds (Anderson & Keltner, 2002). Given the substantial body of evidence suggesting that empathy is a mediator of pro-sociality, much of the current research focuses on (a) the antecedents of empathy and its related outcomes, and (b) whether empathy-motivated helping is truly altruistic, or ultimately egoistic.

***Personal antecedents of empathy-related pro-sociality.*** The connection between empathy and pro-sociality is mediated by other factors. While empathy is part of autonomy via its function in maintaining realism, education for autonomy will only facilitate pro-sociality if it also contributes to, or at least does not hinder, these other mediating factors. The work of Daniel Batson provides some insight on this issue. Batson (2011) has provided one of the most comprehensive accounts of the antecedents of what he calls empathic concern, and argues that empathic concern is an important aspect of altruism. Batson's "empathic concern" is not the same as empathy. Whereas empathy as discussed earlier is "an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition, and that is

similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel” (Eisenberg, 2002, p. 135), empathic concern is akin to what is normally called sympathy insofar as it includes a “feeling for”: “empathic concern is other-oriented in the sense that it involves feeling *for* the other” (p. 11). More generally, he defines empathic concern as “other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need” (p. 11). Batson argues that there are two primary antecedents of empathic concern: perceiving the other as in need, and intrinsically valuing the other’s welfare. There is reason to believe that education for autonomy facilitates both of these antecedents.

There is evidence that the form of empathy that is part of education for autonomy can facilitate both the perception of the needs of others, and intrinsically valuing the other’s welfare. First, both of these are facilitated by empathy’s “salience effect” in which empathy “makes salient another’s particular emotions, concerns, reasons, interests, and considerations in such a way that they are relevant and important to the empathizer, so that she is motivated to respond to these concerns” (Oxley, 2011, p. 78). Secondly, warm and caring social conditions that are part of education for autonomy contribute to intrinsically valuing the other’s welfare through developing pro-social moral identity and intuition (Narvaez, 2009). Finally, perceiving the needs of others and intrinsically valuing their welfare will be, in part, a function of the norms held by the individual (Krapp, 2013; Rest, 1986). If so, it is feasible that the egalitarian and democratic contexts that facilitate autonomy development would also facilitate moral identity and intuitions which are characterized by respect and toleration (Narvaez, 2006, 2010; Scharff, 1977). These three elements – empathy,

warm and caring contexts, and communal norms of respect and dialogue – are part of education for autonomy and increase the likelihood that the two antecedents of empathic concern (sympathy) will be met, thus promoting altruism.

While perceiving the other as in need and intrinsically valuing the other's welfare are two primary mediators of empathic concern (sympathy) and altruistic motivation, sympathy-based moral functioning is a complex phenomenon, and Batson (2011) argues that other factors such as perceived innocence, vulnerability, similarity, and perspective-taking, one's general disposition to experience empathy, emotionality, and emotional regulation also play a role. Furthermore, although it is commonly thought that women are more empathic, the empirical findings are mixed (Schonert-Reichl, 2011). Batson (2011) argues that it is not yet clear whether the differences that have been found between men and women are the result of inherent ability, or cultural norms. He stresses that regardless of the likelihood of initial arousal, once aroused, the motivational consequences are the same across genders. Finally, while Batson (1997, as cited in 2011) argues that group membership is not a mediator of empathic concern, Sturmer et al. (2006) suggest that the experiments Batson relies on to draw this conclusion are flawed. Sturmer et al. provide some evidence that not only did group membership increase empathy's positive relation to helping, but the degree of similarity between in-group members also facilitated this relationship.

Finally, while there is evidence that empathy rouse pro-social motivation, such motivation does not necessarily translate into behaviour. There are many ways one could remove the empathy-evoking need: one could help, have someone else help, or not help and simply resist the motivation and wait for the empathic stimulus to subside.

Batson (2011) hypothesizes that the final behaviour will be a product of one's motivation mixed with a cost-benefit analysis of potential actions. More specifically, after a review of the relevant research, Batson (2011) concludes that whether empathic concern leads to helping is influenced by whether (a) a person can provide the needed help, (b) no one else can, and (c) the cost of helping does not exceed the benefit. If these conditions are met, then the more empathic concern one has for the other the more likely they are to help.

In summary, while empathy can act as an important mediator of sympathy and pro-sociality, a host of other factors influence this function and help determine whether or not the pro-social motivation produces helping behaviour.

***Egoistic or altruistic?*** While research suggests that the above antecedents contribute to pro-sociality, there is still debate over whether this pro-sociality is ultimately egoistic or altruistic (e.g. de Waal, 2008; Maner, Luce, Neuberg, Cialdini, Brown, & Sagarin, 2002; Preston & de Waal, 2002; Sibicky, Schroeder, & Dovidio, 1995). Batson (2011) has pulled together decades of work on the subject to present a compelling argument that not only does altruism exist, but that empathy-induced altruistic motivation holds particular advantages over egoistic motives. First, empathy-induced altruistic motivation leads to *helping in contexts which other motivations fail to produce pro-sociality*: when escape from the potential helping situation is easy, when failure to help can be rationalized, when there will be no feedback about the effectiveness of the helping, and when one expects personal mood-enhancement even if one does not help. Altruistically motivated helping holds these advantages because altruism is ultimately concerned with the welfare of the other; hence the egoistic

concerns that would motivate avoidance of helping under the conditions listed above are mitigated. Secondly, empathy-induced altruistic motivation can lead to *more sensitive helping*. Since altruistic motivation is ultimately concerned with the welfare of the other, the needs of the other will be more salient in one's helping behaviour. Furthermore, there is evidence that empathic concern for another leads to consideration of short-term as well as long-term effects of one's helping, thus leading to a more sophisticated understanding of the consequences of one's actions on another.

***Dangers of empathy.*** Empathy is not without its pitfalls and, if not engaged in an appropriate manner, can be detrimental to others as well as the self. The first danger of empathy stems from empathic bias: the tendency to apply more empathic attention to certain demographics. Empathic bias can come in a number of forms, including in-group bias, friendship bias, similarity bias, and here-and-now bias (Hoffman, 2000). While the first three have to do with the degree of similarity and familiarity between the observer and the target, the latter has to do with the fact that one tends to react more strongly to distress cues that are geographically and temporally immediate. While there exists various levels of evidence for each of these forms of bias, at present none can be ruled out as a potential problem for empathy. Empathic bias holds two particularly troubling implications. First, there is evidence that dissimilarity only effects empathy if it arouses antipathy (Batson 2011). This is especially problematic in multicultural contexts characterized by inter-ethnic conflict (Hoffman, 2000). Secondly, empathic engagement with another motivated participants to unjustly reallocate resources to the target of their empathic attention (Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). This occurred even though the person recognized that the action was

unjust. Batson et al. concluded that empathy-induced altruism and justice are two distinct pro-social motivators that can conflict, and that an empathic reaction can sometimes lead to unjust behaviour. Furthermore, Batson argues that when this effect is generalized it can act as a threat to the common good (Batson, 2011).

A second concern about empathy has been elucidated by Megan Boler's (1997) discussion of "passive empathy" in which "our concern is directed to a fairly distant other, whom we cannot directly help" (p. 257). Passive empathy leads to a problematic identification with the oppressed other that lacks any critical consciousness and awareness of one's own responsibility for and participation in the power relations implicated in the state of the distressed other; thus, sustaining oppressive power structures. Empathy can lead to maternalistic or paternalistic attitudes towards the other, and foster "dependence, low self-esteem, and a reduced sense of efficacy" (Nadler, cited in Batson, 2011). Expanding on the work of Boler, Audrey Thompson (2003) warns that too often whites' self-serving empathic identification with people of colour is characterized by "voyeuristic pleasure" and a problematic sense of redemption. Theresa Kulbaga (2008) gets to the heart of these concerns: "the rhetoric of empathy invites readers to remain in the realm of individual imagination, where affect is divorced from critical reflection and political action" (p. 517).

Thirdly, as briefly addressed in the section on empathic accuracy, empathy can create a false sense of sameness. Either through projection or identification of oneself with the other, or through empathy's focus on elements of commonality, we can be blinded to the uniqueness and difference of the other (Lather, 2009; Todd, 2003). This false representation can inhibit sound moral reasoning by introducing a false premise.

What's more, this annihilation of difference "violates the other and is part of the demand for totality" (Lather, 2009, p. 19). One overlooks and minimizes aspects of the other, and treats the other as an object to be used in one's pursuit of the "will to know".

Fourthly, there is evidence of empathy's fragility, or our ability to repress or thwart the empathic experience when we want to avoid the likely consequences of empathic engagement. This problem is especially salient when the cost of helping is high (Batson, Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, & Isen, 1983).

Fifthly, Lather (2009) has argued that there is the moral issue of whether one has the right to know the inner state of others. One might wish for one's inner life to remain private, and not be visible to others. In addition to the simple desire for privacy, such a desire may be motivated by the worry that the knowledge gained through empathy might be used to harm the other. While evidence for the empathy/pro-sociality connection goes some way in lessening this concern, Batson's observation about the fragility of empathy should give us pause. If one initially has an empathic response, then egoistic drives take over, it is likely that one could use the knowledge garnered through empathy for egoistic and potentially harmful ends.

Sixth, certain needs are less effective at eliciting an empathic response (Batson, 2011): needs of non-personalized others (dislike for the other or the other being encountered as "one of many individuals with similar needs"); abstract needs such as environmental degradation or nuclear proliferation; and chronic needs, as empathic concern tends to diminish over time. All of these are ineffectual at eliciting and sustaining empathy.



Finally, empathic concern can motivate one to help even though one is not sufficiently knowledgeable about the particulars of the case to skillfully render aid. Such well intentioned but not well-informed attempts to help can actually end up doing more harm than good. On the other hand, one might be perfectly competent to render aid; however, if the situation calls for a more emotionally detached attitude for effective helping, one's empathic concern could prove distracting (Batson, 2011).

A growing body of research on pathological altruism has revealed ways in which empathy can also be harmful to the empathizer. Pathological altruism occurs when a person "intends altruistic acts, but...harms the very person or group he or she is trying to help...or harms others; or irrationally becomes the victim of his or her own altruistic actions" (Oakley, Knafo & McGrath, 2012, p. 4). Evidence has been found for a positive correlation between altruistic behaviour (especially altruism that involves high risk) and incidence of victimization (Homant & Kennedy, 2012). Prinz (2011) argues that one contributing factor to victimization is the ability for empathy to be manipulated. Those seen as highly empathic are taken as easy targets for emotional manipulation. In the area of health care research, Olga Klimecki and Tania Singer (2012) have argued that the issue of "compassion fatigue" should be re-labeled empathic distress fatigue. Empathic distress fatigue occurs when the empathic experience of another's distress becomes overwhelming for the observer to the point where it negatively affects the empathizer's mental and physical health. Carolyn Zahn-Waxler and Carol Van Hulle (2012) have argued that when faced with parental depression and conflict, children with high empathic ability can develop pathogenic guilt, anxiety, a sense of personal failure, and ultimately depression (these findings are particularly relevant given the

increase in interest in early empathy-development educational programs). In the context of close personal relationships, William Ickes and Jeffrey A. Simpson (1997) have argued that empathic accuracy must be skillfully managed as awareness of certain thoughts and feelings of one's partner could potentially upset the health of the relationship. Finally, and more generally, Batson (2011) has argued that strong empathic engagement with distressed others can lead one to overtax one's time, resources, and abilities in an attempt to help the other, even to the point of risking one's life.

**Developmental Conditions.** Above I have reviewed the moral promises and perils of the nine capacities. However, the nine capacities do not function in isolation from the conditions and practices in which they were developed. As discussed in Chapter Three, the social conditions that facilitate the development of these capacities are marked by safety, warmth, support, trust, respect, lack of competitiveness, intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation, opportunities for choice, valuing of experiencing things for oneself, willingness to share experiences, and democratic, egalitarian, and libertarian contexts. It is widely acknowledged in the developmental literature that safe, warm, and caring contexts marked by trust and respect facilitates moral development (Hall, 2004). Such conditions have been shown to facilitate neurobiological development of areas of the brain associated with mammalian emotions such as empathy and affection (Narvaez & Gleason, 2013). These conditions also influence moral identity and moral intuition marked by care and respect for others (Narvaez, 2009). There is evidence that intrinsic rather the extrinsic motivation and opportunities for choice is associated with greater pro-social behaviour (Benson, et al.

1998; Krapp, 2013). Experiencing things for oneself, in particular experiencing a variety of emotions, has been associated with empathy development (Hoffman, 2000). Finally, sharing one's experience and opinions within egalitarian and democratic contexts has been a staple of Kohlberg's Just Community approach to moral development (Lickona, 1977; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999), as well as contributing to moral identity and moral intuitions marked by care and respect for others (Narvaez, 2006, 2010; Scharff, 1977).

Caregiving practices related to these capacities include maternal responsivity, touch, breastfeeding, maternal support, elaborative versus authoritarian parenting style, inductive disciplinary practices, an emphasis on taking responsibility for one's actions and not blaming the victim, inductive disciplinary practices, talking about emotions, and shared positive emotion. There is evidence that each of these influences moral development. Drawing on neurobiology, and cognitive science, Narvaez (2008a, 2009) argues that maternal responsivity, touch, breastfeeding and maternal support facilitate neurological development that is related to pro-social behaviour. Elaborative versus authoritarian parenting provides a degree of motivational autonomy, which has been associated with well-being and pro-social development (Benson, et al. 1998; Krapp, 2013). Finally, inductive disciplinary practices, talking about emotions, and shared positive emotion and an emphasis on taking responsibility are recommended for the development of empathy (Batson, 2011; Hoffman, 2000).

Finally, a number of the educational practices associated with education for autonomy also hold implications for education for morality: liberal education, encouraging curiosity, objections and questioning authorities when their positions

seems problematic, SEL, the study of epistemology, developing the ability to investigate the validity of intuitions, stressing cross-cultural similarities, perspective-taking of absent parties, and meditation practices. It has been argued that liberal education introduces students to the “great sphere” of cultural diversity and traditions of inquiry that is necessary to avoid “ethical servility” and the contributes to one’s ability to engage in informed moral debate and inquiry (Callan, 1997). Also, exposure to alternative cultures has shown to be positively related to postconventional moral reasoning and intercultural sensitivity (Narvaez, 2003, 2010). Finally, liberal education may increase one’s awareness to radically different others who are temporally or spatially absent, an important element in combatting empathic bias and promoting broader empathic experience that will facilitate pro-social and altruistic motivations (Hoffman, 2000). Questioning presuppositions and authorities when their position seems problematic can help safeguard against authoritarian attitudes that have contributed to the genocide and widespread human atrocities (Staub, 1989). Social-emotional learning has been associated with a wide array of indicators of moral development and functioning, including antisocial and aggressive behaviour, mental health, problem behaviours, and positive youth development (see Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger [2011] for a review). The study of epistemology can help promote epistemic humility, which may play an important role curbing extremist and imperialistic tendencies of some comprehensive worldviews (Borchert, 2013), as well as provide one with the ability to explore ever more sophisticated and well informed moral positions via moral epistemology. Given the recent acknowledgement in moral psychology of the prevalence and importance of moral intuition in moral

functioning, the ability to investigate the validity of moral intuitions is of vital importance for ensuring one's moral intuitions cohere to one's wider moral commitments (Hogarth, 2010). Finally, a variety of morality-related outcomes have been connected to various meditation practices, including the minimization of gender and age related biases (Lueke & Gibson, 2015), increased feelings of social connection and positivity (Hutcherson, Seppala, & Gross 2008), socially competent behaviour (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010), and moral maturity as understood in the Kohlbergian tradition (Nidich, Ryncarz, Abrams, Orme-Johnson, & Wallace, 1983).

**Summary.** Above I have argued that the nine awareness-promoting capacities that are part of autonomy also play a positive role in education for morality. While empathy was shown to be a perceptive capacity with particular moral import, the other eight awareness-promoting capacities are not intrinsically morally motivating. However, the social conditions and practices that best promote the development of these capacities contribute to an inclusive moral sense via moral identity and moral intuition. This gives us some reason to believe that, if optimal developmental conditions are met for these capacities, they will likely contribute to autonomy being used in caring and just ways.

### **Self-Regulation**

**Benefit.** Self-regulation, understood as the ability to assess oneself in light of a set of standards and make any changes that may be necessary, is a vital aspect of living a moral life. Such a life requires that we regularly assess ourselves to ensure coherence with moral standards, and regulate the strong emotions one will inevitably face in pursuing a moral life. This emotional-regulation aspect of self-regulation has further

moral benefits. There is evidence that parents who exhibit positive emotion contribute to the development of the pro-social behaviour of their children (Narvaez, 2013).

Therefore, it stands to reason that self-regulation helps promote the expression of positive emotions, and the curbing of the expression of strong negative emotions in the presence of the child. Finally, emotional regulation is one avenue through which one can ensure that empathic experience does not overwhelm the empathizer and effectively transform empathy into personal distress, thus negating its pro-social function (Hoffman, 2000).

**Risk.** As with the neutral awareness-promoting capacities, self and emotional-regulation can be used to pursue immoral acts. The same ability to regulate empathic response that is necessary to ensure empathic emotion does not turn into personal distress has also been shown to contribute to insensitivity to mass suffering (Cameron & Payne, 2011). This function could also be used to minimize moral emotions when undertaking an immoral action. While self-regulation is an important part of moral functioning, it must be guided by other sources of moral motivation.

## **Conclusion**

The above investigation of the impact of education for autonomy on education for morality was painted with a purposefully broad stroke so as to take into consideration the breadth of psychological and social conditions, as well as educational and caregiving practices involved in education for autonomy. While depth had to be sacrificed for breadth, in doing so I hope to have touched upon the silhouette of a larger picture. Developmentally, when we take into consideration a wider array of elements involved in education for autonomy, we find that those elements also contribute to

education for morality (i.e., as understood through Haidt's care/harm and fairness/cheating taxonomy of norms). The development of a stable yet malleable identity, realism (including the nine-awareness promoting capacities), independent mindedness, and self-regulation, if undertaken with an eye towards moderation and balance, all have positive roles to play in moral functioning. The social conditions, caregiving and educational practices that facilitate the development of these elements also promote the development of moral identities and intuitions marked by care and fairness. I will now turn to the question of the impact of education for morality on education for autonomy.

### **Education for Morality & Autonomy**

Does education for morality promote or hinder autonomy? A detailed answer to this question will depend upon the given approach to education for morality and to what degree it facilitates the development and functioning of the capacities and characteristics discussed above. While such a detailed approach is not feasible given the larger aims of this dissertation, a few general comments can be made.

#### **Potential Conflict**

Autonomy is about having a hand in the construction or adoption of one's interests in the spirit of realism (including the nine awareness-promoting capacities) and independent mindedness, as well as the ability to pursue those interests via self-regulation. Given this, education for morality might be seen to threaten autonomy by impeding one or more of these elements. R. S. Peters' (1981a) spoke to this issue when he observed the "paradox of moral education":

given that it is desirable to develop people who conduct themselves rationally, intelligently and with a fair degree of spontaneity, the brute facts of child development reveal that at the most formative years of a child's development he is incapable of this form of life and impervious to the proper manner of passing it on" (p. 51).

Peters observes how children must "enter the palace of reason through the courtyard of habit". The danger is that children are unavoidably subject to forces that influence the development of their interests, habits, and presuppositions before they have the ability to judge the value of those forces, and offer well-informed and effective consent or resistance. Peters makes a "plea for pluralism" and draws upon a mix of Kantian and Aristotelian positions to argue that, in theory, the two educational aims of morality and autonomy are compatible (Haydon, 2011). However, he largely leaves it "to psychologists and teachers" to identify the specific methods through which we can make habit and tradition cohere with later autonomy.

Given the account of autonomy above, how might education for morality positively or negatively impact autonomy? First, education for morality can potentially instill moral interests in such a way that they are impervious to later revision. This is the danger of education for morality leading to an overly rigid identity; calling to mind the much-discussed danger of indoctrination. The common liberal response to this issue is to advocate moral interests that are argued to be normatively "thin". That is, only those interests that are deemed necessary for the stable functioning of a pluralist liberal democracy (e.g., Brighouse 2006; Callan, 1997; Gutmann, 1999; Macedo, 2003). Such moral interests are said to be sufficiently general as to still allow for autonomous



choice over a wide array of views of the good life. Put another way, those interests that serve to maximize the autonomy of all, such as the non-harm principle or the prioritizing of human welfare over other goods. This is in contrast to normatively “thick” interests of a specific ideology that would infringe on personal autonomy by instilling a rigid identity via inculcating a child into a comprehensive view of the good life. While this solution holds for liberal philosophers, it becomes more problematic in the case communitarians, and even more so from a fundamentalist perspective; issues that will be discussed in the final chapter.

Secondly, even if a given approach to education for morality does not explicitly instill rigid moral identity, it might hinder one’s ability to make inquiries into one’s fundamental interests. A given approach to education for morality might dissuade moral inquiry, socially isolate students, or neglect developing the necessary knowledge, skills, habits and capacities that contribute to a student’s ability to engage in autonomy-facilitating processes.

Finally, education for morality might hinder autonomy by obstructing one’s ability to *pursue* one’s interests. One may have the ability to engage in reasoning about interests that is guided by independent mindedness and realism, but lack the ability to effectively act on such inquiry. What capacities and traits are involved in the sustained pursuit of one’s convictions? While a detailed answer to this question is beyond the scope of this chapter, James Rest’s Four Component Model of moral functioning gives us some insight on this issue. While Rest’s model focuses on moral functioning, the four components of this model likely apply more generally to any sustained and intelligent action on a given project. Furthermore, autonomy is generally understood to be

primarily concerned with those projects we deem as particularly important and central to our identity, moral projects certainly fall under this category.

After a review of research on moral functioning, James Rest (1986) constructed the Four Component model of moral functioning which outlines the processes that go into a moral action – a model that has since undergone further research and elaboration (Rest et al., 1999) and remains influential (Rejeev, 2011).

- 1) *Moral sensitivity* involves the receptivity of the sensory perceptual system to social situations and the interpretation of the situation in terms of what actions are possible, who and what would be affected by each of the possible actions, and how the involved parties might react to possible outcomes.
- 2) *Moral judgment* involves deciding which of the possible actions is most moral. The individual weighs the choices and determines what a person ought to do in such a situation.
- 3) *Moral motivation* implies that the person gives priority to the moral value above all other values and intends to fulfill it.
- 4) *Implementation* combines the ego strength with the social and psychological skills necessary to carry out the chosen action. (Narvaez & Rest, 1995, p. 386)

A given program of moral education can have a negative influence on any of these elements. *Sensitivity* can be hindered by feelings of personal distress aroused by the use of traumatic punishment used to enforce behavioural norms. In such situations one moves one's attention away from the needs of others and towards the needs of the self (Batson, 2011). One's values also influence what one notices in the environment. We do not notice *facts*, rather, we notice *particular facts*. Which facts we notice are dictated by

our interests that are in turn based on our emotions and desires. Speaking from the perspective of feminist epistemology, Margaret Little (1995) argues “How reliable one will be in accurately discerning the moral landscape and knowing what ought to be done depends, then, not just on how good one is at weighting risks and foreseeing consequences, say, but on the nature of one’s emotions and desires” (p. 122). The empathic experience highlights certain elements of the experience of others, making them cognitively salient. An approach to education for morality that fosters bias against certain groups will likely hinder personal and cultural perceptual sensitivity towards this culture and its members, thus limiting one’s capacity to engage in independent and realistic investigation into this culture. Insofar as *judgment* is influenced by what we perceive, such biased perception can also bias judgment. An education for morality that neglects fundamental judgment-related skills can also impede this aspect of autonomy. In particular, attempts at education for morality are often concerned with behavioural conformity to a set of norms. This can lead to sacrificing the development of personal judgment-related skills in favor of deeply ingrained habitual behavioural conformity. In particular, such approaches might neglect critical thinking (including some knowledge of epistemology), independent mindedness, self-awareness and the critical investigation of intuitions, as these might be seen as doing little more than undermining behavioural conformity. With regards to *motivation*, it has been shown that intrinsic motivation (motivational autonomy) leads to better and more effective action (Dickinson, 1995). Offering meaningful rationale, acknowledging the students’ feelings, and offering choice fosters the development of intrinsic motivation (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994). Approaches to education for morality that focus on

authoritarianism, external motivation, a lack of sensitivity to and acknowledgement of students' feelings, and a lack of choice would conflict with the development of one's ability to pursue autonomous action. Finally, *implementation* involves "working around impediments and unexpected snags" (Narvaez & Rest, 1995). This involves the ability to resist distractions, keep sight of the goal, resoluteness and competence; what Narvaez and Rest call character or ego-strength. Skills related to implementation include: the practice of "cheering oneself on", self-confidence and perceived efficacy at the task, and the ability to employ one's imagination in such a ways as to influence emotion and motivation as needed in a given moment (e.g., imagining the desirability and achievability of the goal). This final element evokes the importance of social-emotional competency in being able to identify and manipulate emotions for the sake of efficacious action. Education for morality that neglects or underemphasizes character development (e.g., early versions of cognitive-developmentalism), SEL, or the development of realistic self-confidence impede autonomous action.

### **Coherence**

While education for morality can have a negative impact on personal autonomy, it also can contribute to the development of autonomy. First, education for morality contributes to autonomy insofar as certain moral dispositions within a community are necessary for the development of the autonomy of its members. We have seen that warm and caring environments marked by respect and non-authoritarian communication styles contribute to autonomy development. Abusive, uncaring and authoritarian relationships undermine the development of realism, independent

mindedness and self-regulation. If we view such conditions as marks of morality, then the morality of community members is important for autonomy development.

Secondly, autonomy includes the ability to make inquiries about one's fundamental interests. Such inquiry does not happen in a vacuum, but rather within systems of meaning and standards of inquiry that are established and maintained through traditions of inquiry (MacIntyre, 1981, 1989). While not all communities are morally equivalent – history is full of communities who are widely acknowledged to be inhumane and cruel – in order to participate in these communities one must, to a degree, be on the inside of the norms, including moral norms, which govern such movements. If we abuse those around us, ignore and manipulate, we will likely be excluded from the institutions and communities of debate that facilitate our ability to enter into rigorous and well-informed inquiry. Also, insofar as education for morality will include introducing students to moral theory and morally relevant experiences (e.g., wholesome and caring relationships, moral emotions and perceptual states, etcetera), education for morality will facilitate autonomy by introducing students to the knowledge and experiences that are necessary for making informed decisions about various conceptions of the good life.

### **Conclusion**

Although the sheer quantity and complexity of research that is necessary to make such a claim demands only tentative conclusions, the above reflections suggest that – if undertaken properly – education for autonomy and education for morality are interdependent. This leads to two primary implications. First, any neglect of one would negatively influence the development and functioning of the other. Autonomy

development requires safe, warm, caring, egalitarian and democratic contexts that ensure that the autonomy of one will not unduly infringe on the autonomy of the other. On the other hand, the psychological aspects of autonomy and the social conditions and childrearing and educational practices that promote their development also play key roles in moral development and functioning.

Secondly, overzealousness for one of these aims not only negatively impacts the other, but is inherently self-defeating. If one were to stress autonomy over and above morality, this would lead to breakdown of the very conditions that facilitate the development and functioning of autonomy. Autonomy development is facilitated by warm and caring context in which the child is given relative freedom of expression and activity, conditions marked by respect and tolerance for the views of others. An approach to education for autonomy that overly stressed the freedom aspect, and neglected the moral aspect, would ultimately see the very moral norms necessary for autonomy development and functioning deteriorating. Similarly, any overemphasis of education for morality to the detriment of autonomy will, ironically, negatively impact the development and functioning of morality. The realism, independent mindedness, autonomy-conducive identity, and self-regulation that are part-and-parcel of education for autonomy also play central roles in moral development and functioning. To neglect these in favor of a strong emphasis on education for morality will result in myriad negative outcomes for morality, including the tendency towards self-delusion, impressionability and the inability to hold to one's moral convictions in the face of social counter pressures, the inability to revise moral interests if need be, and the lack of self-regulation necessary to effectively pursue moral projects.

While education for autonomy and education for morality are interdependent, a precondition of this harmony repeatedly surfaced in various contexts, that precondition being *balance*. Independent mindedness must not turn into stubbornness; identity must be stable yet malleable; students must be allowed autonomy, but be bound by the basic moral conditions that facilitate autonomy development; and education for morality must foster certain moral dispositions, but that influence must not turn into indoctrination. I submit that these dichotomies should not be interpreted as irresolvable tensions between these two projects, but rather as reflections of constructive developmental and functional limitations which allow for the very possibility of morality and autonomy.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the broadening and deepening of awareness was not only an important developmental and functional contributor to this relationship, but also the central element that makes both of these educational and not merely cases of development, socialization, or indoctrination. I now turn to the implications of this position for debates over these two educational aims.

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<sup>12</sup> This theme of balance is reminiscent of Aristotle's account of virtue as the moderation between two extremes. While this raises interesting possibilities around reassessing Aristotle's account of virtue in light of recent developments in developmental research on morality and autonomy, my intention here is not to offer or comment on philosophically robust accounts of virtue.

## CHAPTER VI

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THREE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

I have argued that a more integrative and holistic understanding of education for autonomy reveals that education for autonomy and education for morality are interdependent and must be undertaken with an eye towards balance. Any neglect or overemphasis of one will lead to a deterioration of both. In this chapter I will argue that this relationship stands as a feasibility constraint that can inform debates over these two educational aims. I will address three general categories of educational philosophies: liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist. While there is certainly a wide array of philosophies of education I could discuss, it is arguable that the three schools of thought I will address have had the largest impact in North American educational thought, and have the morality/autonomy issue at their core. I will begin by reviewing the basic presuppositions of these three perspectives and how they influence their respective educational philosophies. I will then critique these educational philosophies in light of my analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of my arguments for mediating debates over educational aims.

#### **Liberalism**

Like any general philosophical movement, there exist a variety of liberalisms (Gaus, 2003). Robert Talisse (2005) argues that five fundamental commitments lie at the core of these various formulations. The first is the *primacy of the individual*: the individual is the fundamental unit of analysis in political theorizing. While there have been various interpretations of this position, the primary implication is that the



individual is not wholly the product of the social, but remains, in some way, independent. The second liberal commitment is *moral individualism*: the good of the individual is morally prior to the good of the group. While the individual might volunteer to sacrifice personal goods for the good of the group, such a sacrifice cannot be coerced. The third fundamental liberal commitment is *moral autonomy*: the individual has the right to pursue that view of the good that he or she sees as best. The fourth commitment follows from those discussed thus far and posits *political noninterference*: “The state is justified in obstructing an individual in his pursuit of his conception of the good only in cases where his action interferes with another’s legitimate pursuit of the good” (p. 20). In other words, one’s moral autonomy is limited by the moral autonomy of others. This leads to advocacy of certain political virtues such as tolerance, respect, and non-harm. The fifth and final liberal commitment is *political neutrality*: state policy must be neutral with regards to various conceptions of the good life that one might adopt in a liberal state (i.e., those that fall within the purview of non-interference of other’s moral autonomy).

Liberal philosophers of education have tended to focus not only on liberalism broadly defined, but on liberal democracy. The relationship between liberalism and democracy sets the stage for the problem of civic education. First, liberalism “seeks not to cultivate virtue or impose truth, but to establish and maintain the social conditions under which individuals can “take charge of their own lives” and pursue their “own good in their own way”” (Talisie, 2005, p. 80). This political position leads to democratic politics. Given that no single comprehensive view of the good life can guide public policy (as this would impose that particular view on a diverse citizenry), the

democratic process can act as the instrument through which diverse interests can be accounted for and aggregated to inform political action on the part of the state. These two aspects of the state keep each other in check: “on the one hand, the individual is...protected *by* democracy from the oppression of tyrants and, on the other hand, protected *from* democracy by the rights and entitlements bestowed upon the individual by liberalism” (p. 82).

### **Liberal Philosophy of Education**

The above commitments are evident in Callan and White’s (2003) description of the general features of liberal philosophy of education – a description that clearly outlines the morality/autonomy relationship in liberal philosophy of education. According to Callan and White, education should “open up horizons” on different conceptions of how one should live, facilitate self-knowledge – including knowledge of psychological obstacles to self-directedness – allow one to interpret and prioritize one’s major goals, and ensure that one understands the main features of their society. It will also develop autonomy-related qualities of character: the ability to resist conformity to authority or popular opinion, independent-mindedness, and commitment to those projects deemed worthy. Finally, liberal philosophy of education embraces a curriculum that exposes students to various conceptions of the good life, as well as an anti-authoritarian school ethos.

The above description identifies some of the main features of a liberal philosophy of education. However, this description downplays the character element found in the work of most liberal philosophers of education. While a liberal philosophy of education will seek to ensure the moral autonomy of students, education for morality

is important not only with regards to the self-focused virtues cited by Callan and White, but also other-oriented virtues. First, as the principle of political noninterference holds, one's moral autonomy is limited by the moral autonomy of others. That is, one's view of the good life cannot consist of activities that infringe upon the moral autonomy of others. Because of this it is necessary to pursue a basic form education for morality that consists, at the minimum, of respect or at least tolerance for those who hold different views of the good life. Secondly, the democratic process that stands as the political method necessitated by liberalism requires a host of virtues, including respect, toleration, predisposition towards non-violence, and intellectual virtues necessary for public dialogue and debate (Gutmann, 1999).

Myriad examples of the dual autonomy/morality focus of liberal philosophy of education can be found. Amy Gutmann (1999) argues that democratic education includes teaching democratic values such as racial nondiscrimination and religious toleration, as well as pursuing capacities and knowledge that are widely associated with autonomy: self-reflection, knowledge of various traditions, rational deliberation and choice among conceptions of the good life. Harry Brighouse (2006) has also argued for the need for both education for autonomy and education for morality. He argues that education for autonomy is necessary for personal flourishing in a pluralistic liberal democracy. Relatedly, he argues that education in a liberal democracy must seek to develop good citizens. This includes citizens who abide by the law, are disposed to engage in the political process, and that such engagement is characterized by respect and public reasoning – the notion that we “should not make claims and arguments that cannot be accepted by others unless they already hold fundamental moral

commitments about which we expect reasonable people to disagree” (p. 67). For example, a Christian should not cite biblical verse to non-Christians as a justification for the adoption of public policy. The list of liberal theorists who advocate both autonomy and morality as educational aims could continue (Dearden, 1972; Levinson, 1999; Macedo, 2003; White, 1982). The question such liberal philosophies of education must address is whether these two educational projects are compatible.

### **Implications of Analysis for Liberal Philosophy of Education**

The previous analysis indicates that education for autonomy and education for morality are compatible educational projects, and hence the liberal call for autonomy and morality as educational aims as found to be feasible and coherent. Not only can education for autonomy be conducted in such a way as to promote rather than hinder morality, and education for morality can be conducted in such a way as not to unduly infringe on personal autonomy, but these two projects are, in fact, interdependent: to neglect one is to neglect the other, and to overemphasize one is inherently self-defeating. These educational initiatives must be undertaken with an eye towards balance. They can appear to be in conflict, but when they appear so, it should be taken as a sign that they are being undertaken in an unbalanced way or a way that neglects important elements of each.

However, it is important to recall that research in moral psychology conceptualizes morality as primarily consisting in care/harm and fairness/cheating, a limited and socially liberal conceptualization of morality. It is perhaps not surprising then that the analysis of Chapter Five lends credence to the general position found in liberal philosophy of education. One could argue that the analysis held a liberal bias

from the start. While I justified this approach insofar as these two sets of norms are also shared by more conservative philosophies and hence would allow me to make an argument based on norms that are compelling to all parties, from the perspective of conservative philosophies, these two sets of norms are only part of what constitutes morality, and possibly not even the most important parts. Rather, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation are not only important, but might take precedence. These values are particularly prevalent in communitarian and fundamentalist philosophies. I will now explore the implications of my analysis, with its limited liberal account of morality, for these two philosophies with their corresponding robust moral position.

### **Communitarianism**

Communitarianism arose in the 1980's largely in response to what was seen as the excessive individualism of liberalism and the various social ills such individualism was said to cause. The communitarian critique of liberalism has centred on three primary issues: the importance of tradition in moral and political reasoning, the nature of the self, and the value of community (Bell, 2012). Communitarians such as Alasdair MacIntyre (1981, 1988) and Charles Taylor (1991) argued that, contra John Rawls, moral and political judgments are based within ongoing traditions of inquiry that provide the interpretive structure and normative systems in which one can make coherent, non-relative judgments, and which give specificity and meaning to the virtues. This is a movement away from the abstract universalism of Rawlsian liberalism and towards a view of particularism via shared moral and political standards that are found within particular forms of life. Communitarians have also critiqued what they view as

an overly individualistic view of the self held by liberal philosophers. Michael Sandel (1982) critiqued what he labeled the liberal “unencumbered self” as one which can attain a “view from nowhere” in assessing various moral and political judgments. Rather, we constitute “encumbered selves” whose ends and standards of assessment are constitutive of the self and derived from the traditions in which we are steeped. Finally, and most importantly for present concerns, communitarians have stressed the importance of community in moral development and functioning, citing liberalism’s devaluing of community as a source of what is seen as the present state of moral relativism, alienation, and apathy (Aurthur & Bailey, 2000). More specifically, leftist liberals’ emphasis on rights is seen as having deteriorated the individual’s sense of obligation and duty in relation to community, and right-leaning liberals’ focus on an unregulated free-market capitalism – and its fostering of greed and instrumental rationality – is seen as deteriorating family, local community, and democratic politics (Bell, 2012).

### **Communitarian Philosophy of Education**

While the two theoretical perspectives differ, reading through recent literature on the communitarian/liberal debate one can find substantial convergence. With regards to each side’s presuppositions, the debate over the nature of the self appears to have been somewhat misguided, and has fallen out of interest in the last two decades, with both liberals and communitarians acknowledging both the social embeddedness of the self, and the possibility of personal agency in choice within the variation that exists within and between various traditions (Bell, 2012; Callan, 1997; White, 2003). Reading through works on both sides, one can find mutual concern over anti-sociality, greed,

self-interestedness, and the deterioration of communities that act as mediators of personal and social development, as well as calls for a degree of individuality and criticality, as well as a degree of pro-sociality. It seems that the practical difference between the two camps is one of emphasis, and reflects what Stephen Macedo (2003) call the “problem of distrust”. There is a conservative thread in communitarian literature insofar as there is a distrust of how autonomy will be employed, and therefore a need to shore up sources of moral meaning (i.e., community) through the development of communal virtues, such as duty and obligation. In contrast, liberal writers tend to emphasize personal autonomy, acutely aware of potential for any state sponsored efforts at molding the communal character to become oppressive. While one can find points of substantial convergence on educational policy and practice between communitarianism and liberalism (Callan & White, 2003), their respective emphases also lead to marked differences.

To speak of a “communitarian” philosophy of education is somewhat misleading, as there are a host of philosophical positions that have claimed or have been labeled as “communitarian”, and there is no comprehensive communitarian theory of education. However, beyond the general emphases described above, James Arthur and Richard Baily (2000) reviewed a diverse range of educational agendas of communitarians in the U.S. and the U.K., and identified ten main themes.

- 1) Family as the primary moral educator; school as secondary
- 2) Education for morality involves the systematic teaching of virtues (which are to be established by the community, but there tends to be a general emphasis on duty and obligation)

- 3) Ethos of community is a central force in education for morality
- 4) Schools should promote rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- 5) Community service as an important method with which to engage the student in the community and develop character and habits of communal participation
- 6) A focus on developing social and political skills (e.g., “reflective thinking and social action through informed participation”, perspective taking, political literacy, and the ability to engage in dialogue and compromise)
- 7) Schools should promote understanding of the common good through cooperation, friendship, openness and participation
- 8) The positive role of parochial schools
- 9) Community-based education needs to reflect communitarian perspective, and should focus on democratic practices, taking community seriously, promoting responsibility towards society, and concern for the common good
- 10) Schools should be more democratic than authoritarian

From the above ten key characteristics a general picture of communitarian philosophy of education emerges. Communitarians wish to place local community at the centre of education. However, two stipulations hold: (a) the content of such communities must be marked by democratic values, and (b) an emphasis is placed on communal or “socially binding” norms. While some have objected that communitarian education fosters conformity to ideologically restrictive communities (Nash, 1997), communitarians have stressed that their focus on duty and social obligation can be compatible with individual freedom and criticality. For example, Alasdair MacIntyre



(1999) stresses the importance of becoming “independent practical reasoners”. Such persons have the “ability and the willingness to evaluate the reasons for action advanced by one to others, so that one makes oneself accountable for one’s endorsements” (p. 105). While MacIntyre stresses the important role of community in rationality and morality, he nonetheless stresses the importance of a degree of independent-mindedness.

Communitarian philosophy of education faces the same tension that a liberal philosophy of education faces: the need for social cohesion, on the one hand, but a desire for a degree of personal freedom and criticality, on the other. The difference between the two groups seems to be that, whereas liberals emphasize personal autonomy, communitarians tend to emphasize obligation and duty to uphold one’s responsibility in the community for the sake of personal and communal flourishing.

### **Implications of Analysis for Communitarian Philosophy of Education**

While perhaps the primary practical concern for communitarians is the breakdown of civility in modernity, there is little reason to believe that education for autonomy properly conceived is a source of incivility and anti-sociality. Rather, the communitarian critique of liberal philosophy of education’s emphasis on autonomy due to its supposed negative influence on civility is valid only to the degree that the particular formulation of education for autonomy is incomplete (e.g., minimal rationalist versions of education for autonomy). However, the integrative account of education for autonomy I have proposed was shown to also facilitate caring and justice related skills and dispositions. This should go some way in assuaging communitarian concerns about autonomy as a primary educational aim.

However, communitarians do not merely stress other-oriented care and justice, but emphasize communal rather than individual virtues such as duty and obligation to one's community. Recall, my analysis drew upon the basic liberal values of care/harm and fairness/cheating. The communitarian emphasis on duty and obligation is more inline the conservative values of loyalty/betrayal and authority/subversion. While my analysis has little to say about the role of these norms in the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, a few general comments can be made.

First, insofar as care and justice contribute to communal thriving, communitarians have reason to embrace the balanced pursuit of education for autonomy and education for morality. Secondly, the exact implications of my analysis will depend on how a given communitarian thinker conceptualizes loyalty/betrayal and authority/subversion. Does loyalty here refer to blind loyalty, or loyalty born out of critical investigation and approval of a given group? Does respect refer to the general respect we afford others *qua* humans, or does respect in this instance refer to a willingness to follow orders of one's elders and superiors regardless of one's personal judgments? Informed and freely accepted forms of loyalty and basic respect for authorities which one has good reason to respect are not in tension with education for autonomy, as pursuing a conception of the good life entails commitment and loyalty to that community in which that view of the good life is sustained and pursued, as well as basic respect for authorities within that form of life (Aviram, 1995). However, uncritical and uninformed loyalty and respect is antithetical to autonomy. While one would be hard pressed to find any communitarian thinker who would advocate these

uncritical forms of loyalty and respect for authority, the communitarian emphasis on these communal norms must be held with constant vigilance to ensure they do not unduly encroach upon autonomy, which would likely negatively influence care/harm and justice/fairness values, important values for civility and communal thriving.

### **Fundamentalism**

Like liberalism and communitarianism, fundamentalism is a general category used to denote a wide variety of more specific positions. One of the most exhaustive investigations of fundamentalism, *The Fundamentalism Project*, argued that these various forms are held together in a set of cross-cultural “family resemblances”. I will focus here on those elements that are most pertinent for the topic at hand. First, fundamentalism is in large part a reaction to the marginalization of religion.

Fundamentalists object to the encroachment of secular humanism which emphasizes human inquiry and knowledge over divine revelation (Almond, Sivan, & Appleby, 1991). Secondly, fundamentalists hold to moral Manicheism in which the world of the spirit is one of light and goodness, in contrast to darkness and evil that is primarily associated with the material world. The fundamentalist community provides a guarded space within the material world, one that facilitates an orientation to the world of the spirit. Finally, fundamentalists hold to absolutism and inerrancy of their authoritative texts. They are opposed to hermeneutical methods that employ critical interpretations of authoritative texts. Rather, fundamentalists hold to textual literalism: the foundational texts are divine revelations that give humans direct access to basic truths regarding the human condition.

These presuppositions hold implications for one of the primary concerns of fundamentalist groups: morality. Fundamentalists see the encroaching secular humanism as undermining morality and the maintenance of a moral society (Parsons, 1987). Secular humanism's abandonment of divine authority is said to rob morality of objective authority. This, in turn, is seen as leading to moral relativism, hedonism and selfishness. What is needed to stem moral degradation is deep emersion into and steadfast commitment to the authoritative proclamations of the tradition (Kunzman, 2009).

### **Fundamentalist Philosophy of Education**

While fundamentalism exists in a variety of religious traditions, the above fundamentalist commitments are reflected in Paul Parsons' (1987) description of fundamentalist Christian education, and I will use his work to explore the basic contours of a fundamentalist philosophy of education. Parsons identified five underlying principles that guide fundamentalist Christian education. First, an absolute truth exists and can be known. This truth is accessed not through rational inquiry, but rather through the authority of biblical literalism. John Vaughn (1998), an American protestant fundamentalist, clearly describes this epistemological commitment:

a reaction to that drift from historical biblical to rational principles....We hold the basic, a priori metaphysical assumption that God exists. We accept this on the basis of faith in self-evident truth, not on the basis of scientific investigation or of logical or rational conclusion....God communicates to us through Scripture – our most objective source of information....Faith,

therefore, is not leaping blindly but accepting the evidence – the Bible is our evidence. (p. 44)

Secondly, all education must be based on this truth. In practice, this leads to educational practices that are suffused with Christian commentary. One example of this can be seen in how fundamentalists discuss cultures and views at odds with their own. While fundamentalists tend to shield their children from the outside world, this does not necessarily imply total isolation, but rather exposure that facilitates ever greater commitment to fundamentalists commitments. For example, textbooks offer normatively laden commentary on other cultures. For example, commenting on Canadian First Nations, one textbook observes

Because they were removed from Christian influences and their tribal customs, many had a hard time adjusting to modern living....They lost their traditional traits of self-reliance because they now expected the government to do for them the things that they should do for themselves. (Parsons, 1987, p. 47)

Similarly, one textbook observes:

Thoreau advocated the same kind of anarchy that characterized the biblical period of the Judges in which every man did what was right in his own eyes. The political views which he expressed in “Civil Disobedience” became popular a hundred years after his death, and they have led to much disorder, violence, and anarchy in the name of peace, rights, and individualism. (p. 46)

By framing all subjects within the fundamentalist Christian perspective, fundamentalists hope to deeply ingrain this perspective into students as a means of

defending students from what is perceived to be the ever-present threat of secular humanism.

The third foundational principle of fundamentalist education is that education involves learning truth, not searching for it. Fundamentalists believe that they have direct access to absolute truth through divine revelation. The task of education then is to impart this truth, rather than develop the skills and habits necessary to engage in the search for truth. It is perhaps for this reason that controversy is often avoided through the discouraging of discussions of politics or religion beyond the basic recitation of dogma (Rose, 1988).

Fourth, since no search for truth is needed, education is authority-centred. This leads to authoritarian approaches to reading and lecturing. Student-centred discussion is minimized as student-led inquiry is seen increasing the likelihood that students might be led astray, a risk that is seen as unnecessary given that the teacher and tradition already have the correct answers via divine revelation. Therefore, a large part of education is geared toward ensuring students submit to the authority of the tradition (de Ruyter, 2001).

Finally, the motive for learning is to bring glory to God. The aim of education is first and foremost the creation of good fundamentalist Christians. What is learned is merely instrumental to the end of glorifying God. Should education ever come into conflict with that end, academics are sacrificed in favour of deeper inculcation into tradition.

## **Implications of Analysis for Fundamentalist Philosophy of Education**

As seen above, a primary worry of fundamentalists is moral degradation, which is seen to be primarily the product of secular humanism. In defense, fundamentalists shield their children from secular humanist culture, and attempt to instill a firm commitment to Christian values and epistemology. Fundamentalist Christian education “gets some basic character established before the child does battle with the world” (Parsons, 1987, p. 14). “Basic character” is understood as more than basic moral norms, but rather a firm and unwavering commitment to a particular comprehensive view of the good life. While some have argued that religious schooling can contribute to the long-term development of autonomy insofar as it introduces students to a variety of goods and a reasonably stable identity (Burt, 1994; De Jong & Snik, 2002; MacMullen, 2004; Schinkel, Ruyter, & Steutel, 2010;), it is clear that the strict inculcation and authoritarian presuppositions and methods of fundamentalist education is inherently in tension with education for autonomy. Of course, this will not be troubling to fundamentalists, as they see personal autonomy as a misguided secular humanist ideal. However, given my preceding analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, we would expect fundamentalist Christian education’s neglect of education for autonomy and overemphasis on education for morality to have a negative impact on the development of the care/harm and justice/fairness values. Thus, it seems that the feasibility constraint which applies to education for autonomy and education for morality reveals a tension within fundamentalist philosophy of education. An educational philosophy that espouses morality but not autonomy as educational aims fails to recognize the interdependent

nature of these aims. Given that the neglect of autonomy and overemphasis on morality will ultimately have a negative effect on morality, fundamentalists should have some concern that their educational philosophy might be incoherent and, if not self-defeating, far from an efficacious means for attaining their aim of morality.

However, making this case is complicated by two key factors. First, above I observed how moral psychology's lack of focus on loyalty/betrayal and authority/subversion limits the implications of my analysis for communitarians. This problem is exacerbated in the context of fundamentalism insofar as fundamentalist morality not only also stresses ingroup/outgroup loyalty and authority/subversion, but also and sanctity/degradation, and all of these are largely left out of research in moral psychology (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). While general indicators of care/harm and fairness/cheating will likely be welcome signs of moral development from the fundamentalist perspective, there is an important question as to how these two are ranked in comparison to the other three sets of values, as well as to what degree education for autonomy facilitates or hinders the development of the other three sets of values.

Secondly, the authoritarianism inherent in fundamentalism limits the efficacy of evidence-based arguments. Those aspects of the tradition that are deemed by adherents as being fundamental to the tradition, or for which there are explicit teachings in authoritative texts, are impervious to arguments to the contrary. If an authoritative text prescribes corporeal punishment for disobedient children, scientific studies that provide evidence that such forms of discipline negatively impact social development will have little persuasive force.



While the above considerations make any comprehensive claim regarding the implications of my analysis for fundamentalist philosophy of education impossible, some insight on this issue can be gained through an investigation of those elements of education for autonomy that have historically been seen as most morally problematic by fundamentalist groups: anti-authoritarianism, neutral exposure, and the threat to fundamentalist community posed by pluralist liberal democratic contexts.

**Anti-Authoritarianism.** Fundamentalist Christian education is characterized by authoritarianism in multiple forms. First, its presuppositions are authoritarian insofar as they are not based upon empirical-evidence-based arguments, but rather on the claim of divine revelation transmitted via sacred texts. The validity of the texts themselves is taken as authoritative and outside the realm of inquiry and critique. Secondly, fundamentalist methods are authoritarian insofar as critical dialogue is eschewed in favor of lecture and rote learning. To the degree that dialogue is engaged, it is within the boundaries of the tradition's respective fundamental presuppositions (Rose, 1988).

Authoritarianism can influence education for morality in a number of ways. First, recall that education for morality is primarily about the deepening and expanding of awareness of the moral aspects of the human condition. Fundamentalists would likely claim that authoritarianism facilitates this process insofar as fundamentalists have direct access to such matters, and need only pass them down. However, one question raises a key problem in calling fundamentalist practices *education*: How is it that they know the veracity of the texts, as well as the veracity of their particular interpretation of those texts? This question brings Rawls' "burdens of judgment" back

into the picture. Such burdens of judgment are not merely a liberal presupposition, but rather an unavoidable aspect of the human condition insofar as any moral claim is always subject to the epistemological question “How do you know?” and the complex series of evidence, arguments, and claims that follow. While fundamentalists might wish to deny such burdens through claiming the inerrancy of an authoritative text, this move does not negate the issue; as such a claim demands a non-circular justification. In attempting to provide one, one inevitably runs back into Rawls’ burdens of judgment. Insofar as fundamentalist “education” for morality neglects this central aspect of the human condition in relation to morality, it is highly suspect as an instance of education at all.

Authoritarianism can also have a negative impact on morally important awareness-promoting capacities. The most apparent conflict is between authoritarianism and critical thinking. Michael Bacon (2010) argues that the Christian belief in original sin entails that humanity’s ability to properly assess evidence and reasons has been compromised. This can be seen in the lack of argumentation and discourse in fundamentalist education, as such discourse is based upon human reasoning, which will likely do more to confuse than clarify. However, while fundamentalists will likely see critical thinking as unnecessary and problematic with regard to the assessing the validity of the fundamentals of the tradition, whose validity is presupposed, the reason assessment that is the core of critical thinking is also important for intelligent and coherent fidelity to the tradition as one applies the basic principles of the tradition in day-to-day life. This leads to a tension in the fundamentalist position. On the one hand, sound reason assessment is necessary to

maintain fidelity to the tradition. However, critical thinking is not merely a skill detached from one's motivational structure. Rather, the practice that is necessary in developing the skill of critical thinking also develops one's habitual character; one develops the habit of critically assessing claims. While it is possible to, to a degree, compartmentalize one's views, there is the ever-present possibility that the habit of critical inquiry will spill over to assessment of the fundamentals of the tradition, thus introducing a new standard of assessment: evidence-based argument rather than the authoritative proclamations of the text. Fundamentalists must develop critical reasoning skills in relation to application of the fundamentals in one's day-to-day life, while also attempting to strictly curb the tendency to apply critical reasoning to the fundamentals of the tradition, and thus maintain authoritarianism. The danger for fundamentalists is that critical thinking will be too sharply curbed, and diminish the ability of members of the tradition to intelligently and coherently live according to the tenets of the tradition, or not curbed sharply enough, and invite critiques of the fundamentals similar to the "higher biblical critiques" based upon Enlightenment rationality. While it is difficult to say how feasible this balance is, it is at best a highly precarious one that would take substantial educational and societal efforts to establish and maintain.

Authoritarianism also threatens the development of a number of other morality-related awareness-promoting capacities. First, research on the development of imagination stresses the importance of tolerance of ambiguity and practice in questioning assumptions, two practices that are in inherent tension with authoritarianism (Yurtsever, 2000). Given the importance of moral imagination for

moral functioning, there is a worry that fundamental authoritarianism limits moral imagination (Narvaez & Mrkva, 2014). Secondly, as discussed in Chapter Five, non-authoritarian dialogue with children facilitates both language development and empathy. While language development certainly facilitates one's ability to engage in effective and nuanced moral discourse, empathy has been shown to have multiple morality related functions. While fundamentalist parenting styles are a complex mix of authoritarianism and affection (Wilcox, 1998), there is evidence that fundamentalism has a negative impact on empathy development (Bradley, 2009). To the degree that fundamentalists value altruism and pro-social motivations and behaviours, as well moral insight, they should be concerned with the negative impact authoritarianism may have on empathy development.

**“Neutral” Exposure.** Fundamentalist groups have historically objected to one of the primary components of education for autonomy: an exposure to various worldviews that does not clearly and explicitly convey that one particular worldview is correct (in this case, the fundamentalist's perspective). In this approach, the school does not actively praise or critique various worldviews, nor argue that one is “more true” than another, nor actively endorse relativism. Rather, it acknowledges the existence of multiple traditions, and attempts to present to students, in an unbiased way, the history, beliefs and practices of these traditions. In this sense, the exposure aspect of education for autonomy strives to be descriptive rather than proselytizing. I will call this approach “neutral exposure”, however, *neutral* is not meant to indicate that this approach is not without potential non-neutral effects, as it might lead to the abandoning, revision, or affirmation of one's beliefs and habits. Such exposure is also

not neutral in light of the critical reasoning (including critical spirit) that is a part of education for autonomy. As discussed above, critical spirit includes “a rejection of partiality, arbitrariness, special pleading”. When combined with neutral exposure, such an approach would seem to inherently promote reason as the ultimate arbiter of truth between various traditions, rather than, for example, faith or tradition. However, there exists a rich body of work on the relationship between reason and faith (Bishop, 2010). Acknowledging the value of reason and the value of exposure to different traditions does not necessarily imply the supremacy of reason in all things; that is an issue that remains open to students’ reflections and judgments on the material in light of their personal experience. Education for autonomy is meant to open inquiry on such matters, not close it with presuppositions or pronouncements; the standards and theories of rationality and epistemology that guide such inquiry stand as an open and central question in education for autonomy. While inquiry must always occur in the context of standards of judgment, the hope of neutral exposure guided by critical spirit is that students can learn to engage a topic from the point of view of various traditions and their related standards *in turn*, thus offering not a “view from nowhere”, but rather a view that moves through and takes on various positions, with the hope of promoting the most self- and other-aware and well-informed inquiry possible.

Regardless of the above observations, “neutral” exposure is often seen as a biased enterprise by fundamentalists. The case of *Mozert v. Hawkins* sheds some light on fundamentalist concern over such biases. In *Mozert*, a group of conservative Christian families sued the Hawkins County School Board over the Holt Reading Curriculum. The plaintiffs presented a number of complaints: that the reading curriculum taught “value

relativism, disrespect towards parents, the theory of evolution, humanistic values, and the idea that any belief in the supernatural is adequate to attain salvation". At the heart of these complaints was an objection to the "neutral" exposure of their children to alternate religions and worldviews. The plaintiffs claimed that a neutral portrayal of alternative ways of life constituted an interference with the free exercise of their religion. They wanted to ensure that exposure to diverse worldviews took place in a context that made clear the righteousness of their own views. Concerns over loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation values are all apparent in the *Mozert* case.

My earlier comments touch upon the deeper ontological and epistemological issues at play within education for autonomy. However, my primary concern at this point is the issue of to what degree neutral exposure influences morality; although the two are certainly related, and thus this issue cannot be fully addressed without a more thorough treatment of that subject, a few important insights can be gleaned at the current time. Recall, Haidt argued that liberals tended to understand morality as predominately involving the harm/care and fairness/cheating value sets, while conservatives (such as fundamentalists) tend to recognize morality as not only consisting of harm/care and fairness/cheating, but also loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. To my knowledge there is no research that directly assesses the degree to which neutral exposure to various traditions undermines loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation values. Nor will I speculate on the question here. Rather, I want to point out that the analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality gives us

some reason to believe that neutral exposure plays an important role in facilitating the care/harm and fairness/cheating values, especially in pluralist liberal democratic contexts. First, as with authoritarianism, neutral exposure is related to the development of a number of awareness-promoting capacities that also have moral functions. First, empathy has been shown to hold perceptual, epistemic, motivational, and behavioural moral functions. Mature empathy is facilitated by other-focused role taking in which one attempts to take on the position of the other as if *one was the other*. That is, one attempts to clothe oneself in the garb of the other's beliefs and particular historical and psychological characteristics. This is, of course, always only the most rough of estimates, and it is highly unlikely that one could come to an acute experience of what it is like to be the other. Furthermore, one "takes on" the view of the other only to a limited extent insofar as one does not wholeheartedly embrace the other's view (i.e., become a convert), but rather one takes it on as a sort of vivid thought experiment through which one's perceptions and emotional reactions to a given scenario are affected by the change in framework. The point here is only that, in order to engage in other-focused role taking, one must be able to set aside one's own framework for a moment; to stop judging the other from one's alternate belief system and to take on the other's framework on its own terms. Other-focused role taking holds particular epistemic, motivational and behavioural moral advantages (Oxley, 2011).

Secondly, there is evidence that multicultural experiences facilitate one's movement up through Kohlberg's developmental stages (Narvaez 2010). Alternately, fundamentalists tend to employ moral reasoning oriented around maintaining norms via legalistic structures (stage 4 of the DIT; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999).

Although there are a number of factors that go into moral action (Rest, 1986), higher neo-Kohlbergian stages of moral reasoning are correlated with increased pro-social behaviour (Narvaez, 2005; Rest, 1986). While religiously based reasoning is not necessarily in conflict with postconventional moral reasoning (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999), fundamentalist morality that is based specifically on authoritarian reasons for moral positions do seem to be in conflict with the ideal of postconventional reasoning. There is evidence for this in instances where religious persons acknowledged their intuition for postconventional reasoning, but put aside that intuition in favor of conventional moral reasoning based in their tradition (Lawrence, 1987).

Neutral exposure was also said to be important for the development of a properly stable but malleable identity, a form of identity that I argued was important for morality. However, fundamentalists see pluralist liberal democratic conditions as necessitating a stronger inculcation into their given tradition; effectively promoting an identity more firmly rooted in the norms of the tradition through a denial of neutral exposure. As discussed in Chapter Five, such a rigid identity poses a risk to other aspects of morality. First, I argued that moral fallibility makes it necessary to be able to revise one's moral interests, and that a rigid identity obstructs such a process. However, the fundamentalist principle of inherency renders this danger moot, as no such fallibility is possible. Secondly, while I cited evidence that rigid identity holds other potential risks, fundamentalists could argue that such risks will be negated by a strong inculcation into basic moral norms of the tradition. In short, my argument that



neutral exposure is important for developing a properly stable yet malleable identity will likely not be compelling to fundamentalists given their presupposition of inerrancy.

**Survival of Community.** While I have argued that authoritarianism and a lack of neutral exposure has a number of negative influences on care/harm and fairness/cheating, these arguments do not speak to the loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation value sets. Thus, they hold minimal persuasive force for fundamentalist groups. However, I now want to argue that authoritarianism and a lack of neutral exposure can also negatively affect the ability of a tradition to survive in pluralist liberal democratic contexts, and thus indirectly undermine the tradition's moral framework.

The positive role of education for autonomy for the survival of community in a pluralist liberal democracy is first and foremost a function of the nature of pluralist liberal democracies. Such societal conditions are, ideally, marked by a free exchange of ideas from competing moral, political, economic and religious perspectives. These debates take place both within and between these perspectives, and here it is the latter that is of particular relevance. Such debate is competitive insofar as one tradition seeks to demonstrate how it is superior to another. This process of critique is, at heart, a process of making salient the other tradition's problematic aspects. If these problems are substantial, such a process of critique will likely bring about what Alasdair MacIntyre (1991a) calls "epistemological crisis", or "a systematic breakdown of enquiry in the face of a certain set of intractable problems within a particular scheme of belief" (p. 120). Commenting on this phenomenon, Daniel Vokey (2001) observes, "the inability to make progress within a particular conceptual scheme results in a loss of

confidence in all or a significant part of its assumptions” (p. 53). Thus, the epistemological crisis must be overcome for the tradition to flourish. In short, ideally, a pluralist liberal democratic society establishes conditions in which traditions are regularly exposed to critique, and thus members of a tradition must be able to engage in these debates in such a way as to defend and maintain their tradition if the tradition is to survive.

The degree to which a given tradition will actually engage with competing traditions is an open question. Surely, isolationism, both on the part of the individual and on the part of the tradition as a whole, can always be pursued. The argument presented here will have little bearing on groups that simply choose to avoid or ignore critiques of their tradition. However, for those traditions that wish to engage in and influence the wider culture – a not uncommon characteristic of fundamentalist religious groups who tend to critique modern culture and seek to influence social change according to their tradition – the ability to engage in debate and respond to critiques will be an important part of their activities.

I suggest that the ability to enter into debate in such a way as to demonstrate the rational superiority of one’s tradition over another’s is important for defending one’s tradition from a potential epistemological crisis brought about by the critiques of an alternate tradition. To the degree that one is unable to defend one’s tradition, such epistemological crises will be seen as substantial and likely contribute to the loss of confidence in one’s tradition, as described above. What facilitates one’s ability to effectively engage in such debate? MacIntyre (1988) and Vokey (2001, 2009) argue that demonstrating the superiority of one’s position occurs through a process of

dialectical discourse. Vokey describes dialectical discourse as consisting of two distinct tasks. The first is to demonstrate that one's conceptual framework has the resources to

a) make progress on one or more theoretical and/or practical problems that representatives of the alternate position recognize as important, but cannot adequately address within the limitations of their conceptual framework; b) identify what is lacking in the alternative scheme that accounts for their failure; and c) offer some explanation for the alleged blind spots...within the alternative scheme. (Vokey, 2009, p. 341)

The second task is to show that one's position shares all the advantages of the rival view and is not vulnerable to an alternate and similar critique from another position.

The above process is undertaken according to the criteria set out in the notion of wide reflective equilibrium. Vokey defines the search for wide reflective equilibrium as a process of investigation in which the goal is to "achieve the most satisfactory set of agreements in a given context of enquiry and practice" (Vokey, 2001, p. 92). The term satisfactory here implies that the elements of a given framework

a) are internally consistent and mutually supporting, b) contribute to and are consistent with the world view and way of life of the larger socio-historical context in which they are embedded, c) they assist in the accomplishment of the aims and objectives of the members of that community, and d) they are defensible in dialectical encounters with competing paradigms of inquiry. (Vokey, 2009, pp. 92-93)

In short, wide reflective equilibrium is established when the greatest degree of coherence, consistency and effectiveness has been achieved in a given conceptual framework.

MacIntyre (1988, 1991) and Vokey (2001, 2009) cite two conditions of dialectical discourse that are particularly relevant for my present purposes. First, one needs to be able to empathically engage with the rival tradition, so as to understand and critique that tradition on its own terms. Such engagement is only possible if one has a deep and sophisticated understanding of the rival tradition. Secondly, one needs robust reasoning abilities to identify and draw out the promises and problems of both one's own tradition, as well as the rival tradition. These two preconditions point to a fundamental requirement of dialectical discourse; namely, the ability to engage in robust inquiry about one's own, as well as other, philosophical and religious traditions, as well as the ability to engage one's rational capacities towards the end of elucidating a given belief system's state of wide reflective equilibrium.

I submit that an education for the above two preconditions of dialectical discourse is indistinguishable from an education for autonomy. Recall, two core aspects of education for autonomy are the neutral exposure of students to various worldviews, and the development of rational abilities necessary for inquiry and debate about those worldviews. Given this, the first way such an education facilitates one's ability to engage in dialectical debate is in its offering of substantial knowledge of the various traditions that make up a pluralist society. It is the neutrality of this project that is important here. Recall, dialectical discourse demands that one engage adherents *on their own terms* to demonstrate how their position is in some way deficient in

coherence, consistency or effectiveness. It is an education that does not couch its treatment of a given tradition in terms of a critique from an alternate tradition that best enables one to encounter the other tradition on its own terms. Furthermore, debate is fundamentally about an exchange of reasons. As such, education for autonomy's emphasis on developing reasoning abilities facilitates one's ability to engage in skillfully in debate with rival traditions. This need for developing critical thinking skills problematizes the authoritarianism found in fundamentalist education, which works against the development of critical thinking skills.

If the above observations are correct, then it seems that education for personal autonomy plays an important role in the survival of one's tradition in pluralist liberal democratic contexts. The argument can be summed up in the following way:

- 1) Pluralist liberal democratic conditions, ideally, facilitate free and open debate between competing frameworks.
- 2) Such debate leads to an increase in epistemological crises as competing interpretations of reality make salient substantially problematic aspects of competing traditions.
- 3) If the tradition is to survive, such crises must be overcome by finding wide reflective equilibrium through a process of dialectical discourse.
- 4) Finding wide reflective equilibrium through dialectical discourse requires the knowledge of other traditions on their own terms, as well as the intellectual abilities necessary to engage in debate.
- 5) It is education for personal autonomy that develops this knowledge and ability.

- 6) Therefore, education for personal autonomy facilitates one's ability to defend one's tradition in pluralist liberal democratic societies.

This argument attempts to speak to fundamentalists on their own terms by appealing to their fundamental concerns: the survival of their tradition and its related moral commitments in pluralist liberal democratic contexts. This argument does not hold any rationalist presuppositions about reason as a reliable or ultimate route to truth. Rather, it merely requires that fundamentalists acknowledge that knowledge of other traditions and possession of the reasoning abilities necessary to engage in dialectical discourse facilitate one's ability to defend one's tradition in public debate. The argument here is that the fundamentalist denial of education for autonomy negatively impacts their ability to defend and maintain their tradition in pluralist liberal democratic contexts, thus negatively impacting the survival of its moral tenets.

### **Summary**

My analysis of the relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality posits an interdependent relationship between balanced approaches to each of these educational projects. This lends credence to liberal philosophies of education that espouse both of these educational projects, but only if the account of education of autonomy does not merely focus on reasoning abilities to the neglect of other important elements, and only if the account of education for morality does not hinder the development of autonomy. Similarly, this analysis has revealed that communitarian philosophies of education can be very similar to liberal philosophies of education with regards to the autonomy/morality issue insofar as there are members of both camps that advocate both education for morality and education for autonomy;

liberals do not necessarily neglect the importance of communal virtues, and communitarians are not necessarily uncritical and conservative conformists, as has sometimes been suggested (Nash, 1997). Communitarian philosophies of education that understand the communal norms in autonomy-coherent ways stand as possibly feasible educational philosophies. Furthermore, this analysis revealed that the concern posed by some communitarians that liberal education for autonomy contributes to moral degradation is valid only when directed at incomplete accounts of education for autonomy that focus on rationality to the detriment of educational for autonomy's other elements. With regards to fundamentalist philosophies of education, the authoritarianism and lack of neutral exposure to alternate traditions makes fundamentalist philosophy of education inherently in conflict with education for autonomy. While this approach to education might help bolster the conservative value sets of loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation, it also comes with a risk to care and fairness value sets. Furthermore, neglect of education for autonomy negatively impacts the ability of fundamentalists to defend their tradition in the face of the inevitable critiques that will come in pluralist liberal democratic contexts, and hence will undermine the moral life that tradition espouses.

### **Closing Remarks**

The arguments presented in this dissertation have been painted with a broad stroke. This was done both to bring together a wide body of literature to glimpse the larger relationship between education for autonomy and education for morality, as well as to present an argument that navigates the competing scientific and philosophical players in these fields and to speak to their respective interests from points of wide

consensuses. Because of this breadth, this dissertation does not present any solid conclusions, and only hints at a larger picture.

I have attempted to bring an often-overlooked chapter of Peters' awareness-based analysis of education back into focus, and to argue for its merits for constructing an integrative approach to education. I also offered methodological reflections on the activity of conceptual analysis that expanded on the ongoing discussion of the nature of conceptual analysis within analytic philosophy of education. In doing so I made explicit the principles used to conduct a conceptual analysis that was capable of speaking to the problems this thesis aimed to address. While I argued that an awareness-based understanding of education is implied in many uses of the concept across traditions, by elucidating the awareness-promoting capacities and their related developmental conditions as part of education, I exposed deep ethical and political presuppositions that are inherent in an awareness-based conception of education. Furthermore, by offering a detailed account of an awareness-based conception of education, I have offered a conception of education that has the potential to bridge various foci of educational research (e.g., rationalist account knowledge, skills, habits, etc.), as well as multiple disciplinary fields that study these issues, under one banner of "awareness-promotion" of the human condition. Thus providing a larger context in which these more specific research agendas can be placed and made to relate to one another in light of a larger narrative concerning what it is we are doing when we pursue *education*.

I have also offered what many analytical philosophers of education have long called for: a more detailed account of education for autonomy that draws upon developmental research. The primary revelation of this integrative account of



education for autonomy was the degree to which its various elements also contribute to the harm/care and fairness/cheating value sets by promoting pro-sociality, as well as contribute to the capacities and knowledge that facilitate sophisticated engagement with moral and ethical issues. In short, it revealed the interdependent nature of education for autonomy and education for morality.

Finally, from this analysis of the relation between education for autonomy and education for morality, I derived feasibility constraints that limit educational philosophies that can realistically be advocated. Thus contributing to debates between liberal, communitarian, and liberal philosophies of education. Liberal and communitarian philosophies of education that are appropriately balanced gesture towards a feasible educational agenda in relation to its call for both autonomy and morality as educational aims. The communitarian worry that autonomy poses a threat to morality is understandable given the minimal, rationalist approaches to education for autonomy that have been presented in the past. However, a more integrative account of education for autonomy effectively weds education for autonomy and education for morality (in relation to care and fairness values). In contrast, fundamentalist philosophy of education is problematic insofar as its stated educational aims are incompatible, and its methods partially self-defeating.

The above reflections on the implications of my analysis for liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist philosophies of education are only suggestive, and more detailed work would need to be done to draw stronger conclusions. However, while the breadth of the preceding pages make any solid conclusion premature, three general observations can be made that might act as effective guides in assessing

educational theory and practice. First, awareness, morality, and autonomy are all promoted by balance in multiple personal and social spheres, thus extremism of all kinds should be approached critically if one cares for autonomy, morality, or awareness. Secondly, authoritarianism is problematic from the perspective of the development of autonomy, morality, and awareness, and any authoritarian approach to education should be viewed with suspicion. Finally, there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between autonomy, morality, and awareness, and the social conditions that promote them. The autonomy, morality, and awareness of the individual help to sustain safe, warm, democratic, and egalitarian social conditions, which in turn promote these individual characteristics. Thus, we have a reason to believe that the larger picture outlined here points towards a coherent system capable of being self-sustaining. In contrast, authoritarian or extremist social conditions impair the development and functioning of the very individual characteristics that are necessary to sustain a given way of life.

Much remains to be done to provide a more compelling case for the picture I have painted here. First, more empirical work on the social conditions, childrearing and formal educational practices that facilitate the development of the awareness-promoting capacities, autonomy and morality could help to strengthen or problematize my argument. In particular, I echo Haidt's (2012) call for more research into the additional "conservative" moral values (loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/subversion), which have received minimal attention in moral psychology. Particularly, research on: the developmental conditions of these values; their relation to personal, social and ecological wellbeing; and their developmental coherence or

incoherence with the remaining two sets of virtues (harm/care and fairness/cheating), would be particularly helpful in moving forward debates between liberal, communitarian, and fundamentalist over educational aims. Relatedly, further philosophical work could be done on the conceptual coherence of all five sets of virtues, as there is reason to believe that the “liberal” values are more fundamental than the remaining three sets, and concerns over conflicts between these values needs to be addressed (Blum, 2013). Furthermore, Haidt’s work is not without its critics (e.g., Blum, 2013; Narvaez, 2008b), and further work on the five value sets would serve to bolster or critique the case I have made. Secondly, while responses to the above arguments from liberal and communitarian theorists would move the discussion forward, because the fundamentalist perspective is potentially the most problematic according to this analysis, responses from fundamentalists would provide especially useful insights into the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments and their potential for fostering consensus on educational aims. Thirdly, I have only briefly touched upon the epistemological and ontological presuppositions of education for autonomy, and to what degree they may be fundamentally in tension with faith or reliance upon tradition. A more thorough exploration of this topic would certainly help elucidate the relationship between education for autonomy and fundamentalist philosophies of education. As it stands, I have only argued that elements of education for autonomy, such as neutral exposure and critical thinking, can both contribute to the development of care and fairness, as well as the ability of one to defend one’s tradition in pluralist liberal democratic contexts. Finally, an application of this analysis to

concrete cases, such as the debate of parochial schools, would help to elucidate the theoretical and practical implications of this analysis.

This dissertation has been an opportunity for me to revisit, in a philosophically and scientifically informed manner, those themes that were so prominent during my childhood and adolescence: the autonomy/morality relationship and how individuals from various frameworks can engage in fruitful dialogue. Having come to the end, I have mixed feelings about the outcome of this research and its implications for moving forward on the important educational aims of autonomy and morality. On the one hand, this dissertation provides us with compelling reasons to believe that education for autonomy and education for morality (understood through the care and fairness value sets) are coherent and mutually supportive. This is a welcome outcome for someone such as myself who values both autonomy and the care and fairness based conception of morality discussed above. However, this dissertation also points to some disquieting conclusions about the liberal/conservative divide for liberal democratic politics. First, I argued that education for autonomy empowers traditions to survive in pluralist liberal democratic society. However, the argument I presented is double-edged. First, if this argument fosters greater consensus on the kind of education we as a society wish to provide our children, it will have helped combat isolationist tendencies within K-12 education. However, recall that the initial social conditions that make necessary this risky (from the point of view of fundamentalists) educational project are those conditions secured by liberal democratic politics. If a fundamentalist group were to accept my argument about the interrelation between education for autonomy and the survival of tradition in pluralist liberal democracies, but continued to hold that such

an educational project is too risky, then there would be only two options left for such a group. One is to move towards greater isolation so as to avoid critique of their community. However, this may be problematic for such groups for two reasons. First, as information technology becomes more widespread, such isolationism is going to become evermore difficult. Secondly, if isolationism tends to result in radicalization, then any group that believes the current formulation of their tradition to be the correct should be wary of isolationism; isolationism will likely lead to changes within the tradition towards more radical stances that do not necessarily fit within the tradition as it currently stands (Talisie, 2009). Recognition of these two problems on the part of conservative groups might lead to a troubling line of reasoning: if liberal democratic politics creates conditions in which a highly risky educational project is needed to sustain one's tradition, and isolationism is not a feasible option, then the only remaining option seems to be some form of revolt against liberal democratic politics. It is here where we can see the hegemonic nature of liberal democratic politics, and how this hegemonic influence can sow the seeds of radicalism. In short, the conditions that liberal democratic politics secure end up demanding education for personal autonomy if one wishes one's tradition to survive. Thus, regardless of whether or not a government imposes the educational aim of personal autonomy on the population through a given educational policy, the very structure of liberal democratic politics and the nature of the processes that contribute to the survival of a tradition naturally manifest the need for education for autonomy. If such an education is seen as striking at the very foundation of a given tradition, then that tradition will likely not survive in

liberal democratic contexts. Because of this, it is possible that members of that tradition will see their only option as open revolt against liberal democratic politics.

The second problem is that the degree of generality I was forced to employ with regard to my conception of morality, as well as my lack of specificity of what constitutes the human condition, leaves unanswered the specific degree to which the frameworks of the various parties involved hold fundamentally irresolvable tensions, and the implications of these tensions for educational policy and practice. I attempted to gain some footing by working with what common ground I could find, namely, the care and fairness values implied in both liberal and conservative understandings of morality, and a conception of education as awareness promotion of the human condition. This allowed me to make some headway on speaking to the mutual interests of liberals, communitarians, and fundamentalists alike. However, the divides that might be uncovered through a more specific investigation into competing views of morality and the human condition might be such that they overpower whatever commonality I managed to find in these pages. To return to the place where I began in this work, I believe my parents did an admirable job in pursuing both autonomy and morality in how my siblings and I were raised. However, I can imagine conservative family and friends pointing to my own abandonment of the Catholic tradition as evidence that my parents' concern with autonomy was exactly what led to my un-Catholic, and hence immoral, life. While I have argued that the denial of education for autonomy will have a number of drawbacks even from the viewpoint of a conservative Catholic, it is likely that, if the potential risk is losing one's faith in the tradition, my conservative family and friends would happily accept whatever negative impact there might be in rejecting

education for autonomy in return for what is seen as the greater good of ensuring adherence to the Catholic tradition.

As is undoubtedly clear, much remains to be done in order to more fully flesh out the morality/autonomy relationship with regards to more socially conservative moral values and fundamentalist religious frameworks, and relatedly, the view of the human condition espoused in these frameworks. Regardless of the inevitable limitations of a project such as this, it is my hope that the work done in this dissertation will go some way in cutting a rough trail towards more informed and productive debate over autonomy and morality as educational aims. It is my hope that such debate can help promote consensus over educational aims, and facilitate the implementation of educational initiatives that promote a more just, caring and free society populated by people of high awareness, intelligence, and good hearts that are capable of meeting the pressing local and global challenges of today, and the yet undreamt of challenges to come.

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