TEACHING MORAL CONCEPTS: 
A NEW CONCEPTION

by

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Abstract

Moral education has never been easy but doing it in a context of diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, religious and experiential backgrounds emphasizes certain particular problems. This context further includes a commitment to pluralism. The most difficult problems that arise in this context stem from an apparent conflict between our commitments to education and to pluralism. I seek to articulate a conception of moral education that is harmonious with our commitment to pluralism and that provides substantial guidance for teachers in terms of how they might achieve its aims. To this end, I construct and defend a conception of teaching moral concepts that is sensitive to the concerns focused by diversity.

I work from the background understanding that the broad aim of moral education in a pluralistic society is to help every student to be a sincere participant in the moral community, to help each of them to find meaning in this participation and to be committed members capable of critical engagement. Given the intimate relationship between language and our way(s) of life, achieving this meaningful, yet critical, participation will require that students have an expressive relation with the moral language(s) of their society. For persons to feel a part of their moral community, the discourse of that community—the moral language(s) it supports—must include concepts in which they can express their deepest concerns.

Education can play an important role in introducing students to the moral languages of their society in a way that helps them to develop the appropriate relation with them. Our understanding of what it means to teach moral concepts can greatly affect our ability to do this. If we conceive of this practice as embedded in the larger enterprise described above, we will better understand how to achieve the desired end. Furthermore, an understanding of the open-texture of moral concepts will help us to see that teaching them is not a matter of trying to achieve some fixed end, but rather involves helping students to acquire a working understanding of them with the understanding, openness, commitment and discipline required to continuously deepen this understanding and to sensitively articulate it in new moral situations. I argue that if we view this practice as embedded in moral life so that meaningful participation and critical participation become one in that life, we will be able to respond sensitively to the concerns of our pluralistic society.
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This thesis emerges not only from my academic studies in moral education but from my reflection on moral life generally and how each of us can learn and develop in living that life. Thus my engagement with this work has been intensely personal and my own shortcomings are sure to be reflected in it. For any insensitivities, inadequacies or narrowness that remain, I accept full responsibility.

Finally I would like to thank the University of British Columbia for supporting my studies for two years with a University Graduate Fellowship. I hope I will someday have the chance to give in return.
Chapter One

MORAL EDUCATION AND PLURALISM: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Introduction

We live in a pluralistic society which both demands a program of moral education and provides the context in which such a program faces particular philosophical and practical difficulties. Assuming the necessity and desirability of moral education for the maintenance of a healthy pluralistic society, what should such a programme look like and how should it proceed? To answer these questions we must examine some of the difficulties that diversity and pluralism focus for us and consider how a programme of moral education might address these demands at the same time that it seeks to achieve its aims.1

By pluralism, I am referring to a normative value stance regarding diversity in society. This term is also used as a descriptive term refering to the fact of diversity itself. I will use 'diversity' as the descriptive term and save 'pluralism' for this normative use.2 People have different notions of exactly what a pluralistic view requires us to do to safeguard diversity. The very minimum that can be said for any normative conception of pluralism is that it involves upholding people's prima facie right to live as they see fit—in this way, it is concerned with safeguarding people's freedom to express themselves in different ways. Moral education also requires a normative value stance and in order for any programme in moral education to proceed, it must assume some basis of agreement or commonality. With such general characterisations of pluralism and moral education, no obvious difficulties are apparent. However, constructing conceptions sufficiently detailed to describe and guide actual practice requires that we face actual and potential difficulties when the safeguarding of diversity, in a particular instance, may conflict with certain requirements of agreement in moral education—for example this tension may arise when considering the practice of female circumcision or when considering how to respond to neo-Nazi organizations that advocate ideas detrimental to the project of education itself. In this chapter I will

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1The reason I say that diversity and pluralism 'focuses' these difficulties is because I believe that the root concerns which allow us to see these difficulties as difficulties should be concerns of moral education even in a primarily homogeneous society.

2This, for example, is the sense that Coombs (1986) argues should be foundational in our understanding of multicultural education.
examine some of the specific difficulties that can arise for the pluralistic moral educator and consider the requirements of a view able to reconcile or harmonize pluralism and moral education in practice.

**Pluralism**

We live in a context of diversity. This is true at many levels. Many societies today include groups and individuals with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds; who live according to different values and value system—including different conceptions of morality and different moral codes; with different priorities and ideals; with different social, cultural and religious practices; using different languages and playing different language-games. In countries such as the United States and Canada, which originated from and in diversity, pluralism, in some instantiation or another, has always been among the standing concerns. In Canada today, the struggle to be a bilingual, multicultural society has focused many of the difficulties of making pluralism a living reality. Even societies that seem homogeneous in some respects—for example, ethnically—are diverse in others—for example, religiously. The world, taken as a whole then, certainly embodies diversity of all kinds. And with the end of the cold war, the potential for forming a world community has never been so great. We need to understand what obstacles remain so that we can create a vision of pluralism that can help us to successfully achieve healthy pluralistic societies contributing to a healthy world community.

Pluralism is based on the recognition of a *prima facie* right to difference. The acceptance of this value can issue in three different normative demands. Most of the talk about pluralism uses the notion of *respect* to express the normative demand of this value, but other candidates are *tolerance* and *acceptance*. Tolerance requires only that we refrain from interfering with diversity. Acceptance is one notion that has had little examination and has been too quickly dismissed as radical. I believe that there is potential in this notion that has been untapped but it is not within the scope of my work here to investigate that potential. In its present instantiation, acceptance requires that we act as though all views, values and ways of life are equally acceptable and valid. Respect requires that we, in some way, appreciate diversity itself.\(^3\)

It is upon this last basis of respect that most conceptions of multiculturalism are grounded.

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3 I have chosen the term 'appreciate' quite deliberately for its close link to aesthetics. As Iris Murdoch (1970) has argued, the notions of 'looking' and 'seeing' things in certain ways, which is characteristic of...
These three normative stances can be grounded in different ways. I will discuss three of the most prominent views which can provide grounding for them: 1) various versions of relativism, 2) the view from epistemic uncertainty and 3) the view from the intrinsic worth of persons or respect for persons.

Relativism—epistemological, ethical, aesthetic or metaphysical—argues that the truth, justifiability, acceptability or validity of statements are relative to the individual, group or culture, and that there is no (respective) context-independent way to adjudicate between different views. Relativistic views are often used to ground the arguments for acceptance and tolerance. If all truth, justifiability, acceptability and validity are relative to the individual, group or culture, then our commitments to these things have no objective validity outside of the particular related context. We have no reason then to criticize or reject these commitments, nor does it make any sense to do so, from outside of the relevant context.

Subjectivism, the most radical relativistic view, has been used to support a demand for acceptance of differences, and failing that, has demanded a pervasive tolerance. But, in fact, subjectivism cannot be used to demand anything since demands require criteria of validity which are at least intersubjective. More moderate versions of relativism have been used to support the call for tolerance. Given that we have relativistic value stances, and given that there is no way to adjudicate between these stances across relative contexts, we should tolerate commitments different from our own since we share the need and the desire to remain committed to the beliefs and values we do hold.4

The notion of epistemic uncertainty can be traced back to an extension of the liberal argument for the marketplace of ideas and to a realist argument about the infinite complexity of reality.5 Either way, the argument contends that human beings are fallible in many ways and the uncertainty that we must live with in all our commitments should sufficiently humble us to recommend tolerance of views we do not agree with. That is, because we cannot be absolutely certain that we are right we must allow for the

4Notethattheconclusionheredoesnotfollowdeductivelyfromthepremisesexplicitlystated. A normative premise is also required to complete the argument.
5See for example Murdoch's arguments for this view in (1970, p. 42): "Good is indefinable... because of the infinite difficulty of the task of apprehending a magnetic but inexhaustible reality." Platts (1979) also argues in this way. (p. 247)
possibility that others' views are right. That possibility, if we are committed to truth, should be sufficient to recommend 
*tolerance*.

Epistemic uncertainty can also ground *respect*. Given our limited understanding of truth, there is always potential for enrichment from others’ views. If we view truth as a common goal and can appreciate others’ efforts and experiences toward this goal, then we should be able to appreciate the truth-revealing potential of their resultant views. This appreciation can be the basis of an attitude of *(prima facie)* respect for these different views—for their potential to explain, clarify and reveal aspects of reality in ways different from our own.

Kantian-type 'respect for persons' is the final foundation for *respect for diversity*. Without extensively articulating this notion of respect for persons, we can still examine how it might be used to ground *respect for diversity*. In a way it is an obvious implication given the fact of diversity, but this is too simple to be of much help. We still need to characterise 'respect for persons' in some way if we are to use it as grounding. This respect, like the respect for diversity, requires that we appreciate individual's personhood, however personhood is characterised.\(^6\) A minimum characterisation of personhood in this case, requires that we view persons as the source of potentially worthy views and commitments, that they are potentially sincere in their efforts toward truth and can potentially have critical deliberative capacity. This grounding for *respect for diversity* is different from the grounding from epistemic uncertainty. Here, one can be *'certain'* that others' views are wrong but still treat these views with respect based on a respect for the persons who produced them.\(^7\) An example of this is our stance toward great pre-scientific thinkers and their now obsolete views. An appreciation for diversity can spring from this through an appreciation of the significance for persons of the search for truth.

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\(^6\)To say that we *appreciate* their personhood is to say something different from saying that we grant them personhood. Personhood, then, is not the kind of thing that we can give to people—they either have it or not. To appreciate someone's personhood is to see them as a person, with all the qualities we attribute to persons. We can only make sense of granting personhood if we interpret it as treating a person as a person or causing a person to be treated as a person. As will be argued in chapter two, the act of granting personhood depends on this appreciation which is based on perception.

\(^7\)So on this view, the respect for different views is based on—and therefore is secondary to—the respect for the persons who produce those views. I would tend to favour this view over the one from epistemic uncertainty alone.
I can think of no reason, outside of potential contradictions, why we should have to choose one of these groundings to the exclusion of the others. This said, there are relativistic foundations that do contradict the commitments required by the arguments from epistemic uncertainty and respect for persons. Certain sophisticated forms of relativistic views—usually not called Relativism—can avoid these contradictions and thus work together with the views of epistemic uncertainty and respect for persons to help ground respect, tolerance and acceptance of diversity. For example, it is possible to hold that because certain views are relative to certain aspects of contexts, because we can never be sure that we fully perceive the precise limits of our own views (how they are relative) or those of others, and because the search for truth is a significant part of a meaningful life for a person, one should always be ready to give prima facie moral consideration to views different from one's own.

Finally, I believe that through acceptance, tolerance, respect or, most likely, a combination of these, pluralism can come to be used as a sort of ideal (the ideal sense of the term) which commends a vision of life with diversity. As a norm, it seeks to create a society where human diversity is not crushed, but given a congenial home; as an ideal, it commends diversity as a means of enrichment. There is no way to take such a pluralist stance (either normative or ideal) and be (morally) value-neutral. I will use pluralism in both these senses. The normative sense being the more morally fundamental (as the ideal sense presupposes it) and the ideal sense having educational alliances that will be interesting for moral education.\(^8\)

Requirements of moral education

To proceed with a programme of moral education, some agreement must be reached as to the general aim of the programme. If people from different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds can agree that moral education is a desirable endeavour, already a level of agreement exists. Unfortunately, this minimum level of agreement is insufficient to provide guidance for an educational programme. People from different backgrounds fill in the concept of morality and view moral being in different ways—that is,\(^8\)

\(^8\)One of the arguments for a positive valuing of some diversity in the moral realm is based on the fact that our morality is something we create given our circumstances. Because our circumstances are susceptible to change, the existence of diverse views and ways can aid in our capacity to be responsive to such changes and so to ensure that our morality continues to serve its purposes.
they will have different conceptions of morality and different visions of moral life. These differences can lead to many conflicts over the development and implementation of a substantive moral education programme. These conflicts can take the form of disagreements on specific values (as when two values conflict) or disagreement on scope (as when questions of relevance are raised).

Pluralism does provide commitments which a moral education programme can turn to for a higher level of agreement. But ethical pluralism, defined by Baier (1971) as a term that describes (and/or advocates) a state in which ethically diverse groups interact and/or live together and seek to deal with their ethical diversity without assimilation, (p. 102) is still an insufficient view to ground moral educational practice. Pluralism is primarily a social moral view and there has been sufficient criticism of the bare-bones public moral education approach for us to question the potential of pluralism to do any better, even if we include the public moral values associated with our liberal democratic society.9 Kenneth Strike (1982a) argues that public schools in liberal democratic societies are unable to fully educate since they are not allowed to cross into the realm of private values--in particular, personal moral values. Given his characterisation of the situation, I believe he has a point. But the public-private dichotomy of the moral realm, while useful in some respects, is limiting and problematic in others. The tripartite focal distinction I will propose is able to avoid many of these disadvantages. Moreover, I will not use my tripartite distinction to divide the moral realm into the parts that public education may address and the parts that it may not. The three aspects are intricately and intimately related, and the distinctions serve not so much to compartmentalize as to focus for the sake of clarifying relations and thus to help make the whole of the moral realm more accessible to the moral educator. Although I agree with Strike that education generally, and moral education in particular, cannot be the responsibility of public (or any kind of) schools alone, I disagree with his argument that public schools (in a liberal democratic society) may not address the teaching of what he calls private values.10

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9 See for example, Murdoch's (1970) arguments regarding the need for increased privatization of values in moral being. (pp. 20-26) Also, Sabina Lovibond (1983) argues that moral language will fail if it does not speak to or express peoples' individual lives and experiences. (p. 222) Finally views that argue for the teaching of virtues, character, and the approach from personal relationships also recognize the limits of this kind of 'public' moral education.

10 I will be much more specific about how we can address the private values in public schools without transgressing the values of liberal democracy in later chapters.
The different kinds of moral educational aims that have been pursued and argued for can be loosely categorized into three aspects: the individual, the social and the cultural. These three concepts are mutually defining without being mutually reducible. The individual aspect cannot be understood apart from the social nor the social apart from the individual; and there can be no cultural aspect without the other two. This said, the relationships are not simple ones. Neither an individualist nor a communitarian view is adequate. The individual cannot exist without the social nor the social without the individual, nor finally the cultural without the social and individual; all three aspects impinge upon each other. If we are to find clarity rather than imprisonment with this tripartite distinction, we must always remember these relations.

Educators and educational theorists who emphasize character, feelings (caring), personal experiences and the like, focus primarily on the individual aspect of morality. One could also say that the personal or individual point of view is given central importance. Moral training and its attendant aims focus on the social aspect; the aims come from the social point of view. Aiming at moral reasoning, and the teaching of (culturally based) ideals and virtues focus primarily on the cultural aspect of morality. I have characterised these aims as cultural because their meaning and sense require the stability characteristic of cultural forms. Their characterisation (and achievement) requires culturally understood, established concepts whose applicability (or potential meaning) transcends that of more fleeting social concepts attached to more particular social contexts. I use the terms ‘focus’ and ‘primarily’ to emphasize that my categorization of these aims does not imply that their achievement can be successful through aiming purely at the aspects in which they are each categorized. In fact, on this view, moral education can only be successful if we understand it as working on all these mutually dependent aspects at the same time. Thus, theorists and practitioners, whose focus is so narrow, intense and undeviating that they forget the contributions of the other aspects, cannot ultimately be successful even in achieving the narrow aims they seek. So while the theoretical stance of ethical pluralism does provide a basis of agreement on

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11 Even though the social is possible without the cultural—though some may argue that such a ‘society’ would not be human—once a culture is born its influence is indisputable.

12 While some arguments can be made for putting one or the other of these aspects at the centre of one’s programme, a more responsive (less reactive) programme might offer all the advantages of the various forms without many of the limitations.
which moral education could proceed, its narrow social focus is self-inhibiting. Because although agreement must be socially established, agreement that exists only in respect to the narrowly defined social concerns of public morality—those concerns that are particularly and explicitly about the maintenance of public society—fails to provide adequate support for rich and textured personal and cultural meaning. And, in particular, educational endeavours call for the cultural level.

A final requirement of moral education is the avoidance of immoral practices in its implementation. Indeed, it would be an unacceptable paradox for moral education to require immoral practices.\textsuperscript{13} Pluralistic values provide some guides to meeting this requirement but they can also lead us to conflicting claims. Unadulterated assimilationist approaches are deemed off limits but how is an educator to respect the practices and beliefs of different cultures, some of which may include assimilation or indoctrination? Proceeding with any programme of moral education requires a way for us to see through this difficulty that does not require us to give up the concerns on either side—neither the concern for respect for diversity nor the concern for creating a shared moral community.

**Criteria for a view and approach that harmonizes the two endeavours**

Any pluralistic moral education programme will require a working concept of morality able to include and make sense of diverse conceptions and practices. Furthermore, it must have a working conception of morality which retains sufficient openness for the concept to embrace diversity within itself, while giving the concept sufficient flesh by describing and recommending concrete instantiations of it. And, as a working conception, it must be held in a way that allows for change in response to new insights focused by diverse situations.

This view of moral education appreciates the bringing together of its means and ends. Because it seeks to be sensitive to differences at the same time that it promotes this same sensitivity, education through example must be understood and a significant place must be found for it in a pluralistic programme. To do this, the programme must have and provide a basis of agreement which will allow for the establishment of a moral community. It must also provide enough critical understanding and openness.

\textsuperscript{13}Witness the controversy and resultant investigation of the apparent paradox of indoctrination and moral education or of the inculcation of habits and moral education. See, for example, the literature on the paradox of indoctrination in (moral) education. Jerrold Coombs (1985), Anthony Flew (1972).
to allow for directed dynamic change. That is, the programme must serve the double function of reproduction and production; it must be able to address both Sittlichkeit and Moralität. In a society lacking a basis of agreement, this is clear.\(^\text{14}\) But even in a society with established agreement, if the potential for directed change is not addressed, an important part of the spirit of morality will be missing.

The living moral community that this programme must seek to instantiate, to produce and reproduce, must be rich enough and open enough for all persons to find meaningful membership in it: persons from all the diverse backgrounds, with diverse interests and diverse styles of life. It must be a community in which diversity itself is appreciated and where disagreement does not automatically require expulsion but can be the source of deeper meaning. In order to do this, the moral education programme must provide enough varied experiences to help initiate students into a form of life characterised by the sensitivities, competencies and practices which are required of the morally educated person in a pluralistic society. In particular, these include (1) the experiences that support the learning and use of resources that foster an (ever developing) appreciation of personhood, (2) experiences that support an appreciation of the different things harmful to persons as well as the diversity of instantiations of these harmful situations, (3) experiences that support an appreciation of the different ways and styles of life that can be meaningful to persons.

Furthermore, this moral education programme must include a way to view conflicts that can penetrate to the root of such problems—to discern both the agreements and the disagreements that shape the conflict. It must support an approach that all persons can use to contribute to the construction of a viable resolution. This view must be able to reconcile the potential conflicts between the demands of acceptance, tolerance and respect, (provide criteria as to when each of these demands is appropriate), and our commitment against indoctrination, coercion, propagandizing and other immoral practices.

Finally, this programme must be able to address the individual, social and cultural aspects of moral being. By addressing all three points of view, disagreement in one aspect need not lead to despair,

\(^{14}\)This is not to say that schools should try to take on all the responsibility for doing this. This education must be the responsibility of all potentially influential educational institutions in society. But as the primary social educational institution, schools have a special responsibility to this aim.
since the other aspects can be appealed to for agreement and support to build needed agreement in the first.
Chapter Two

A BROAD VIEW OF THE ENTERPRISE:
WHAT ARE WE AFTER AND WHAT HAVE WE TO WORK WITH?

Introduction

Before going on to examine the problem I have posed more closely and propose a solution for it, we must be clear about the aims of moral education which will provide the background for a solution. Moral education is a difficult notion to define because it is made up of two difficult-to-define concepts, those of morality and education. In fact, I will not attempt to produce a definition for these three notions in this thesis. Rather, I will try to clarify some of the issues and concerns that are at stake in choosing a conception of morality and of education with which to understand the notion of moral education and its aims; and I will then propose a conception of moral education which I contend is most appropriate in light of our concerns for morality, pluralism and education combined. A clear understanding of this conception will be central not only to the work that follows in this thesis but also for the educators who seek to carry out the kind of moral education that I will be proposing.

With a clear but still very general and abstract conception of moral education in hand, I will consider the work of three philosophers who have proposed analyses of the aims of moral education: Kurt Baier, Jerrold Coombs and Lawrence Blum (specifically Blum's work on multicultural education). The characterizations of these three philosophers will provide the basis for a distilled categorization of the aims of moral education into three aspects or focal areas of concern: the social, the individual and the cultural. I will argue that all proposed aims of moral education can be encompassed by one or another of these aspects and that, in fact, these three aspects approximately parallel the three concerns most prevalent in talk of moral education: moral training or socialization, education for character (or talk of promoting 'care' and the virtues), and the promotion of good moral reasoning.

With these three kinds of moral educational aims in mind and a clear characterization of their relation to each other, I will propose a new framework for understanding the moral educational enterprise which will provide a new categorization of the components of moral learning. The reasons for such a new

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1This idea came partly as a result of my reading Katherine Nelson's (1985) work in developmental psychology.
framework will be clear from the analysis and criticism of the existing framework, together with my
examination and explication of the new components and their place in the new framework model. These
reasons include both the improved educational work that the new framework supports as well as the
ability of this framework to provide a better picture of the enterprise of moral education and learning. An
initial sense of the relationship between language competence and these new components of moral
learning will be clear from the description of these components and their relationships in the framework.
A closer investigation of these relationships from the point of view of language learning will be the project
of the next chapter.

Conceptual clarification and the construction of a working conception of moral education

The concept of morality

The mention of moral education always seems to put people on their guard. One of the reasons
for this is a prevalent sense in which morality is understood. One way in which we talk about something
being moral is as opposed to it being immoral. The concern over indoctrination is founded on the concern
over educators telling students what is moral and what is immoral—that is, concern over the indoctrination
of a moral message. But there is another way in which we ascribe morality and that is as opposed to
something being non-moral. Upon first examination this may seem to solve the problem of controversy for
moral education but, of course, it does not. The ascription of morality in this second sense can be just as
dogmatic and indoctrinatory as in the first sense, but there are some controversies that it does not face
because it deals only indirectly with moral messages through circumscribing the domain and form of these
messages. I do not believe that we can avoid the significant responsibility of moral education by
narrowing its scope to dealing only with morality in the second sense.2 In fact, it is difficult to see how
this could be actually possible or what it would amount to. Moral education, I contend, must deal with
both these senses of morality.

Although this distinction does not make moral education easier by narrowing its scope, the
relationship between these two senses of morality does tell us something important about moral education.

2R.M. Hare deals with only this second sense in his (1952) The Language of Morals. His attempt to use
his analysis of this second sense of moral to do the work of the first sense clearly fails when he discusses
our possible response to the fanatic in his (1965) Freedom and Reason.
These two senses clearly do not constitute independent uses of the term. The first use only makes sense within the context of agreement regarding the second sense. We can only talk about something being moral or immoral in some domain of morality circumscribed by the first sense—that is, only when we have some notion of the moral versus the non-moral. This is a logical dependence. It does not imply that educators must set out specifically to teach the moral/non-moral distinction before they can teach the moral/immoral distinction. It only implies that it will be impossible to successfully teach the second without the first.³ Oftentimes, the two are taught and learned together.

Another distinction that helps us to get clearer about the notion of morality is that between the concept of morality and conceptions of morality. By the concept of morality I am referring to that core notion that we all understand when we talk about morality. There may be disagreements in our description or characterization of this concept but it is there nevertheless and this is evidenced by the fact that we are able to understand each other (to some extent) when we use that notion. Something gives this concept integrity whether or not we are consciously aware of it as such, much less able to agree in our identification of it. The concept of morality is a cultural construction but this does not mean that each culture has its own concept of morality. In order for us to identify another culture as having this concept, their notion must share with ours that something that gives it integrity.

So far I have spoken as though concepts were fixed constructs. They are not. One of the ways in which concepts can change is through conceptions offered by subcultures, subgroups or individuals. Conceptions of morality are particular instantiations of the concept in use; they usually add to the standard concept in some way considered significant by the user(s). This could include additional detail that the concept leaves open, changing the direction of emphasis of the public concept, or otherwise repackaging the concept. What makes these conceptions, conceptions of morality rather than another concept altogether is our recognition of them as playing the same essential role in our language-games as the concept of morality. They are offered (or used) as alternatives not as supplements. They are meant to address the same concerns that the concept of morality addresses.

³This kind of argument first introduced to me through my reading of Hamlyn (1979). It is true that one need only a very nebulous understanding of the first to begin to understand the second distinction, but my contention is that a deep understanding of the second will require a deep understanding of the first.
Central to the notion of a conception is its subject dependence. People have conceptions. This focuses the connection between concepts and their basis in human (language) use because the notion of a conception points to this living (or 'subjective') dimension while the notion of a concept points to the artifact (or 'objective') dimension. But because of the interplay between the two, there is no clear and fixed dividing line between concepts and conceptions.

The distinction, however, is sufficiently well defined to help us to see a feature of the moral/non-moral distinction which was not apparent before. The idea that conceptions of morality often fill in details that the concept leaves open can help us to see that this second sense of morality can be understood at different levels of specificity. So something can be considered moral when we use a less specified conception of morality while it would be considered non-moral when we use a different, more detailed conception of morality, or vice versa.⁴ In a pluralistic society, we need a concept of morality that can embrace a plurality of conceptions but which is sufficiently vigorous to bind the society together and form the basis for a sense of moral community.

One proposal that has gained much acceptance in liberal democratic societies such as ours is to divide the moral domain into a private and a public sector.⁵ This division and subsequent focus on the public sector has been allied with a view of morality that sees it as primarily and centrally concerned with the prevention of harm. We need a morality, it is argued, that regulates public life so that people will not harm each other when pursuing their own ends. It is the distinctive job and province of public education to address this need. The private domain consists of those values and concerns that are supposedly not legitimately the domain of public praise or censure—supposedly, those values that might constitute a person's individual conception of the good. (Baier, 1971 and Strike, 1982a) But as we will see educators are not often informed by a good understanding of this distinction. And I shall argue with Strike that this division is seriously flawed with respect to education.

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⁴Some kinds of specificity serve to broaden the scope of a concept and others serve to narrow it. We can see how this has worked in that people with different conceptions of morality will either include or excluded issues of sexual relations in the moral domain.
⁵See, for example, Kenneth Strike (1982a); Kurt Baier (1971); and Stuart Hampshire (1978).
Yet many (moral) educators have accepted a narrowing of the domain in which they can legitimately work. It is interesting to observe what has been relegated to the private domain. The division has been used to draw a line between those aspects of morality that are considered to have "objective" bases and those that are considered "subjective." The result is that only those aspects that have public acceptance are considered legitimate and those that do not have such acceptance are considered illegitimate. Because modern societies are enamoured with the "rational" and the "scientific," those aspects of morality that can be "proven" or "rationally justified" are the one's given legitimacy. Thus, certain "proven" democratic principles may be included but no "substantive" conception of the good or moral ideal—that is, only the strict obligations of morality may be included while recommendations of compassion or superrogation are prohibited. Or sometimes the public sector is used to circumscribe behaviour and actions while the private sector is used to circumscribe intentions, feelings, etc. On the surface, these seem to have the potential to solve many of the problems that pluralism focuses. I would like to suggest, however, that they are not only the wrong solutions, they do not really constitute solutions at all.

Many democratic principles, themselves, express or presuppose substantive conceptions of the good and thus are moral ideals. And certainly divorcing actions from beliefs, intentions and feelings destroys our ability to even identify these actions as moral. I agree with Strike (1982a) that restricting moral education to the public sector fails to fully educate. (pp. 7-8, 12-13, 87, 144-147) Moral education needs to work with a full conception of morality which can pay as much heed to the private sector as it does to the public. One of the reasons I believe that the private-public split ultimately fails is because it ignores the intimate relationship between the two sectors. We do not live two lives, one private and another public (though some may try). The public and private aspects of our moral lives spill into each

6 These terms are in quotations because I believe the understanding and use made of them in these contexts are problematic. They suffer from a misunderstanding of the fact/value, objective/subjective distinction and a gross misunderstanding of science. So, although I do believe that there are legitimate uses for these terms that connect them to useful and important concepts, my contention is that they are not in this case so connected.

7 Baier (1971) argues similarly when he claims that "advocating tolerance of moral views in such matters is advocating the irrelevance of moral views to what is the best decision. And this is surely contrary to what we take to be the point of morality." (pp. 104-105)
other, and interacting, transform each other. The private aspect might be seen as the personal style with which we carry out the public. Someone's particular style can be appreciated and can illuminate for another the public aspect in unique ways. Even though we may prefer not to publicly praise (or condemn) this style as generally good (or bad). We may not want to force another person to be friendly but whether they are or not will affect the character both of our personal and our social relations with them. Like the parallel distinction between our individual or personal and social lives, we cannot understand what it would mean to have one without the other. It is impossible to understand public morality without a sense of morality that includes the private aspect. The two cannot exist independently. They exist, as it were, in each other's space. Given this, even if we insist on continuing to use the terminology, as moral educators, we cannot simply assume that the private sector will be taken care of somewhere else because on it depends what we can do with respect to the public sector. I will argue and show that it is not necessary to restrict ourselves to the public sector in order to protect individual autonomy; so addressing the private sector need not contradict the spirit of liberal democracy. Furthermore, I believe that the view of morality as fundamentally concerned with the prevention of harm, which often forms a background understanding for this division of the moral realm, is too impoverished a view to ground moral education.

Clearly prevention of harm is a central moral concern, but is it not similarly central to the concept of morality itself? My contention is that we cannot understand why we would want to prevent harm unless we understand the pursuit of good. Nor could we know fully what constitutes harm unless we know something of what constitutes good. The prevention of harm cannot be the end of morality but is instead the required context in which the pursuit of good can occur. Thus, morality is grounded in our concern for the good. The conception of morality that grounds moral education must be thus positively characterized.

Now the good has always been problematic for moral philosophers as well as for moral educators. Especially in a liberal democracy that values the freedom of individuals to define their own good, and in a pluralistic society where there are many different visions of the good, how is it possible to ground moral education on a positive notion of the good? Whose do we use? It is human good, in all its complexity and
depth, that is central to the concept of morality. It is both the source and the concern of our morality.⁸ We can only speak of different conceptions of the good if we have some sense of what would constitute a conception of the good. This understanding may be nebulous and completely resistant to satisfactory concretization, but it nonetheless exists and plays the central role that I have described.⁹

John Wilson and Iris Murdoch have proposed similar positive views of morality. Wilson's (1990) notion of the condition or health of the soul (pp. 82-83), however, is too obscure and he appears to leave it behind when he begins to examine the specifics of moral education. I will argue that moral education must always keep in mind this "magnetic" view of morality because "the idea of perfection or progress", which Murdoch offers as central to this view of morality, is our way of understanding our pursuit of an "ineffable good" and this idea naturally resonates with the concerns of education. This view captures the moral spirit that it is so important for moral education to inspire if it is to succeed in helping students to live meaningful moral lives.

_The concept of education_

The second concept in the notion of moral education, that of education itself, also needs some clarification. I will not try to provide any kind of an overview of this concept as sufficient literature exists that does this job adequately. Rather, I will focus on making clear what I see to be the distinction between education and socialization and, in doing this, touch on what I consider to be the important aspects of education that should inform our conception of moral education.

First of all, with Hirst and Peters (1970), I will be talking about the concept of education which circumscribes the ideal sense of the term—the sense that includes worthiness as one of its conditions. I

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⁸Because human being are innately social, human good must involve a concern for community.
⁹See Iris Murdoch's essay "On the Sovereignty of the Good" in Murdoch (1970). for more in depth arguments for this view. While it may be the case that the notion of the Good cannot be understood without individual concrete instantiations of good, in their presence, it exists and has a kind of independence from these concrete instantiations. The possibility of an 'ineffable good' is explicable in this way. Just as the existence of truth depends on agreement but truth itself has a kind of independence from agreement—it is not defined by agreement.

We can also find in the Asian philosophical tradition philosophers who take this view. In particular, the work of Mencius and Wang Yang Ming from the Confucian tradition affirm that it is only because human beings have the intrinsic (or innate or naturally endowed) capacity to recognize good that human morality could exist; and it is only if we believe that they have this capacity that moral education is possible.
assume that this is, and should be, the concept that educators use to understand their work. This concept also makes the most sense when used to understand the notion of moral education because of the importance of goodness, excellence or progress to the concept of morality.

This is the concept of education that can be clearly distinguished from that of socialization. It is the intrinsic purpose of education that distinguishes it from socialization which Michael Oakeshott (1989) characterizes as "an apprenticeship to adult life governed by an extrinsic purpose. . . . a systematic apprenticeship to domestic, industrial and commercial life in a 'modern' State,"(p. 82) and which Kieran Egan (1988) describes as "aimed toward social utility. . . [and which] has implicit in it the impulse and tendency to make people more alike." (p. 27) This understood, I would like to add a further insight about this relationship. Unlike both Oakeshott and Egan, I do not believe that there is any logically inevitable tension between socialization and education. In fact, a kind of socialization is a must if we are to educate at all. Without it, education would be impossible. Without the basis of agreement that society both embodies and provides, individuation, which Egan (1988) argues is the special aim of education, (pp. 27, 31) would make no sense. If we understand the extrinsic purposes of socialization as originating in the intrinsic purposes of education—as the contingent pre-requisites of intrinsic concerns—then socialization will be transformed from a competing enterprise to a necessary part of education.

But what is it that education aims at that is more than socialization? In what form does this ideal part find expression? Oakeshott (1989) describes it as follows:

Education is not acquiring a stock of ready-made ideas, images, sentiments, beliefs and so forth; it is learning to look, to listen, to think, to feel, to imagine, to believe, to understand, to choose and to wish. It is a postulant to a human condition learning to recognize himself as a human being in the only way in which this is possible: namely by seeing himself in the mirror of an inheritance of human understanding and activities and thus himself acquiring . . . the ability to throw back upon the world his own version of a human being in conduct which is both a self-disclosure and a self-enactment. . . . Education is not learning to do this or that more proficiently; it is acquiring in some measure an understanding of a human condition in which the 'fact of life' is continuously illuminated by a 'quality of life' . . . .

Thus, an educational engagement is at once a discipline and a release; and it is the one by virtue of being the other. It is a difficult engagement of learning by study in the continuous and exacting direction of attention and refinement of understanding.

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10Contingent that is on the social nature of human beings; their dependence on each other for their full realization. Human meanings cannot be had without the commonality which is the basis and characteristic feature of society.
which calls for humility, patience and courage. Its reward is an emancipation from the mere 'fact of living', from the immediate contingencies of place and time of birth, from the tyranny of the moment and from the servitude of a merely current condition; it is the reward of a human identity and of a character capable in some measure of the moral and intellectual adventure which constitutes a specifically human life. (pp. 66-67, 71, 93)

In expounding his vision of education, Oakeshott vehemently opposes it to socialization. I believe that there is a way to read his characterization which is less radical than it may at first sound. To be "emancipated from the mere 'fact of living'..." need not be understood as coming from a view that dismisses the contextual, historical locatedness of life, instead it can be understood as coming from a view that sees education as centrally concerned with "the greatest expansion of meanings" which is able to give the 'fact of life' a quality it otherwise would not have. There is the sense of a dynamic movement forward which is part of the ideal of education. I am suggesting that this understanding of education should form the background for our conception of moral education. 

_A skeletal framework for our conception of moral education_

Given the foregoing comments on the concepts of morality and education, our conception of moral education can now be described. Moral education according to this view is interested in morality broadly conceived. It will address both senses of morality and be able to work from a positive, ideal or 'progressive' view of morality. It will involve helping students to learn "to look, to listen, to think, to feel, to imagine, to believe, to understand, to choose and to wish" in the moral realm as part of living a moral life. As distinct from moral socialization, it will seek to free us from the domination of the 'fact of life' so that we can partake in something more, something that transforms that life and gives it a distinctively human quality and meaning. In this way, it will be interested in promoting Moralität as well as Sittlichkeit. It will do this by _awakening_ our sense of morality (our sense of goodness) and by helping us to _actualize_ our moral selves in a moral world that already exists but is ever open to change by our moral efforts.12

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11This expression from Egan (1988), p. 38.
12I was first introduced to the idea of _awakening_ as an educational aim in reading Maxine Greene's article (1977), "Towards Wide-Awakeness: an argument for the humanities in education." If we accept that human beings have the innate capacity to recognize goodness then what education seeks is not to insert this capacity from the outside, but through proper guidance to help awaken it from within.
This is only the very sketchy outlines of our conception, but it will serve as the framework on which to build our more substantial conception. In building this conception we will have to consider more specifically what the aims of moral education should be in a pluralistic society.

*The aims of moral education in a pluralistic society*

One of the philosophers who has attempted to systematically examine the implications of pluralism for the aims of moral education is Kurt Baier. My own work has been informed and inspired by his (Baier, 1971), as well as by the work of Jerrold Coombs (1980, 1986, 1985) and that of Lawrence Blum (1991) on the values of multicultural education. In what follows I will introduce important aspects of these works which help to form the foundation for my framework. As well, I will comment on where I depart from these works and why.

Baier (1971) characterizes ethical pluralism as a term that describes (and/or advocates) a state in which ethnically diverse groups interact and/or live together and seek to deal with their ethical diversity without assimilation. He argues that we allow conflicting convictions because we "lack knowledge of the principles we should employ in settling this difference of view..." (p. 102) Coombs (1986) argues that cultural pluralism is a moral concept with the aim of justice. Blum (1991), on the other hand, argues that one of the values of multiculturalism is the positive valuing of diversity for itself. Coombs (1986) specifically denies the necessity of this value for what he calls cultural pluralism (p. 11); Baier would plainly concur. In choosing to adopt the view that Blum describes, I will be bring a different background understanding to the work of Baier and Coombs which will significantly alter our understanding of their proposals and the implications for practice. The new framework that I will introduce is fundamentally a reworking of these proposals to reflect this altered understanding, harmonizing them with a larger view of morality and pluralism, and bringing to the fore the educationally significant implications.

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13See especially pp. 11-12. So pluralism depends on and is subordinate to the larger moral claim of justice, which exists in a way independent of it. It does not have its own independent moral value. I believe that the question of how a value has come to be recognized should be distinguished from the question of where its logical roots lie. The difficulties encountered in a diverse context may be what focuses the root concerns of pluralism for us, but these concerns exist (perhaps in some unrealized form) independent of the problems.
One obvious way in which I depart from the views of Baier and Coombs is the view of morality that I work with. Both Baier and Coombs work with a view of morality that is primarily concerned with avoiding harm. As I have argued, I believe that this view is too narrow to support the full potential of moral education. It lacks reference and attention to the spirit of morality—the sense of goodness—without which a moral educational enterprise cannot hope to be truly successful. In particular, the broader view of morality I will use will open up the private domain to moral education which Baier considers off limits in a pluralistic society.

My view of pluralism also significantly departs from that of Baier (and Coombs). Sometimes it is true that conflicts between moral convictions only require more sensitivity and clarity to settle, but real ethical pluralism means that conflicts can arise between moral convictions which are not based on mutually corrigible aims and standards. That is, sometimes it comes down to choosing between convictions based on their relative potential to support a meaningful life. For different people, and groups of people, this choice may be different. Perhaps Baier means to include in "settling the difference of view" the possibility that if we had "knowledge of the [appropriate] principles" we would no longer view certain convictions as conflicting—that is, perhaps it includes dissolving the conflict as well as solving it. If this is the case, then I must agree with him. But it would be quite an extraordinary reading of his argument.

I must agree with Putnam (1987) that as with his example of the dispute over the two ways of viewing points in a Euclidean plane—as either parts of the Euclidean plane or as mere limits in the plane—some disputes cannot be absolutely put to rest not because of our limited knowledge, "but because there is a limit to how far questions make sense." (p. 19) I believe that this can be the case with moral conflicts as well as with disputes over the ontological status of points in a plane. Only within a meaning context—a living moral language embodying and expressing a way of life—does moral choice make sense. What we seek to do in a pluralistic context is to find enough agreement so that the commonality in the meaning context is sufficient to support a healthy moral community which seeks and provides for the flourishing of all its diverse members.

It would be largely in the area outside of this common meaning context that real moral differences exist. I do not call this a universal meaning context because, although there may be some very
stable constituents of this context. Given our limited understanding of ourselves and each other, it would be unwise to make any claims to universality and labelling something universal often gives the impression that one will be dogmatic about it. Moral disputes can sometimes be the catalyst for changes in the common meaning context itself, as long as some part of that context remains intact. For example, the dispute over the morality of slavery has led to a change in our common meaning context, but it has led to this change partly because of the support from other unquestioned aspects of context. Slavery, once considered acceptable, is now considered highly immoral, but our concern for respect, though extended to others, has not changed. The kind of context stability required for some sense of continuity need not be overly threatened by a sincere openness to non-arbitrary change. This openness does not imply the kind of radical ethical relativism feared by moral philosophers and educators alike. A substantial moral image, (which Putnam (1987) argues does not contradict the spirit of liberal democracy but, in fact, is essential to that spirit) is one way that moral communities seek to build a meaning context for themselves (that is, a common meaning context for all their members). (p. 61) Thus human beings are both the creators and the beneficiaries of moral images. This is an important consideration to keep in mind when formulating the aims of moral education. If students are to be full members of a moral community they must be prepared to participate as both creators and beneficiaries of substantial moral images.

Baier proposes three moral excellences, which he considers to be the proper aims of moral education. These--knowledge, ability and willingness (or inclinations, dispositions, propensities and the like)–clearly distinguish the usual kinds educational 'goods' or attainments. In his article "Attainments of the Morally Educated Person," Coombs' list of attainments can also be categorized into those that pertain to knowledge, ability and inclinations. Although some of them involve a combination of these, they are clearly described that way. I would like to introduce two categorizations that together I believe will provide a more helpful broad view of moral educational aims.

14 This is a slightly different use of epistemic uncertainty from Baier's use, but it makes a significant difference to our overall understanding. It is used more as a check than as a foundation which is much more appropriate to the epistemic strength and status of an 'uncertainty'.
15 In fact, Putnam argues that we need a plurality of moral images.
# Parallel Tripartite Focal Distinctions

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**Figure 1**
First of all, the aims of moral education appear to fall into three kinds. These roughly parallel the three aspects of morality I discussed earlier so I will use the same terms to distinguish them (see Figure 1). The social aims are those concerned with moral training—introducing students to the intersubjective understanding needed for sharing. The individual aims are those concerned with the particular instantiation of moral being in a subject; it is concerned with nurturing the subject as the fundamental living source and natural home of the moral spirit and the centre from which caring emanates. In particular, education for character constitutes a focus in this category. Finally, the cultural aims are those concerned with introducing students to the cultural resources that support understanding; they work at the objective level where understanding occurs. Moral reasoning is founded in human cultural traditions, thus education that aims at moral reasoning can be understood as focusing on the category of cultural aims. I have used the term ‘focus’ to ascribe particular aims to these categories because this categorization system does not divide the aims into mutually independent kinds. The relationship between social, individual and cultural aims parallels the relationship between the respective aspects of morality. Although there are also logical and psychological relationships (from the developmental point of view) which tell us that the progression of possibility flows from social to individual to cultural, they do not establish this as a hierarchical system of stages. It is much more useful to view these categories as focusing points of view or concerns. If the actual aims are to be aims of moral education they must be understood in the larger context as contributing to the moral life of students. In pursuing these aims, we must always keep in mind their relationship to the larger aim if we want to avoid the risk of distorting our practice and finally failing to achieve our real aims. Pursuing any one of these aims to the neglect of the others and without reference to them would be worse than trying to take a good photograph by attending only to clear focusing to the neglect of composition and proper lighting. The pursuit of such aims would not likely result in the ultimate aims we seek.

But given a clear understanding of the interrelated nature of this categorization system, I believe that it can be useful to view the aims of moral education in this way. Seeing the different foci of moral

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16For an insightful and philosophically sensitive discussion of the empirical evidence for this developmental progression, see Katherine Nelson (1985).
educational aims can help us to better refine our practices, thereby improving their efficacy. Seeing the relationships among these foci can also help us to adjust and coordinate our practices so that they are more supportive of each other. An understanding of the developmental progression can help us to improve our approach to certain aims. This will be of significance especially when we are interested in promoting cross-cultural understanding. It may be necessary, for example, to introduce students to certain new social interactions or situations as precursors and/or accompaniments to the more "objective" study of other cultures if we want them to gain moral sensitivity from the objective study. There are a multitude of ways that this categorization system can help the educator to improve practice. With a clear understanding of the system and the relationships among categories, the attentive educator will have the tools to see more clearly where the paths to success must lie.

The second categorization system is a re-categorization of the three main kinds of educational 'goods' or attainments of interest to us. It is meant to replace the knowledge-ability-dispositions (KAD) categorization system that has been so prevalent in education. Knowledge is too often equated with information or 'justified true belief'. This misses the, morally significant, knowledge-by-acquaintance or knowledge-from-the-participant-point-of-view as opposed to that from the spectator point of view. Abilities are too often reduced to mechanical or habitual skills. Most morally valuable abilities are complex abilities which have not received adequate study and analysis. It tells us very little educationally, in these cases, to say that they are abilities we are trying to develop. Finally, dispositions are too often insufficiently examined to demystify them for the educator. Dispositions refer only to the outcomes which very often emerge from complex combinations of knowledge, abilities, feelings, attention, etc. Often the most obvious means of achieving a dispositional change is through conditioning or some other anti-rational methods. Thus describing a goal as dispositional gives us very little practical guidance. Moreover, 'disposition' is too superficial a descriptor for morally significant dispositions. Because the term does not make reference to the background motivations and reasons for the disposition it can allow for morally suspect outcomes that seem to fit the description—for example, the disposition to be kind can be interpreted as the tendency to do acts typically considered to be kind acts and one can be conditioned to so behave purely out of habit.
This KAD categorization system gives the appearance of discrete components relatively independent of each other. Because we are not encouraged to consider the relationships between the components, this system can actually serve to reinforce compartmentalized thinking. Of course, what I am suggesting is to replace the categorization system and not the terms themselves. Clearly we cannot stop talking about knowledge, ability and dispositions, but I believe that there is an educationally more useful way to categorize the particular attainments we seek. I am suggesting that we do not rely on these terms to do this categorization work.

Instead, I suggest that we talk about resources, practices and discipline (RPD). This categorization system parallels the cultural, social and individual aspects of morality and focus of moral educational aims (Figure 1). By resources, I mean those cultural resources such as languages, concepts, principles, thinking strategies, standards, ideals, exemplars, paradigms, stories, heroes, rituals, beliefs, knowledge, etc., that embody and transmit meaning. These involve the conceptual tools through which new worlds of possible thoughts, feelings, perceptions and understandings become accessible to us; they also constitute the springboard from which we can leap to create new tools that enrich and expand the culture's pool of resources. By practices, I mean the social practices that make up the background context of a life— in particular, a moral life. These include the specific language-games played—such as, saying "please" and "thank you"—and the social interactions and activities which provide the context for the creation of meaning and which embody the pre-intentional assumptions necessary for intelligent living— for example, the normal interactions and activities shared by parent and child which provide the context for the creation of shared meaning between them and which embody certain assumptions of trust by the child and reciprocity by the parent. The practices embody what Wittgenstein calls a form of life. By initiating students into certain interactions and ways of being with each other, these practices bring forth and nurture mental capacities that Searle describes as non-representational. The centrality of these practices for moral learning will become clear when I explicate my framework. In particular, the implications for educating for pluralism, especially cross-cultural understanding, is very significant. By

17The resources and practices dimensions are very close to John Searle's Intentional Network and pre-Intentional Background. I have chosen to use terms and to make the distinction with educational concerns in mind. See John Searle (1983), especially pp. 141-159.
discipline, I mean two things 1) the practices and 2) the consequent abilities that these practices seek to promote. The second sense is basic to the notion of discipline I am using. It refers to the ability, of individuals and groups of individuals (specifically those groups that constitute a community), to direct energy and effort which makes (moral) living possible. It is what allows us to sustain moral life and nourish its development. Moreover, discipline is the way to realize an inner order, which is an individual's unique reflection of the resources and the practices described above. It is the realization of this inner order that is the source of moral strength. When an individual regulates his or her life according to an inner order, we describe this person as disciplined or self-disciplined. Thus, discipline constitutes the moving force of moral life.  

This re-categorization of the educational attainments has several advantages over the old KAD system. This RPD system is more geared to the educator who is interested not only in the description of the outcomes desired but in a description of those outcomes that also helps them to see their significance to the overall enterprise and that can help them in their thinking about how to educate for those outcomes. The components can point to both outcomes and the educational 'goods' that contribute to these outcomes—for example, we use resources in helping students to gain resources. While this is true of knowledge and ability in the old system, it is not true of dispositions and is of only limited use for the ability component because of its complexity. By clearly pointing to both outcomes and the educational 'goods' associated with them, this RPD system can be more helpful to educators in directing their practice. For example, Baier's third moral excellence, that of willingness or good will, can now be seen as involving the direction of one's energies and efforts to moral concerns in both thought and action. Since discipline points to both the outcome and the educational 'goods' that support that outcome, understanding this excellence as primarily concerned with discipline helps to direct our practice appropriately. One way to promote internal discipline is through the use of external discipline—that is, we can help students to develop good will by externally directing their energies and efforts to moral concerns in both thought and action. Clearly this is only one possible way, but at least it provides a practical starting point for educators.

18 I will be saying much more about this component later when describing its place within the framework I will introduce.
It is important to remember, however, that these components are not like the three strands of a braid. The distinctions are abstractions with limited use. Just as we are not three different people put together but one person nourished from three sources, we must remember that none of these components can stand alone. The contribution of each to the overall enterprise can only be understood in the context of understanding the contributions of the other two. We cannot unravel the braid to get at the three individual strands independently. Without such an understanding of this categorization system, it would suffer from one of the same faults that I ascribed to the old system. The framework I will introduce includes a description of the relationships among these components as well as between these and other important educational components involved in moral learning.

Returning now to the more specific characterizations of the aims of moral education in a pluralistic society, Baier claims that we are only legitimately able to pursue four specific moral educational aims: 1) goodwill, 2) understanding of the nature of public morality, 3) understanding of the need for some public moral order, 4) understanding the criteria of acceptability for particular provisions of public morality. Aim #1 refers to the individual aspect of moral development while #2-4 refers to the cultural aspect. It is interesting to note that Baier leaves out the social aspect here. This may be because it is where the differing contents of moralities would most obviously show up. But if I am right about the relationships among these different aspects of morality and among those of their respective aims, leaving the social aspect out will result in a failure to really educate the student. Now it is true that Baier does recognize the importance of moral training, where the morality of the group is taught, and his analysis of ethical pluralism does not contradict what I have said so far, but his characterization of these four legitimate aims fails to adequately show their embeddedness in the existing moral context. This the implications of a pluralistic context is not sufficiently addressed.

Morality is realized in social settings just as moral education must take place in such settings. Even a pluralistic society must have some social moral rules that apply to all in the society if it is to constitute one society—a moral community. Moral training or socialization may not look like it would in a homogeneous society but it is still necessary to provide a shared basis for understanding and the building of shared meaning. In fact, Baier’s aims can only be understood within a moral community that shares
some substantial moral image. In order to successfully achieve those aims, a much richer understanding of their relationship to the moral resources, practices and discipline available from the various moral traditions interacting and co-existing in the society will be required than Baier indicates. My framework model will make these other components explicit and suggest a way to view their logical, and other educationally significant, relationships.

In his article, "Attainments of the Morally Educated Person," Coombs sets out to characterize in more detail the kind of person who would be considered morally educated. His list of eleven attainments gives us a sense of the range of things that such a person would have achieved. Unfortunately, this list fails to relate its components sufficiently. It fails to provide an integrating principle which helps us see how these attainments would come together in a moral human being. It does not connect these attainments with a vision that brings them alive in a moral life. Admittedly, I do not believe that Coombs meant to provide such a vision, but it is only with such a vision that such a list will be of any real use to educators. With such a vision, the list can be used as a dialogical tool to evoke and inspire thought and reflection, rather than as a checklist used mostly in a mechanical and educationally spiritless way.

The Framework

While we have at our disposal such developmental models as Kohlberg's stages of moral development and Piaget's earlier work on moral development, we have no comprehensive understanding of the components of moral learning, their logical and educational relationship to each other and to the overall enterprise, how they might be influenced by what we do as educators, and how all these affect moral belief, judgment and action. John Wilson's work (1968, 1990) to develop a system for such understanding is unfortunately too complicated, full of unfamiliar terms and lacking in a strong unifying picture for it to provide clear guidance for practice in education. It also fails to make clear the importance of concepts to achieving the moral components that he proposes. The framework I am proposing, provides such a comprehensive picture. In this picture, I depict the system of significant components of moral learning, their relationships to and influences on each other as well as on the aims of moral education generally. In particular, this framework gives us a clear picture of where the points of potential educational influence lie, thus helping educators to direct their efforts appropriately. The components all
have a clear relationship to moral language learning and competence. This framework model represents the background understanding from which the rest of my work will emerge. Although it was developed to emphasize the place and significance of concepts to moral learning, which the rest of the thesis will examine, I believe that it is able to stand on its own as a useful framework for understanding other aspects of moral educational concern as well. In developing this model, I have given much effort to making it as simple as possible while giving it the potential to do as much educational work as possible. Not all possible components and objectives are included explicitly in this framework model but I believe that all can be explicated by it. In what follows, I will give an overall explication of the framework and its components. Chapter three will be devoted to investigating the particular relationship between these components and moral language and concepts.

The Role of the NetBack and its relation to Resources and Practice

As I proposed earlier, there are three educational 'goods' that I believe contribute to the aims of moral education. Two of these goods are the cultural resources and social practices that children are introduced to as part of their education. What are the results of a successful introduction of these educational 'goods' to the child? How are people affected by these resources and practices? What does it mean for a child to have learned or gained these educational 'goods'? In order to answer these questions, I will borrow a framework from John Searle which he explicates in his book (1983) Intentionality: an essay in the philosophy of mind.

Searle introduces the "Network of Intentional states" and the "pre-Intentional Background" in discussing the mental states that support Intentionality. Where, by Intentionality, he means the "directedness" or "aboutness" of mental states by virtue of which they have content. For example, beliefs, desires, hopes, intentions, and fears are all about something and thus are Intentional states. Intentional states involve representations and thus constitutes the mind's condition when holding conceptual content. Since the cultural resources that I have referred to as a class of the educational 'goods' that contributes to moral education are also conceptual resources, their successful attainment by students can be viewed as a change in the Intentional states of the students. The holistic network of such states in a person is what Searle refers to as the Network. Intentional states must be understood as part of this Network rather than
as discrete states existing independently—just as no one concept is understandable alone but only within a conceptual framework or a conceptual scheme.  

Searle further argues that, in fact, if one were to trace the logical and psychological foundations of an Intentional state one would eventually come upon mental states that are too fundamental to be called Intentional states. This is when one begins to enter the territory of the pre-Intentional Background. This Background is constituted by the non-representational (non-conceptual) mental capacities of a person.

I believe that anyone who tries seriously to follow out the threads of the Network will eventually reach a bedrock of mental capacities that do not themselves consist of Intentional states (representations), but nonetheless form the preconditions for the functioning of Intentional states. The Background is "preintentional" in this sense that though not a form or forms of Intentionality, it is nonetheless a precondition or set of preconditions of Intentionality. (Searle, 1983, p. 143)

This Background includes the know-hows and pre-Intentional "assumptions" that support the Network, that form the context in which the Network operates. For example, that the ground will not fall way from us at any minute is a pre-Intentional "assumption" that forms the essential background for many of our Intentionally supported activities—like walking or jumping. Such "assumptions" do not require concepts because we do not normally bring them to mind; they are not a part of our beliefs, conscious, subconscious or unconscious. (Searle, 1983, pp. 142-143) In this way, the Background is an indispensable part of a person's capacity for Intentionality. Understanding the Background is essential for fully understanding Intentional states. Attention to the Background of students from different cultures is important to understanding how we may affect their Intentional states. It is also an important area of potential educational influence when we are interested in helping students to understand outside of their own cultures. If the relevant Background capacities are not there, certain Intentional states cannot be attained.

This is one place where the wisdom of experiential encounters with, or immersion in, a different culture for educational purposes gains its legitimacy. Understanding depends on sharing forms of life. When this

\[19\] I do not think that Donald Davidson would object to this limited use of the notion of a conceptual scheme despite his arguments against the cogency of that notion in his (1991) "On the very idea of a conceptual scheme."

\[20\] Several other people also refer to this using other terms and in different contexts. For example, Tasos Kazepides (1991) talks about "the riverbed propositions" in talking about the pre-requisites of moral education; and Wittgenstein talks about the "background of agreement" or "shared form of life" required for understanding. Lovibond (1983) also discusses in depth the importance of social practices in a Wittgensteinian way in her work. (pp. 126-130)
is missing, it must either be achieved through the use of analogy and imagination or through constructing a bridge by seeking to share actual experience.

Finally, it is impossible to say precisely where the Network ends and the Background begins or vice versa.

The Network shades off into a Background of capacities (including various skills, preintentional assumptions and presuppositions, stances and nonrepresentational attitudes). The Background is not on the periphery of Intentionality but permeates the entire Network of Intentional states; since without the Background the states could not function. . . (Searle, 1983, p. 151)

For this reason, I will adopt the term NetBack to refer to the whole—both the Network and the Background—of the mental capacities that support Intentionality.

The NetBack then can be used to explain what it is that happens to a person who gains the cultural resources and learns the social practices that we referred to earlier (see Figure 2). Their NetBack is altered. This means that their system of mental capacities have been changed (in particular, educationally enriched) in some way. A person's Intentional capacity, say to have the belief that the earth is spherical, depends on his or her NetBack. If the aim of education is to initiate students into the human inheritance so that they may participate as a full member, and if this involves the things from Oakeshott mentioned earlier, then clearly education is concerned with affecting people's NetBacks.

In my framework model, the NetBack represents an individual's mental capacities at a particular time. It is what that person has to work with and what the educator must ultimately seek to engage and enrich. It is what the child comes with, that feeds into the heart of education (see Figure 3), as well as what the child will leave any educational experience with. The resources and practices we share with students in education should be directly aimed at expanding their NetBacks.

The Heart of the Framework

The heart of the framework involves those other educational outcomes that emerge from and influence the NetBack. In the heart is included all the areas where educational and individual efforts and strategies influence and are influenced by the NetBack. It represents the region of dynamic potential.

21 I am greatly indebted to my colleague, Heesoon Bai, for the term NetBack as well as for introducing me to Searle's work to begin with.
Figure 2
The Framework Model

of the System of Influences

on Moral Being

The Framework Model

of the System of Influences

on Moral Being

NetBack

Discipline

1. Directing attention and powering engagement

Reasoning

Perceptions

Feelings

Discipline

2. Directing reasoning in accordance with standards

Knowledge

Understanding

3. Directing conduct and actions according to receptions

Conduct/Actions

Points of potential educational influence

Where energy is made available in the system

Figure 3
Within (and making up) this heart I have located my components of moral learning. These include the three foci of reception: moral perception, moral feelings and moral understanding, which along with moral reasoning and moral action cover the range of aims and goals that moral educators usually talk about.

My view of moral action—which will be further explicated below—results in its placement outside of the heart as an emerging outcome of what occurs in the heart. As will be seen, this does not preclude it from being influenced or having influence, but in a different way than usually understood. Instead of moral action, I include in the heart what I call moral discipline. This component has the active characteristic that moral action is usually expected to supply. My characterisation of moral discipline will reveal, however, that it is actually able to focus this active or dynamic quality in a way that, on the normal view of moral action, it simply fails to do. This will be especially important for education.

A. The three foci of reception

In the very centre of the heart I have located the three foci of reception (see Figure 3, p. 38 and Figure 5, p. 42). These three foci highlight the three areas of focus that I referred to in discussing the aims of moral education (see Figure 1). They occupy this central placing because, in a more direct way than the NetBack, they are the moral components we seek to influence in moral education. Moral perception highlights the social focus of moral education. Moral feeling highlights the individual focus of moral education. Moral knowledge or understanding highlights the cultural focus of moral education. I call these foci of reception because they constitute a focusing distinction rather than a discrete division of a field. In fact, none of these can exist without the other two. Without certain perceptions and understandings, one cannot have certain feelings; without certain perceptions and feelings, one cannot have certain understandings; and etc. For example, when I say that I feel angry about something, I do not mean to say that what I am experiencing is just ‘pure’ anger, for that would not be possible. Without some accompanying perception and some understanding (conscious or not) of a reason to be angry, we simply don’t get angry.22 In fact, we sometimes use the terms perception, feeling and understanding each in turn

22To say that a person is angry ‘for no reason’ is really to say that one cannot think of a reason for the anger or one finds the reasons ‘unreasonable’. Or finally it could be used to indicate that this person seems to be angry—is acting in a way typical of angry people—but because no reasonable explanation can be
to mean the same amalgamation of the three focal components in an overall reception. For example, when I say, "after that experience, I have come to see the world in a whole different light." I do not mean only that my perceptions have changed but also that my feelings and understandings have changed correspondingly. The three components are inevitably linked in this way. They affect each other and form the background for a full understanding of each other (see Figure 5).

Before I go on to explicate in more detail each of these focal components, it is important to explicate the notion of a reception. First of all, by referring to these components as receptions, I mean to contrast them with activities and actions—or what might otherwise be referred to as 'doings'. In this way, receptions are passive. They refer to things that happen to us rather than things that we do. Reception terms point to our experiences rather than our doings. This does not mean that receptions and 'doings' are not intimately related. As my framework model suggests, the two influence each other in forming a part of a very dynamic system. This will be important not only as a conceptual insight but as an important insight for practical guidance in education. We cannot affect receptions directly; our efforts must instead be directed at the activities and actions that help to develop the concepts and capacities supporting receptions.

Perhaps the best analogy for understanding the nature of receptions is to consider the features of a radio receiver (see Figure 4). In many ways, when we are concerned with promoting receptions as educational goals, the students' success in manifesting these outcomes can be likened to that of the radio receiver when it succeeds in receiving a radio signal. For example, if we are interested, in music education, that the student be able to hear the difference between major and minor chords, what we are interested in is a reception. As the radio receiver must have the capacity to distinguish between different radio frequencies, the student must have the capacity to distinguish between major and minor chords—this
involves both conceptual and physical capacities in the student.\textsuperscript{24} As well, like the radio receiver, the student must be 'turned on' and 'tuned in' to the right frequency. For the student, this means that he or she must be awake (in a way that implies more than not being actually asleep) and listening for the distinctions concerned. To be awake is like being 'turned on', it indicates a state of being ready to receive through being 'powered' or 'energized'. To be listening for the distinctions is like 'tuning in' to the right frequency. In a student this is the 'doing' that results in the reception sought—that of hearing the difference between the major and minor chords. It is how one can 'try' to 'achieve' a reception. The student has features parallel to the hardware, tuning and power of the radio receiver. The signals that the radio receiver is able to receive also has some similarity to the things that these reception terms (seen as educational goals) refer to. The important difference is that, as a human experience, receptions are about representational content, not about objects.\textsuperscript{25} Radio receivers receive actual radio signals; but human beings in recognizing a mistake do not, in the same way, receive the mistake itself, instead they recognize that such-and-such is a mistake. What is recognized is not the such-and-such in itself, but that it is a mistake—recognition, then, involves representation.\textsuperscript{26}

Other significant limits of this analogy have to do with the fixed nature of radio receiver hardware. Even the physical capacities (the hardware) of human beings are not similarly fixed—although there are certainly limits to their development, we would be wise to recognize that we do not know precisely where these limits lie. In the case of hearing major and minor chords (if a person is not irreparably deaf) it may be possible to develop (especially at certain early stages of life) the physical

\textsuperscript{24}It is interesting to look into this point further by considering what allows us to hear something. Most people would answer that it is our ears that allow us to hear. But a closer study will reveal that this is clearly a superficial understanding of a much more complex process. The ear is only the external receiver of the sound waves. These vibrations, when received by our ears, are translated into neural signals which travel through our nerve system to the area of our brain which receives them and allows us to hear them the way we do. This whole system is what constitutes the hardware which allows us to hear. We can lose our hearing through damage in any one of the three critical areas that form this system—through damage to the ear, the nerve system which carries the neural signals to the brain, or to the portion of the brain that receives these signals. But so far we have only dealt with the physical aspect of our capacity to hear something. Without the conceptual distinction of major and minor chords, one would not be able to hear that difference.

\textsuperscript{25}I am indebted again to Heesoon Bai for this point.

\textsuperscript{26}This view of the relationship between reference, representation and meaning owes much to Hilary Putnam's arguments for realism, against reductionism. See Putnam (1987, 1988).
Reception 1

**Radio Reception**

- Signals
  - Tuning (Externally directed)
  - Power
    - Hardware (Physical, Fixed)

**Human Perception**

- Tuning
  - 1) Internally directable (discipline)
    - Depends on "wares" but also affecting the "wares"
    - Affected by social practices (external direction)
  - Power
    - 1) Awareness - Alertness
    - 2) Sustaining reception
    - 3) Powering internal tuning
    - 4) Externally based, but internally supplied

Figure 4
characteristics that will enable a person to hear the difference in question. Certainly the conceptual
capacities (the software) of human beings are open to change—this being, as I will argue, one of the main
avenues of educational influence. Unlike radio receivers, living human beings can actually influence the
capacities of their own 'wares' and so become able to receive 'signals' never before conceived. So it is
possible to educate human beings but not radio receivers.

Another limit of the analogy has to do with the need for external direction in tuning a radio
receiver. This may occur with human beings as well, but they also have the capacity to, as it were, direct
their own tuning. This will have important implications for our educational endeavours to promote certain
receptions which I will discuss in more detail later. Already it should be clear that there exists a
relationship of mutual influence between our receptions and our NetBack.

A1. Perceptions

It will probably be noted that the analogy with the radio receiver actually reveals aspects of
human perception (see Figure 4). This is because perception is, in a way, the most basic reception of our
three foci. 27 We most naturally connect perceptions with our senses, thus we speak of 'seeing' evil. But as
we speak of sensory perception without redundancy, other kinds of perception are also possible. We can
perceive, for example, a good argument or a sense of excitement in the room. I align perception with the
social aspect of moral being and focus of educational aims because moral perceptions (as all perception)
requires social interactions (rather like truth requires agreement) which provide the Background context
in which moral concerns arise and in which shared ways of perceiving are created and re-created. This
sharing provides the ground for the construction of meaning, relationships, community, and constitutes
much of the agreement on which truths stand. It is interesting that Katherine Nelson's work in
developmental psychology supports a similar view of the intimate relationship between social
practices/interactions and perceptions. 28 While her explication of this relationship is offered within the

27 Both Lovibond (1983) and Platts (1979) discuss the nature and role of moral perception in great depth.
What follows is only a brief introduction to perception as part of my framework model. In the chapters to
follow I will carry out much more indepth investigations of moral perceptions in relating them to moral
concepts and the other components of moral learning.
28 Wittgenstein, Lovibond, Putnam, Hamlyn, Kazepides. In fact, Nelson (1985) also posits three levels in
the meaning system which parallel my three aspects of morality: the social, individual and cultural.
(epecially pp. 1-17 and pp. 249-260).
context of developmental psychology, the fact that empirical research should find evidence in harmony with the posited logical-theoretical structures should be viewed as a positive sign for researchers in both areas.

Perceptions can be viewed as the most basic aspect of reception because both feelings and understanding require some kind of perception. Perceiving something in a certain way does not necessarily require any feelings, though it may evoke feelings or naturally lead to certain feelings. The same is true of understanding. Without some perceptions (even if they are those in one's imagination) it is difficult to see how any kind of understanding can occur. One can, on the other hand, have certain perceptions without much understanding—except, perhaps, of a very limited and superficial kind. It is for this reason, I believe, that philosophers, such as Iris Murdoch, Sabina Lovibond and Mark Platts, have chosen to focus on moral perception.29 Moral perception will also be of central importance in my discussion of moral concepts and the educational potentials of teaching moral concepts in the chapters to follow.

Two important aspects of moral perception that educators must be aware of are those that contribute to seeing things from the moral point of view generally, or what might be termed 'having a moral sense'; and to seeing things from the moral point of view particularly, which is related to having in one's repertoire of active use, historically specific, concrete moral concepts and principles (and other things having to do with a specific moral code)—that is, the manifestation of moral sense in a particular life. Obviously these two aspects are not discrete but interdependent. Still, it is possible to warp the whole enterprise of moral education by attending only (or too much) to one while neglecting the other.30 Because of their interdependent nature, it is impossible to do this without at the same time failing to adequately treat (even) the part in focus. It is important to remember these two aspects and keep in mind that only in attending to both can we expect to succeed in truly achieving either. In particular, educators who seek to

29Lovibond (1983) writes: "For on a realist view, perception in ethics is logically prior to feeling: the morally blind man, according to Platts, 'does not feel because he does not see sufficiently.'" (p. 17)
Murdoch (1970) writes: "...if we simply introduce into the picture the idea of attention, or looking, of which I was speaking above. I can only choose within the world I can see..." (p. 36)
30As it seems that many people try to do in order to 'respect' diversity.
improve moral sensitivity must recognize this if their practice is to be guided by an adequate understanding of how specific instances of moral sensitivity are related to moral sensitivity generally.

If helping students to see from the moral point of view is what we mean by moral perception as an educational goal and if moral perception is a reception, then what we are interested in is that the content of people's perceptual experiences should involve relevant moral concepts. If, as Platts (1979) argues, the apprehension of situations in this way is not inferential—that is, not by inference from non-moral aspects of the situation—then moral perception can emerge directly from the meeting of our NetBack with the world. (p. 244)1 This is what the arrow leading directly from (and to) the NetBack, on the left side of heart, to (and from) the reception circle represents in Figure 3. I will discuss the other arrow leading from (and to) the NetBack through the reasoning component to the reception circle, when I explicate how I see reasoning as affecting our NetBack and our receptions.

A2. Feelings

Feelings are another reception focus which many consider an important moral educational goal. I will try to make clear what I mean here by feelings (in particular, moral feelings) and the role that I see it playing in the overall framework model. I have aligned feelings with the individual aspect of morality and focus of educational aims because subjectivity is an inevitable and predominant characteristic of feelings. As well, educational focus on feelings—especially talk about nurturing the "caring" side of people—usually involves a corresponding individual focus. As a distinct focus of reception, feelings aim at value while perceptions aim at reality. That is, while perception terms point to our experience of our engagement with reality (through representation), feeling terms point to our experience of a certain, physically focused or manifested, expression of our evaluations of reality (see Figure 5).32 To feel ashamed of having been dishonest requires that one perceives dishonesty as shameful, but feeling terms point to the experience of the physical manifestation of this evaluation. In this way, feelings are receptions rather than doings.

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1 Clearly this gets around the problem of the direct access to the world-in-itself without implying that an inference is required. This is a problem that Lovibond (1983) investigates in more detail and the solution of which she calls ethical intuitionism. (pp. 46-51)

32 I have come to this characterization of feelings largely from studying the works of Oliver Letwin (1987), pp. 85-123; and Robert Nozick (1989), pp. 87-98. Nozick, in particular, talks about the mind-body link that having emotions provides us. He claims that emotional responses to things are fuller responses than "bare evaluative judgments, since emotions involve our bodily responses also." (p. 92)
Reception 2

Experience of the meeting of representation and world - Sense perceptions are fundamental as they occur at the interface between mind and world where engagement begins

Experience of physical expression of evaluation - Energy release

Perceptions

Feelings

Understanding

TRUTH
Ordering and organization of NetBack - Experience of Internal Order

Figure 5
By moral feelings, in particular, I mean those feelings that are clearly and directly relevant to being moral. I do not consider vague, undirected agitations or moods as moral feelings. Rather, moral feelings are Intentional in that they are always about something; they have Intentional content. One cannot simply be ashamed, one is always ashamed of something. Similarly, if a certain instance of sadness is to be a moral feeling, it cannot be a mood of undirected sadness but requires substantive content; it must be sadness about something.33

It is clear that feelings other than the moral feelings that I refer to here will be important for moral being. There are certain kinds of feelings, which are natural human responses, without which we would be unable to perceive or understand similar responses in others. The ability to perceive the feelings of others is a very important outcome for moral education. It is an important part of being able to see others as persons. And if Hamlyn (1978) is right, this is only possible in the context of becoming a person oneself through being treated as a person. (p. 101) Thus feelings, in general, and moral feelings, in particular, are dependent on (and can affect in return) one's pre-intentional Background as well as the conceptual capacities of one's Network which allows us to perceive things in different ways.

Before going on to examine the relationship between feelings and the other foci of reception, it is important to be clear why I have chosen to talk about moral feelings rather than emotions or affect, the more common terms in educational writing on the subject. First of all, affect is a technical term which is conceptually and practically questionable. Emotions, on the other hand, covers too narrow a scope to include the range of things I wish to refer to here. For example, I would clearly want to include a feeling of respect for others as a moral feeling of educational value. But such a feeling need not be manifested as an emotion—and it certainly need not be emotional. Compassionate feelings, which many have argued is "the fount of all morality", also need not be expressed emotionally. By emotions we usually mean to refer to experiences that are sufficiently disturbing as to disrupt our normal flow of activity (Letwin, 1987, p. 103)—such as anger, fear, sadness or joy.34 Certainly moral feelings do not preclude emotions but it is

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33 Although the perception of a mood may be morally relevant, and having such a mood may alter, in morally relevant ways, one's actions, still moods fails to be morally relevant in the way required because their relevance is haphazard.

34 I have chosen to adopt Letwin's characterization of emotion rather than Nozick's because I believe that it is closer to our common sense understanding than is Nozick's.
important to note that they include more than emotions and that emotions do not necessarily even constitute the central cases of moral feelings.

What, then, constitutes this physical expression of an evaluation? I believe that a most promising characterization is that moral feelings involve the release of energy. This energy can either be allowed to dissipate haphazardly—as the energy released by a feeling of joy (which is non-moral in the relevant respect) is often dissipated through an extra bounce in one's step, a smile on one's face or a "jump for joy"—or it can be the catalyst for moving us to think and act morally—as the energy released by a feeling of compassion can move us to alleviate suffering through an act of kindness. This energy can also serve to call our attention to evaluations that would otherwise remain hidden or suppressed. This view of the character of moral feelings will be important for a deeper understanding of how moral feelings can affect moral thought and action as well as how education can influence this.

I stated earlier that perceptions are the most basic of the receptions. Without perceptions, one would not be able to feel in the relevant sense of the term. Yet, if Nozick (1989) is right that feelings are the fitting response to values, as belief is the fitting response to facts, (p. 92) then without feelings our perceptions may lack a kind of vividness which may be necessary if they are to guide our moral life the way that Lovibond, Platts and especially Murdoch have all indicated. Furthermore, the energies that are released in feelings can serve to call our conscious attention to aspects of a situation and thus can affect our perceptions, even eventually altering the ones that occasioned the feelings to begin with. Thus the arrows in the model (see Figure 3) flow in both directions between perceptions and feelings.

A3. Understanding

While perceptions involve acquaintance with reality and feelings involve the manifestation of valuation, understanding involves truth (see Figure 5). As truth is a particularly cultural (human culture) phenomenon, I have aligned moral understanding with the cultural aspect of morality and focus of educational aims. While truth is a characteristic of propositions, which are generally understood

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35See especially, Murdoch (1970), p. 38. Platts' (1979) explication of akrasia can also be augmented with this insight about the importance of feelings for moral action. While moral perceptions can provide compelling reasons for action, having moral feelings can release the energy needed to make action happen. (p. 256)
linguistically, understanding, which involves truth, is not similarly linguistic. Although exhibiting one's understanding often requires its embodiment in linguistic form (or through action that is conceptually represented), understanding itself is not this embodiment. In this way, "understanding is silent." (T. Y. Pang, 1987, p. 323)³⁶

While perceptions point to the 'seeing' experience and feelings point to the experience of energy release which is the physical expression of evaluation, understanding points to the experience of having a certain internal order in the mental structures one uses to make sense and construct meaning in the world; it is the experience of having a particular organization of one's Intentional states. In this way, moral understanding is a 'second-order' reception. It does not involve receiving things the way that perceptions do but rather involves the ordering and relating of perceptions and feelings. It points to the experience of having a certain state of internal order which guides one's living. It emphasizes the cultural level because it distinctively provides the dimension that allows for depth. Where, by depth, I mean the result of bringing many moral perceptions and feelings together to form a holistic picture in which each component part is transformed in light of its relationship with the others.³⁷ It should be clear from this characterization that moral understanding admits of degrees. It can be argued that even at the level of the simplest moral perception, some moral understanding is required. This is true, but Platts' (1979) investigation of akrasia may help to explain why it still makes sense of talk of moral understanding as I have. He writes:

At least at the moment of action, the akratic's perception is not cloudy but shallow: the concept he is then employing in his moral perception is the skeleton, austere concept, the shallow, dictionary defined concept, not the concept fleshed out by years of experience. . . . He regresses to a formal, non-experiential understanding of the moral notions involved. . . . He has forgotten all that experience has taught him, all that gives moral concepts life; he is like a man whose perception of beauty has been jaded to the point of mere encyclopaedic knowledge. He sees but does not feel; and he does not feel because he does not see sufficiently. Morality for him, is a dead language. (p. 256)

³⁶"Understanding is silent, it is wordless yet meaningful, it is colorless yet beautiful, it is effortless yet vigorous, it is formless yet real, it is everywhere and everything."
³⁷Platts (1979) describes this in terms of moral concepts and what he calls semantic depth. Lovibond (1983) writes of Platts: "The pursuit of moral understanding, success in which is reflected in an ever more subtle apprehension of the meaning of moral words, seems (on Platt's [sic] account) to resemble the project of philosophical definition by ascent through a 'scale of forms'. As we make additions to our repertoire of 'correct judgements' in connection with a given moral concept, we acquire the intuitive basis for our next step up the scale of forms of reflective specification of the content of that concept. . . ." (p. 34)
Moral understanding is fed by experience, both real and imaginary, and it has life only within a context where experience can be given meaning. The connecting of instances of moral perception and feeling across cases and over time, is the distinctive focus of moral understanding.\(^{38}\) The dual-direction arrows that connect moral understanding to these other foci of reception express this mutually influencing relationship.

Finally, it should be noted that, as a second-order notion, moral understanding can also encompass reflective insights about morality itself. Thus, moral understanding emphasizes comprehensiveness and includes the connections between moral concerns and the non-moral world. Its relationship with the NetBack is clear from its relationship with moral perceptions and feelings and their relationship with the NetBack. Understanding refers to having a certain order and coherence in one's NetBack.

B. The Place and Role of Reasoning

The focus on promoting good reasoning as the aim of moral education was one response to the problem of indoctrination that still sought to educate.\(^ {39}\) Educational philosophers such as Richard Peters and John Wilson, and developmental psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, have attempted to characterize moral reasoning and devise frameworks, tools and approaches that help educators to promote its development and improvement. When we note that reasoning is a practice—that is, it is an activity or a 'doing' as opposed to a reception like perceptions, feelings and understanding—it is clear why this has been a focus in education and why it is legitimately so. It is clearly something that we can directly influence by educational efforts; the very nature of the practice makes indoctrination difficult if not impossible; and the practice holds the promise of expansiveness that harmonizes with the spirit of education as earlier described. Much of this work on moral reasoning, however, has suffered from being overly narrow in its focus. Moral reasoning cannot stand alone. As a form of intellectual practice, it must be supported by the conceptual and background capacities of our whole NetBack. The procedures,

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\(^{39}\) Another is the Values Clarification response which I have argued elsewhere fails to fully educate students. See Wojciechowicz and Pang (1991), esp. 24-5.
strategies and standards that one usually hears about in discussions on moral reasoning do not define moral reasoning itself. They are the concrete embodiments of reasoning; that is, they are the ways we actually carry out reasoning. In order to understand the practice of reasoning as a whole, we must understand its purpose.

Many people have confused reasoning with instrumental reasoning—or what I feel might aptly be described as 'mental calculating'. I would like to suggest that reasoning has a much wider purpose and thus encompasses a much wider range of specific kinds of activities—such as, for example, the exercise of one's moral imagination. Its primary purpose is to improve our receptions through reflective engagement. (Thus, I have placed it between the NetBack and the receptions on the right side of the heart of my framework model. See Figure 3.)

Seeing the practice of reasoning in this way not only makes its connection with perceptions and understanding clearer, but it also provides us with a distinctive and insightful view of its relationship with feelings. This view does not just maintain that moral reasoning leads to moral judgments or decisions on morally appropriate actions. In a sense, this view can show us how moral reasoning does this. The procedures and strategies that moral reasoning involves are meant to direct our attention and our efforts in such a way as to make our moral perceptions clearer, keener, more inclusive and more meaningful; our feelings more apt; and our moral understandings deeper, more coherent and more comprehensive. It is obvious from this view that moral reasoning involves not only activities that one does alone, but also the dialectical discussions between two or more persons—including the kinds of 'discussions' that can go on between reader and writer.

Such an understanding of the primary aims of moral reasoning, if it can form a constant background awareness in the teaching of moral reasoning, can serve to keep such teaching from degenerating into the mere teaching of sophistry, the mere transference of knowledge and skills that can be used for good or for bad. Moral reasoning, then, would be characteristically moral in both senses of

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40 Yi-Fu Tuan (1989) describes imagination as an "attentive mode of inquiry, a vigorous engagement with the real" in Morality and Imagination: Paradoxes of Progress, p. 143.
41 This notion of there being educational outcomes that have this character—that include a normative aspect in it which characterizing them in terms of dispositions just does not seems to capture—was first called to my attention when I read John Passmore's article (1967) "On Teaching to be Critical," in which he distinguishes the "critical spirit" from the skills and abilities that are needed to express that spirit in practice.
being moral. This seems, at least intuitively, appropriate. Given such a view of moral reasoning, there is no question that sophistry is not an instantiation of good moral reasoning. And even if the tools of moral reasoning can often be wielded for immoral purposes—such as often happens when people first learn how to spot weaknesses in other people's arguments and, relishing the power they have acquired, use it recklessly or purposefully to injure others—teachers will see that they have yet to achieve their aims when this occurs. This view is important to seeing moral reasoning holistically rather than simply as some amalgamation of knowledge, abilities and dispositions.42

This view also explains why specific, explicitly statable moral arguments, no matter how rationally sound, rarely constitute the final word on moral judgments. They focus a significant, but very small part, of all the things that contribute to a moral judgment. As R. M. Hare (1952) states, we are rarely able to state explicitly the exact principles on which our moral judgments are based—they are simply too complicated, involving some interrelated system of elements from our NetBack. (pp. 56, 78)

The principles that we explicitly offer point to what we consider to be the most significant of the considerations that contributed to the judgment—they describe only the most significant parts of what we perceive, feel and understand as relevant about the situation. So as guides to moral judgment and moral action, explicitly statable moral principles can serve only as "signposts" and not as absolute determinants of judgment or action 43 As signposts, they serve to direct our attention to different aspects of situations so that we may see more clearly, feel more aptly and understand with more depth.

Moral reasoning as a social-cultural practice can also alter one's NetBack directly by affecting one's non-representational mental capacities—that is, one's Background. Part of what is involved in moral reasoning includes know-hows, and in learning to reason morally, we acquire these know-hows. But why should this particular social practice be singled out for special notice by moral educators? and why do I continue this emphasis here? The centrality of this social practice has to do with its specifically educational character; it is intrinsically educational. Moral reasoning is, in a sense, our way to continuously educate ourselves about moral aspects of situations, thus informing our judgments, our

42 That is, moral reasoning ≠ {moral knowledge, certain abilities, certain dispositions}.
43 The term "signposts" is from R.S. Peters (1979), pp. 123-124.
conduct and our actions.\textsuperscript{44} Reasoning does this by evoking sleeping resources, directing attention and consequently creating a felt need for further resources, etc. Reasoning is our way to make efforts to perceive better. It can evoke relevant resources that are not already in use in our immediate perceptions. Thus, we can see that the moral judgments that follow from moral arguments in reasoning simply express the altered perceptions that reasoning has effected. Insofar as moral judging is an action, it must point to the acts involved in reasoning or to the act of making one's, thus altered, perceptions known to others.

Finally, as an activity, moral reasoning requires energy and effort. In this way, its practice involves a certain kind of discipline. As a rule-directed activity, moral reasoning is also related to discipline in a different respect; it can be seen as a moral discipline. These two insights about moral reasoning will be clearer once I have fully explicated my notion of discipline and how I see it as working in the framework model. The significance for education of the relationship I posit between moral reasoning and discipline should then be clear.

C. Action

Moral action is the final category of moral objectives that moral education seeks. From the perspective of moral agency, it would appear that moral actions should be of central focus. But there is more than one way to interpret moral agency and the associated importance of moral actions. Certainly, it is of practical moral importance that people should act morally. And if morality is about human goodness, the expression of which is centrally through actions, then agency is indeed an important aspect of moral being. But a particular action can be viewed either as an end-in-itself or as a part of the continuous life of a moral being--that is, as an end-in-view. It will be obvious from my framework model that I have chosen the second view. In fact, this is the way that I will distinguish between talk of moral conduct and talk of particular moral actions. Moral conduct refers to actions viewed in the context of a life, as somehow characterizing that life. It points to groups of actions of certain kinds--such as, conduct expressing generosity--rather than to particular actions as discrete events--such as a particular generous act. To describe a particular act as part of someone's moral conduct is to emphasize that it is just one instance of a

\textsuperscript{44}Murdoch (1970) would argue that this expansive or progressive character--which she would describe as a tending toward perfection or the Good--is not just an educational characteristic, but more fundamentally a moral characteristic. This is how education is a moral enterprise. I tend to agree with her.
characteristic way of proceeding. I contend that it is not discrete moral actions that should constitute the central focus or ultimate end of moral being. As Murdoch (1970) argues, the notion that we are not moral except at moments of choice in action misses most of the important contributions which determine our choices at these moments, and thus, it misses most of the moral life. (pp. 36-37)

While placing conduct/actions at the opposite end of the framework model from the NetBack seems to reinforce the view that actions are the outcome toward which all other morally relevant activities aim, the closed nature of the framework model which shows the reverberating influence of conduct/actions back on the other components of the system, indicates that this is not in fact the case (see Figure 3). In fact, either the top or the bottom of the model could be considered "the end", or neither could be so considered. What is important is not which we choose but that we see the relationships and reverberating influences of all the parts, moral conduct/actions being one of them. I am arguing that moral being involves holistically all the components in the framework model.

Given this understanding, it is natural to proceed to examine just how conduct and actions are related to the other parts of the framework. The first thing to note is that, as 'doings', conduct and action require energy and effort and so are intimately related to discipline. (Again, we will see how this is so when discussing the role of discipline in the model.) The second thing to note is that this component is a consequence of (or follows from) moral receptions. Work in action theory tells us that a particular behaviour can be interpreted as a variety of actions depending on the way it is represented. The way a person represents an action in a moral situation constitutes the way that person perceives the situation—that is, the way that person represents the situation to herself or himself. Judgment of the appropriateness of an action will depend then on the overall perception of the situation in which that action is performed.45 This perception will include not just a perception of the obvious (physical) consequences of the action, but also other implications of the action—including those that reflect back on the self-

45This idea that action follows from receptions—especially perceptions—is significant in the work of Searle (1983), Murdoch (1970), Lovibond (1983), and Platts (1979). As well, this idea explains Wong's (1984) reference to Taoist thought when discussing respect for persons—that it is unconditional and follows from "looking" at others from the "human point of view", that respect does not involve calculating worth (as utilitarians would have it) but rather, seeing it and acting accordingly. (pp. 208-214)
perception of the individual contemplating the action. All of this depends on one's understanding and the feelings that this understanding evokes. In particular, feelings, as mentioned before, can have a very important role to play in the motivation of action through its release of energy that not only calls our attention to our judgments but serve to initiate and engage effort for action.

This view of conduct/actions as following naturally from one's receptions (in particular, one's perceptions) is supported by Murdoch as well as Platts. But while Murdoch (1970, pp. 36, 38) mentions effort and discipline and Platts (1979) explicates quite proficiently how it is possible that moral perceptions can compel actions without guaranteeing them, (pp. 249-250) I believe that it is only in combining the insights from both that we can get a full picture of the phenomenon of akriasia which will give us some hope of helping to alleviate it. My contribution to completing Platts' examination of akriasia will involve a detailed articulation of Murdoch's notion of discipline. For me, the 'weakness of the will' problem is one with the weakness of discipline. I will explain this further in the next section on moral discipline.

Before going on to that topic, however, a few final words need to be said about moral conduct and actions. As mentioned before, moral actions have reverberating influences back on receptions and the other components in the framework. One of the ways this influence is instantiated is through the opportunities that particular actions provide for new receptions both as one carries out the actions and in contemplating the consequences of the actions after the fact. If these new receptions include perceptions and accompanying feelings expressed as new desires or needs, then the motivational energies from these will be available for initiating further change in the system. Furthermore, because moral action requires the movement of energy (in the form of effort), it can serve to release energies in a way that nothing else can. As well, carrying out moral action, which is the unique rational expression of our moral judgments,

As Richard Rorty once said in a lecture on moral principles, one of the considerations that can make a difference when we try to decide on what to do in difficult moral situations is: which course of action will reflect the kind of person we want to be?

Murdock (1970) calls these "psychic energies." (p. 43) By this I assume she means energy that feeds our psychological or mental functions or at least is available for those functions. She does not explain what she means and speaking of "psychic energies" makes it sound like it is a sort of energy which is somehow divorced from the physical. I believe that the energies that are released can be directed not only to psychological change but also to the more physically overt changes that are often necessary accompaniments to them. For example, changes in the way we do certain things if we are to make
helps to give moral meaning to our lives. We experience this meaning through all the foci of reception including the feelings which release further energies. Thus a continuous supply of energy is available for the transformation of the system which is moral growth and change.

D. Discipline

While discipline is not an unfamiliar word in educational circles, it has not been the subject of much recent philosophical study. I propose quite a central role for discipline in my model so it is important for the understanding of the model that I explain as clearly as possible what I mean by discipline. The following analysis is not exhaustive but serves to emphasize some important features of discipline that are significant for grasping how I mean for it to be understood as part of the model.

First of all, the notion of discipline and the notion of 'the disciplines' are closely related. The disciplines are thus called because they provide a framework or order to help us to understand a field. They have internal order expressed in rules and standards which structure intelligent thinking in the field. It is also the case that it takes some effort to "get on the inside" of a discipline. This process does not involve simply internalizing some external set of rules and standards—that is, simply taking on the programming—it involves finding these rules and standards intelligible and meaningful for oneself so that they become a part of one's tools for understanding the world without thereby limiting one's understanding of the world to the view they offer. This is the way that a discipline can continue to evolve.

Thus the disciplines are external devices that help us to develop an internal order for understanding things. The external order of the discipline rather than stating eternal laws that our thinking must follow, serves instead as an aid to our understanding—the understanding which partially constitutes the internal order that regulates our lives. Thus, the disciplines constitute more a means than an end in education, though they may be considered as ends-in-view, and their aim is what might be called disciplined thinking in their associated fields—that is, internally regulated thinking.  

compassion a meaningful part of our moral living. I believe that my model makes Murdoch's insight clearer and more helpful.


49 Coombs (1982) distinguishes "having discipline" and "being a disciplined X". He argues that in order to be attributed with having discipline, the significant rules to be followed are those one finds appropriate oneself, whereas being a disciplined X requires that one follows rules that actually define excellence in X-ing. (p. 201) What I mean here by disciplined thinking is having discipline in one's thinking in a field but
Much of what I have said about the disciplines is also true of 'discipline' as I mean the term. Discipline can point to both the external order that is "imposed" and the internal order that it aims for. (cf. Coombs, 1982, pp. 199, 202) A disciplined person is not a person who acts according to an externally imposed order—not even when this order is internalized—rather this is a person who has internal direction and has developed an internal order of his or her own. Disciplining ourselves or others is what we do to aid in the development of this internal order and internal direction.\(^{50}\) As with the disciplines, if the imposition of an external order is to constitute discipline, in the way that I mean it, it must have as its ultimate aim the development of internal direction and an internal order, and not be an end in itself. I believe that this is what Oakeshott (1989) meant when he wrote that "an educational engagement is at once a discipline and a release; and it is the one by virtue of being the other." (p. 93) This understanding of discipline is very important to the correct interpretation of its significance in my model.

Another related term that can provide insights into significant features of the notion of discipline is the term 'disciples'. This term has become rather obsolete in our modern world but a brief review of its use in older texts is quite revealing. The term 'disciple' was usually used to describe a person who had offered a holistic commitment of energies and attention to the teachings of some teacher or master. The notion of 'master' used here is not the one which is the complement to 'slave' but rather the one which is the complement to 'apprentice' or 'novice'. Disciples would often live with their teachers, trying to see things the way their teacher sees them, trying to imitate and be steeped in the way of life of their teachers. The ultimate point of this was not imitation but the light of understanding or the realization of that internal order which would be their freedom. The effort that disciples are said to have made toward this end provides insight into the characteristics of discipline. The relation of disciple to teacher provides another insight into the characteristics of discipline. It gives us a sense of the interpersonal connection and its significance for discipline. Even a full understanding of self-discipline requires that we acknowledge the significance of support from others. Finally, the deep trust that must exist between

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\(^{50}\)Here, I am only referring to what I consider to be the relevant sense of disciplining. For other senses, see Coombs (1982) pp. 202-203.
teacher and disciple provides a clue as to the kind of relationship that might be important if external
discipline is to achieve its aim in education.

Before I go on to examine more explicitly the notion of discipline, one final conceptual tie needs
to be investigated—that is, the close relationship, historically, between discipline and punishment. I want
to disentangle discipline from this conceptual link by making clear the distinction between it and
punishment. The distinction is rooted in the difference between the intention of discipline and that of
punishment. Discipline seeks correction through a transformation in one's receptions (one's perceptions,
feelings and understandings) regarding one's life and actions in relation to the rest of the world.
Punishment seeks retribution for a perceived wrong usually through inflicting some form of displeasure in
return. Many people believe that punishment is "just dessert" for wrong doing and do not believe that
discipline is possible. Others believe that punishment can achieve (as a natural consequence?) what
discipline seeks to do directly. The evidence is heavily against this latter belief. Witness our criminal
justice system which, in passing out punishment, expects to reform criminals.51 It has been a miserable
failure.

The way that external discipline would work in reform and in moral education is the same. It
aids in the creation of an internal moral order (moral understanding as I mean it) which allows people to
see the world morally, and in the development of the internal discipline that is needed to help them to live
their lives according to that order.

The first step in my investigation of this concept is to distinguish two senses in which I will use
the term. The first sense is where discipline refers to an activity carried out according to some external
order, hereafter discipline_{ex} or external discipline. The second sense is where discipline refers to an
outcome which I describe as the ability to regulate one's life (through directing one's efforts) according to
an internal order, hereafter discipline_{in} or internal discipline. The two sense are related in that the first

\[51\] It is interesting to investigate why reform has not worked. The notion of reform is interesting in that,
punishment can re-form a person but probably not in the way that people generally expect. To 're-form' has
the ring of manipulation which education, in the sense I use it, intentionally avoids. Nor does it help
to change the word to 're-educate' because that would only bring the sense of manipulation into the term
education which is contrary to intent. The answer probably lies not in changing the term we use but in
changing the way we view the practice of reform and thus the way we carry it out.
sort aims at the second.\textsuperscript{52} This characterization of discipline in part accords with our ordinary language use of the term and in part constitutes a stipulated conception. There is also a purposeful relationship between external discipline and the internal order that is our understanding.

Discipline\textsubscript{ex} points to activity and has a very strong physical foundation. Thus we often speak of training through discipline\textsubscript{ex} or for discipline\textsubscript{in}. We need to investigate more fully what this training entails and how it is significant to moral learning, for clearly being moral does not appear to be centrally a matter of exercising skills and moral training has often been viewed as antithetical to moral education. As I have hinted before, the connection between discipline\textsubscript{in} and the physical is rooted in the relationship between discipline and energy or effort. Discipline, as I mean it both as an activity and as central to activity, has to do with the summoning of effort or the direction of energy (see Figure 6). External discipline serves to train one's abilities to direct one's energy through the temporary imposition of an external order. As we discussed in talking about the disciplines, external discipline uses an established external order to help us to direct our energies. The internal discipline that it seeks to develop is the ability to internally direct our energies according to an internal order whose development has been, and continues to be, nourished by discipline\textsubscript{ex + in}. This internal order stabilizes but is never permanently fixed. Improved discipline\textsubscript{in} would then involve the ability to direct one's energies more precisely. Wherever energy is made available in a moral situation (for example through moral feelings or desires), discipline is the term that picks out what can help us to harness that energy for moral purposes.

To develop discipline, we must train our energy. Developing discipline for moral living may require that we becoming familiar with the way our energy presently moves within us and that we nourish its source as well as improve our ability to direct it. For example, suppose we are interested in helping a young shoplifter, call her Red, to develop some moral discipline. It would be helpful for Red to pay careful attention to what moves her to shoplift—that is, it will be helpful for her to be fully conscious of how she allows her desire to possess certain things to overpower her sense of right and wrong and thus dictate her

\textsuperscript{52}This distinction somewhat parallels the distinction Coombs (1982) makes in the two kinds of rules that a person with discipline must follow. He argues that these rules are "(a) those that constitute standards of good performance... (b) those that specify the regimen of practice, diet, or the like one must follow to be capable of good performance." (p. 200)
Discipline

\[ \textbf{Direction of Energy} \]

- External
  - (means)
  - 1. Directing attention
  - 2. Directing the activity of reasoning
  - 3. Directing conduct and actions

- Internal
  - (means/end)
  - 1. Directing attention
  - 2. Maintaining engagement
  - 3. Directing the activity of reasoning
  - 4. Carrying out reasoning activities
  - 5. Directing conduct and actions
  - 6. Realizing conduct and actions

\textit{Figure 6}
actions. Unflinching attention to her motivations will reveal how she has failed to make efforts to empower her moral views by redirecting her energies away from her immediate desires toward relevant moral considerations. If her failure has something to do with a lack of energy, as might be the case if she were subject to deprivation, oppression and other causes of suffering, then it will be important to the development of her discipline to take steps to nourish her capacities to produce energy for moral living. This may require vastly different potential courses of action, from simply feeding her properly to helping to alleviate emotional turmoil that can drain her energy as well as damage her capacity to produce it. This second course may involve helping her to acquire the intellectual and emotional resources to better deal with her situation.

A comparison with physical discipline might help. In the same way that practice in a physical discipline can both improve our form as well as our bodies, moral discipline can affect our moral learning in more than one way. An improved form will help us to use less energy to do what we want; an improved body will both move more easily and supply more and/or better (in the sense of being more stable and of purer quality) energy to do what we want (that is, we have improved equipment and more and/or better energy). The improved form in moral being has to do with the concepts, reasoning strategies and orientations we take on; the improved equipment is evidenced in the competence and dexterity with which we are able to use our concepts, reasoning strategies and orientations; the improved energy in moral living will show in the keenness of our looking (our attention, our perception) and the strength of our commitments and resolve to instantiate certain ways of life and actions. Finally, moral discipline will be evidenced in the actual moral life that we lead.

I have indicated that discipline as an educational activity and goal is centrally concerned with two things, one that is physically based and the other that involves helping to actualize an internal mental order or understanding. More needs now to be said about how discipline of the former kind influences the latter aim. How, that is, does discipline affect reception? As part of a dynamic system, reception can be greatly affected by discipline. But there is no way for discipline to act directly on reception. Reception is itself effortless not because it is easy but because it is a passive phenomenon. It emerges as a consequence
of effort exerted in activities that direct our attention in ways required for reception. It can be viewed as an achievement only within this broad, systemic or holistic, point of view.

One of the primary tasks of discipline in our model has to do with directing attention. Murdoch (1970) talks about "habitual objects of attention", which she links to "attachment" to certain things, as important for moral being. (p. 56) It is not clear to me whether she means this in the most negative sense of the terms 'habitual' and 'attachment', but I would like to offer what I believe to be a more apt and less potentially misleading choice of words. Instead of "attachment" I think we should talk about engagement; and in the place of "habit" we should talk about familiarity. Along with Murdoch, I am interested in talking about the quality of our attention, but as I describe it above. Murdoch seems to be referring to the quality of the objects of attention, i.e., the concepts we tend to use to focus attention, as well as the things themselves on which we focus our attention. As we develop our discipline and the quality of our attention is improved, we will be able to engage more fully and more steadily with "reality".

In the words of Searle, engagement implies a world-to-mind hold while attachment implies a mind-to-world hold. Engagement is less aggressive than attachment but equally alive and more responsive and expansive. Discipline will help us, through directing regular engagement with certain aspects of reality, to develop a familiarity with these aspects. This will then lessen the required amount of attention for future engagement. Habit can also do this, but for a slightly different reason. Habit actually helps us, in a way, to 'attend' with less engagement--a rather narrow sense of attend. By making attention a habit, it takes on the quality of an attachment which does not need to be responsive to aspects not previously deemed relevant. For this reason, habits can lessen the amount of energy required to 'attend'. What discipline aims to do is direct sufficient energy so that the full potential of engagement is received. This can then lead to a familiarity with the object of engagement, allowing us to attend to it with less energy; because we already know it so well the extra energy, otherwise required, is not needed. This familiarity is supportive of sensitivity because the more familiar you are with something, without withdrawing your attentiveness and becoming habitual, the easier it is for you to detect changes in it.53 Furthermore,

53Kuhn (1980) mentions something similar when he talks about how a very good grasp of the prevailing paradigm can help one to recognize anomalies. (p. 65)
disciplined engagement that aims at familiarity rather than habit or attachment can also help us to refine our attention, improving its very quality so that less will be needed to attend or engage at the same level—as a car often runs better and farther with 'supreme' quality, 'high octane' gasoline than with regular gas. It does this by improving the quality of the energies available to power our attention (the way that electricity powers a radio receiver). Recall the analogy with overt physical discipline—both the form and the body are improved through discipline—moral discipline has a similar effect. Energy is physically based. Practice—in the sense of attentive, repeated use—can serve as a kind of training which improves not only our control of our energy but also the supply of energy itself. Habit can never refine our energy in this way because of its mechanical nature.

Disciplined effort is distinguished from other sources of energy in an educationally important way. We all recognise that sometimes when we try too hard we can actually hinder our progress toward a desired goal. Nervous energy often does this to us. Its uneven quality and uncontrolled release can have more detrimental than helpful consequences. Disciplined effort, then, is not only a matter of calling forth energy when needed but of regulating the amount of energy released so that just what is needed is made available. This is very important not only for supporting overt activities but for maintaining the orientations that make clear perception possible. Too much undirected or misdirected effort can actually block such perceptions.

Discipline can affect action by directing effort to maintain one's attention on the appropriate questions and powering the engagement and practice of reasoning that may lead to decisions for action. This second influence of discipline is very important. As stated before, moral reasoning is a sort of moral discipline. It requires sustained energy and effort for reflection, questioning, seeking answers, reassessing and etc.

Discipline can finally direct one's energies to carry out the actions viewed as appropriate given the circumstances. Discipline helps us to supply the moving force that carries us from our receptions to our actions. It is here that the problem of akrasia arises. Platts' (1979) explication of akasria leaves off at the point where insufficient attention is given to the moral aspects of a situation so that one's actual perception of the situation, at the moment of action, lacks depth and vividness. This may be because one's
attention is largely taken by other considerations such as how much pleasure or money one might gain in
the situation. This divided attention is evidence of a lack of moral discipline, a lack of control over one's
energy distribution. Sometimes, a person will have moments of perceptual depth which provide
compelling reasons to act morally. But if action does not follow, this may be a sign of an inability to
sustain the level of engagement which provided that depth of perception. This can also be viewed as a
problem with discipline or energy. Finally, although full depth of perception may be maintained,
sometimes people lack the physical control (sometimes described as a lack of courage) of their bodies
needed to summon the effort to actually carry out the action. The obstacles to action may be due to fear
which often serves to paralyze people, or to habitual ways of proceeding that people are unable to
overcome. Here again is a reason to be wary of aiming for habits as educational goals. They can actually
work negatively in akratic situations. Habits have a mechanically conservative force that can pull us back
to ways of seeing and acting that we are otherwise able to see is wrong or unproductive.

Thus, akrasia can be explained as due to a lack of energy, and/or a lack of ability and facility in
directing and sustaining energy toward moral concerns. As discipline aims directly at the latter and can
clearly influence the former, I will argue that the way to avoid akrasia is through attention to discipline.
Weakness of will then is actually weakness of discipline.

_The Framework revisited (see Figure 3)_

It is difficult to make fully explicit all the characteristics of the framework I am offering. A few
words, however, can be offered in the way of emphasis on two very important features. The dynamic
nature of the conception is, I believe, one of its most educationally significant characteristics. The sense of
potential for directing change and the continuous movement of influence and energy offer more than hope
for education; it offers direction. The model must not be misinterpreted as a developmental model. Rather,
it would more appropriately be viewed as a 'snapshot' of the system, with influence flow lines which
represent logical and psychological/physiological relationships between the components at play. The
model appears to represent a closed system, in which echoes of influence reverberate thereby maintaining
the energy from within the system. The stars (see Figure 3) indicate potential points of educational
influence where energy can be introduced from outside. 54 Thus the system is actually open though it has features very like closed systems—or, it can be viewed as either an open or a closed system.

While the old framework, which relied on the categorization of educational aims on the basis of knowledge, abilities and disposition outcomes, is conceptually adequate, the new framework I am offering is able to do much more educational work. By revealing the relationships between receptions and activities-actions, and introducing the dynamic force of discipline, it not only helps educators to see the relationships between different kinds of objectives and their relationship and contribution to a larger aim, but also provides a way for external influence to work with the system.

In particular, this new framework reveals characteristics of moral dispositional outcomes that have otherwise been hidden from the educator. It reveals that moral dispositional outcomes must consist of certain moral receptions—this would include the disposition to perceive certain things which depends on having the necessary components in one's NetBack, some familiarity with those components, as well as attention sufficiently keen and alert—together with the appropriate discipline. If we seek to promote certain dispositions in students it is important that we see the coordinated and reverberating nature of these dispositions and educate accordingly. This insight can also help us to diagnose where and why existing practices may fail or be otherwise inadequate for promoting moral dispositional outcomes.

The broad vision of moral education in a pluralistic society

As I have stated before, none of the specific components of moral education and moral learning will have much meaning outside of a larger vision which gives them unity and integrity, and from which their ultimate purpose can be gleaned. Moral education in a pluralistic society seeks to help all students to become full members of the moral community. 55 In doing this, it performs both a reproductive and a productive (or creative) function—that is, it is an agent both of Sittlichkeit and of Moralität—often doing ______

54 There are many ways to do this. One interesting but not often examined way is through inspiration which introduces energy into the system the way the an initial push introduces energy to the system of a child on a swing. Once given, the system in motion is able to sustain and direct movement through internal sources of energy—the child can keep the swing moving and, in fact, get it to go higher and higher by exerting effort of its own, i.e., by moving in certain ways.

55 This notion of a moral community I first encountered in a paper by Jerrold Coombs (1988) on Global Education. Since then it has been augmented especially by the works of Lawrence Blum (1991, pp. 16-20) who describes the importance of an "interracial community" for multicultural education, and David Wong (1988) who discusses the importance of community to self-identity.
the latter in large part by doing the former. (Lovibond, 1983, p. 195) This initiation depends on awakening the sense of morality in students and helping them to realize a moral life through introducing them to the resources and practices which have been central to the realization of moral human lives. In a culturally diverse society the resources and practices which are available to nourish the NetBack are various and rich. A society which nourishes this diversity through education, enhances its ability to provide a meaningful moral life for all its members by providing a rich source of ideals, lifestyles, exemplars and paradigms for its members to find themselves in. Lovibond (1983) argues that an inclusive approach, which allows people with differing (marginal) moral views to remain a part of the moral community, keeps the lines of communication open and allows people to see each other as fellow participants in a common form of life which they create together—that is, it allows critical participation as part of moral living.

... the mere existence of a language-game in which moral facts are recorded is not enough to endow our life with meaning. The only thing which could do that would be the advent of a moral language-game which was expressive of ourselves... and the only sort of game to which we should be willing to ascribe this quality would be one that we could see, not merely as the expression of some arbitrary set of cultural circumstances in which we happened to be placed, but as grounded in a form of life capable of withstanding critical inspection... it is only in so far as he can conceptualize the conduct of his life in terms laid down by some real system of moral institutions that the individual will succeed in finding a meaning in life as a whole. (pp. 222-223)

The "expansion of meaning" that is the potential reward of a pluralistic approach to moral education is a distinctive offering of education as well as a contribution to the potential "semantic depth" of moral living. This uniquely expresses the notion of progress toward an ineffable good which is the very root of the moral spirit. Moral education in a pluralistic society should seek to help all students to find a meaningful moral life for themselves and thus to create a living moral community. It can do this by offering the cultural resources, practices and discipline as well as a community of fellow participants to support such a life.

The Canadian Mosaic is a particularly apt moral image for a pluralistic moral community. A mosaic is made up of a richness of colours, shapes and textures each distinct but together making up a

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56Lovibond's discussion of this aspect of moral living is particularly enlightening, although it is also mentioned by Wilson in his recent work. Lovibond (1983), pp. 169-223 and Wilson (1990), p. 103.
greater coherent picture. As a part of a mosaic, the individual contributors gain a significance they would not otherwise have. (Not only is the whole more than a sum of its parts, the parts are themselves 'more' for being parts of the whole.) The picture that the mosaic makes depends on the individual contributors so that a change in any part would constitute a change in the overall picture. This way, each person and subculture is a participant in the greater moral community with a definite say in the more concrete moral image that an actual mosaic presents. Moral education in a pluralistic society has the role, then, not simply of sustaining a mosaic, but of helping students to become full critical participants, with the potential to construct for themselves meaningful lives in a living, dynamic community mosaic.
Chapter Three

HOW MORAL LANGUAGE IS IMPLICATED IN MORAL LIFE

Introduction

The general aim of this chapter is to link the aims of moral education—moral learning and moral being—to moral language competence, generally, and the learning of morally significant concepts, in particular. As we can already see from the framework in chapter two, a person's mental capacities at a particular time largely involve their conceptual resources—the resources which affect their perceptions, feelings, understanding and actions. I will consider here in more depth the relationships of moral language and concepts with the moral components proposed in chapter two.

I begin by examining the relationships among language, reception and thought. Because we use language both to describe and express, represent and exhibit, talk about and live our lives, language is never just language. I will argue that moral language, as a special subset of human language, is deeply implicated in moral life. So one way of understanding our morality (that is, both our moral nature and how it is articulated in our lives) is through our moral language. The legacy of Wittgenstein's work on language as a social institution or form of life will ground this examination.

In light of the implication of language in our moral lives and the variety of languages extant in our pluralistic society, what can we say about moral diversity? Differences in moral views and practices can be examined through their link to the moral languages and language-games which describe and constitute them. We must come to some understanding of what links, as well as what differentiates, moral languages if we want this notion to contribute to a better understanding of moral diversity. The work of Jeffery Stout, Hilary Putnam, Sabina Lovibond and Nelson Goodman all support the validity of conceptual relativity generally. Stout examines what this might mean in detail for the moral realm in particular. These works propose that our lives, including our moral lives, cannot be fully understood outside of the contexts in which they are lived; and our language is inextricably involved in the make-up of these contexts.

This link between moral language, moral learning and moral life has important implications for moral education in a pluralistic context. It suggests a certain way of viewing diversity in the moral realm
which allows moral education to proceed based on a clear understanding of the appropriate relationship between educational approaches and the aims of moral education. With this view as a foundation, I will examine specifically the important role that concepts play in language and indicate their involvement in each of the moral components of the framework. Once the relationships are clear, it will be possible to revisit the aims of moral education in a pluralistic society from a concept learning point of view.

The work in this chapter prepares the way to a clear perception of how concept learning fits into moral education for a pluralistic society. This broad view will in turn affect our understanding of what it means to teach (moral) concepts for moral understanding and living. The implications will be discussed in chapter five after I say more about concepts of special significance in moral education: moral concepts.

Language, reception and thought

One of the things that distinguishes humans from other animals (as far as we can tell) is our linguistic capacity. Other animals use signs, but our linguistic symbolic capacity allows us to transcend our immediate circumstances in a way that has implications not only for practical progress but also for the very forms of life open to us. Our linguistic capacity everywhere colours our lives. Even our relationships with pre-linguistic infants and non-linguistic creatures are coloured by the former's potential for language (their developing capacity to learn our linguistic forms of life) and our projection of linguistically coloured forms of life onto the latter.¹ It has been said that we perceive the world—that is, reality—mediated by our language. The difficulties of this view which posits a reality independent of us and language as a kind of filter through which we see this reality have been insightfully discussed by various philosophers. In detail, those arguments do not directly affect us here except to suggest that it is possible to recognize the intimate

¹The question of whether we can really know what it is like to be a non-linguistic creature is discussed by Thomas Nagel in his paper, "What it is like to be a bat" in Nagel (1970). In it Nagel talks about what we actually experience when we try to imagine what it is like to be a bat. Because we cannot jump out of our human perspective into a radically different one, not only can we not know what it is like to be a bat, we have no idea what a "bat perspective" might be like. Hamlyn (1978) has much to say about our relationships to pre-linguistic children and non-linguistic animals and the presumption of a shared form of life that is involved. He argues, "We are apt, as I have already noted, to speak of animals (and equally of young children) in terms of the concepts that we possess. . . . The absence of language means that it is impossible for the animal to bring to bear at one time sufficient of the implications of the relationship without making them explicit; language, as I have said, provides a focus for the knowledge involved without its having to be made explicit (although it is less clear to me whether it is right to say that the animal cannot have the concept in question because it cannot use language, or whether it cannot have the use of language because it does not have sufficient of the kind of understanding in question)."(p. 79)
relationship between our notion of reality and our linguistic capacity without accepting the dichotomy between form and content posited by a naïve view where conceptual schemes are set against "things-in-themselves."²

In fact, this relationship is what distinguishes our languages from other potential symbolic systems and what makes their characterization as forms of life so apt. Hamlyn (1978) argues that what makes a form of understanding linguistic or something that is linguistically coloured is, among other things, that it involves an understanding of truth and falsity in the definite form that these notions have in application to sayings. Thus the child's learning of language is the learning of an institution which has these ideas at its centre. (p. 112)

Truth is the linguistic correlate of reality.

Related to the notions of truth and reality is that of knowledge, and it is no less bound up with language than the other two. Knowledge is concerned with our perception of truths and so must be, at least potentially, expressible in our language. But particular languages are limited in what they can express. They are embedded in social practices and ways of proceeding which are open to change. Thus any living language is (more or less) dynamic and responsive to the context in which it has its life—that is, it changes with changes in the environment, in practice and ways of proceeding—and through intentional and unintentional extensions of its use.³ Here the notion of conceptual relativity (or what Stout (1988) terms conceptual diversity and Goodman (1978/1992) terms different ways of worldmaking) easily finds a congenial reception. According to Putnam (1988)

what is (by commonsense standards) the same situation can be described in many different ways, depending on how we use the words. The situation does not itself legislate how words. . .must be used. What is wrong with the notion of objects existing 'independently' of conceptual schemes is that there are no standards for the use of even the logical notions apart from conceptual choices. . . . To talk of 'facts' without specifying the language to be used is to talk of nothing. . . . (p. 114)

²That is to say, without our language, we couldn't have our notion of reality (one existing independent of us) and it makes no sense to ask whether reality would exist even if we couldn't have a notion of it. I believe this is what the Buddhists mean when they say that reality is empty or vacuous. See also Davidson (1991), and Wing-Tsit Chan (1973), "The Philosophy of Emptiness," pp. 357-369.

³See Jeffrey Stout's (1988) discussion regarding change in moral language. (pp. 74-81)
So a language both influences and is influenced by the prevailing form of life. For anyone to have knowledge, they must share a form of life with others and this involves sharing a language as well as other things. As Hamlyn (1978) states it,

the possibility of knowledge itself . . . is something that presupposes not only again the satisfaction of causal conditions, partly genetic partly environmental, but also the sharing in a common form of life. The implications of this last notion suggest that a creature that can know must also be a creature capable of other things. It must have wants and interests in common with others in such a way that these are really common, if often competing. This in turn implies the possibility of seeing others as such, and this cannot take place unless the creature in question is in a position to have relations with others, relations that may be founded on feeling or are at any rate not simply cognitive in nature. . . . There could . . . be no possibility of knowledge without the possibility of agreement over what is so and what is not so. This presupposes common reactions and attitudes to the world, something which, in the sense of 'reaction' and 'attitude' in question, presupposes in turn common, though sometimes competing, interests and wants. Hence, knowledge and experience would be impossible except in creatures which have such interests; except, that is, in creatures which have feelings, and feelings which involve each other as well as other things. (pp. 86-87)

These insights will be important to keep in mind when we look at the relationship between language and thought.

Thinking involves both active and passive components. Reasoning and critical thinking refer to the active components of thinking while receptions refer to the passive components. As we have discussed in chapter two, receptions include perceptions, feelings and understanding. The first two kinds are of particular interest here as they include both primitive (or basic) elements and complex/abstract elements. The former being a condition for language (that is, the basic reactions and attitudes that Hamlyn talks about as quoted above) and the latter a consequence of it. Hamlyn (1978) notes,

What any symbol does for us is thus what I suggested earlier: it serves as the focus for a whole mass of understanding which because of it does not have to be made explicit. Without what Piaget calls the 'symbolic function', that understanding and knowledge would have to be made explicit if it were to be used for any thinking that was at all abstract. That is to say that it would make impossible any thinking that presupposed a body of knowledge or understanding which is divorced from the circumstances in which it ordinarily gets application for the person or animal concerned. Without the symbol that knowledge and its circumstances would have to be made explicit, and this would prevent one from considering new applications for it. (pp. 111-112)

The work of Katherine Nelson (1985) in developmental psychology supports this insight and augments it by positing an initial pre-linguistic "event representation", where the child differentiates and recognizes events like bath-time or meal-time given certain regular event cues. New applications—that is,
coming to recognize bath-time even when the regular event-cues are missing, as may be the case when having a bath in a new setting or eating at a restaurant--are only possible as the child's linguistic capacity grows and the child comes more and more to have the ordinary, linguistically anchored concept of bath-time. A similar relationship holds for feelings as for perceptions. There are the basic feelings which are our instinctive reactions to things and then there are the more complex feelings and emotions which involve more complex perceptions and understandings of things. The common primitive feelings are a condition for language while the complex feelings and emotions depend on language—that is, on linguistically coloured perceptions and understanding.

Furthermore, any particular thought can only be examined in light of its concrete realization and, for complex thoughts at least, that implies its realization in a particular language. Lovibond (1983) puts it well when she says, “The expression of thought in language is likened to its expression in any other artistic medium: until it is embodied in the medium, it is without determinate content. Or, to state the same point in a philosophical idiom that is especially congenial to it: a thought is a 'spiritual' entity in the sense that its essence is not specific, but individual, so that it is not merely accidental but essential to such an entity that it should achieve a concrete realization."(p. 28) So a particular language, at a particular point in its development, will be able to support some thoughts and not others. This will be an important point to keep in mind when we discuss the limits of particular moral languages and why (and how) moral education should be interested in teaching moral concepts.

Language is also significant to the activities of thinking as the second order concepts involved in reasoning are abstract and require the complex syntactic-semantic symbolic system which is language. For example, notions such as consistency, universalizability, coherence, etc., are inextricably embedded in our language. Our ability to find these notions intelligible depends on the framework of that language. They indicate standards for the proper use of our language within our language-games.

This leads us to consider the relationship between language and action. Wittgenstein argued that "It is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language-game." (On Certainty, 204) By this he meant that language is "a social institution which is grounded, like other institutions, in the shared way of life of a community."(Lovibond, 1983, p. 30) In our framework model of chapter two this intimate
relationship was represented by the NetBack. What would that model look like without the linguistic aspect? That is, what would it look like without the Network of intentional states which are formed in language? I believe that the system would be a closed one in which no real understanding is possible, thus no self-discipline is possible and finally no internally generated change is possible. Any notion of freedom and agency important to morality is therefore also made impossible. Language is crucial to action (as opposed to behaviour) because not only is the very possibility of conceiving different ways of proceeding (as candidates for choice)—which is essential to acting (as opposed to simply behaving)—inextricably bound to linguistic capacity, the different ways of proceeding, themselves, also depend largely on the language we have available for conceiving them.

So, while language is not everything and everything is not just language, our linguistic capacity is not a feature of ourselves from which we can be divorced and still recognize ourselves. Moreover, we cannot recognize our particular selves (individually or as a community/culture) divorced from the particular languages in terms of which we live our lives. (Stout, 1988, p. 72) Our interest in moral education then cannot be divorced from our interest in moral linguistic capacity and its expression in concrete moral languages.

Moral languages and language-games

One way of addressing the problems focused by diversity is by understanding how diversity is exhibited in our moral languages. We can easily identify strangers by their foreign tongues (languages). Moral differences are similarly expressed by different moral languages. This is, however, not usually as obvious or easy to recognize. Two questions arise whose answers can help us here. When do we have a moral language and what do we mean when we say that someone speaks a different moral language than we do?

As should be clear by now, when we talk about examining a language or language-games, we never mean simply examining the concrete linguistic form. The question, "what ultimately distinguishes moral languages or language-games from other languages?" is not to be answered by looking at the linguistic form itself—although I do not deny that there can to important insights gained by doing this. 4

4See, for example, Hare (1952).
The answer to the question, "what makes a moral language, a moral language and not a scientific language or an artistic language?" can only be found by looking at the form of life that such a language supports. That is, moral languages are distinguished by the concerns (moral concerns) which they allow us to articulate and express.

But in order to say what these concerns are, we cannot work outside of a particular moral tradition and the language or languages that it makes accessible to us. In other words, we identify moral languages according to our notion of what constitutes the category of moral concerns. As Stout (1988) points out, "to say that another society has a moral language is to say that it has views on at least some of the topics we denominate as moral. A society that never assessed conduct, character, or community as good or bad, right or wrong, honorable or dishonorable, just or unjust, as contributing to or detracting from human well-being, and so on across the board, would simply not possess a moral language." (pp. 59-71) Furthermore, our ability to identify another society as having a moral language will depend on our ability to recognize (our sensitivity to) their discourse, their form of life, as having these concerns in common with ours.

Having recognized that "moral diversity is the order of the day," we are often less than willing to seriously entertain work that tries to say what it is (or should be) that connects moral languages. There has often been an unspoken implication that nothing really does connect moral languages, that there are no "human constants at work" which allow us to recognize the different languages "as members of the same family, instances of the same kind." Several people have tried to answer this question and I believe that their insights can be important to our investigations as the indispensable background supporting the work of this thesis.

Lovibond (1983, pp. 53-91), Wiggins (1976, pp. 344-378) and Murdoch (1970, pp. 102-102) have all tried to say what it is that makes us moral creatures--creatures with moral concerns. In doing this, they are addressing a different question from the one that asks what in fact are these specific concerns or what are some typical concerns. The latter question depends on one's location in a moral language in deeper ways than the former. Answering the latter will give us a description of the family resemblances which connect actual moral languages, while answering the former will give us a sense of why moral
languages would be connected by such family resemblances in the first place. Examining the former
question will also give us some direction when we are looking for these connections in the language of a
foreign culture and thus help us to recognize a moral language as such. It does this by saying something
about human nature which is not independent of moral language but seeks to be maximally removed from
the local parochialisms of the language while remaining within it. That is, it provides a moral image, in
the sense in which Putnam (1987) uses the term, which "is not a declaration that this or that is a virtue, or
that this or that is what one ought to do; it is rather a picture of how our virtues and ideals hang together
with one another and of what they have to do with the position we are in." (p. 51)

Lovibond (1983) suggests that actual moral languages "exhibit the moral spirit" of their
community of users. Murdoch (1970) contends that it is because we are spiritual creatures—endowed with
love, which "is the energy and passion of the soul in its search for Good"—that we create moral languages
to express and refine this concern. Lovibond (1983) argues (in agreeing with Platts) "that institutions
without the spirit of them are dead . . . you cannot have the moral world unless it is willed . . . [and] to be
willed it must be willed by persons." Wiggins (1976) confirms the reasonableness of explaining "x is good
because we desire it" by saying that "such desiring by human beings directed in this way is one part of
what is required for there to be such a thing as the perspective for which the non-instrumental goodness of
x is there to be perceived." Morality, they suggest, is about "the unconditional concerns arising out of our
vision of an intrinsically admirable life," and to say that we have a moral spirit is simply to say that we are
creatures for whom such a vision is of unconditional interest.

But the moral spirit is indefinite until it is given concrete expression in a language and form of
life. To talk about moral languages abstractly, is to speak of a category of languages identified by the
purpose to express moral spirit—that is, to express the unconditional concerns related above. But we can
only speak of spirit and abstract categories because there are actual moral languages which are used to
play actual moral language-games by actual people living real lives. Our moral spirit is not a linguistic
entity but we can only point to it through its expression in our moral language-games and practices.

So we can now make sense of identifying different concrete moral languages as alternative
expressions of the same kind of language-game—that is, the moral kind of language-game. Next it will be
our task to consider how to individuate these diverse moral languages. On first inspection it seems obvious that one of the things they do is make different moral language-games possible.

It is important to examine the notion of a moral language-game more closely to benefit fully from these insights. First of all to say that two languages belong to the same kind, are concrete expressions of the same kind of language-game, is to speak at the level of morality as category. Next, to speak of two languages as making possible different moral language-games is to speak of concrete moral language-games which can occupy a range of specificity from those that express different moral images—as is the case with the example of the Corleones and the Modernist given by Stout (1988, pp. 61-71)—to those that articulate the same (or similar) moral image in different ways—as is the case with the different language-games used by different cultures for expressing respect for elders or gratitude for assistance given. The latter kind of difference will have much to do with the specific way that a community has made this moral image their own so that the significance of the different language-games cannot be fully understood without reference to their place as part of a specific articulation.

Returning to the question of how to individuate moral languages, Stout (1988) proposes a promising approach which accords with our initial intuition.

Let us say that moral languages, in the relevant sense, can be individuated by reference to the sets of candidates for truth and falsehood they make available.... My point is not to identify a moral language with the set of candidates it makes available, as if there were nothing to a moral language but that. My point is rather to individuate moral languages by reference to sets of candidates. ... The notion of a moral language, thus delineated, remains vague. ... What matters, philosophically, is that there are clear cases, cases in which it clearly makes sense to speak of distinct moral languages. ... these will be cases in which two groups differ morally not primarily because one group denies propositions the other asserts but rather because their respective forms of discourse put forth different possibilities to disagree over. (pp. 68-69)

Since agreement or disagreement depends on a deeper level of shared possibilities, people who play similar language-games will share possibilities on which to disagree while people who play very different language-games will not. The actual moral language in use and language-games played are important

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3Here the Corleones speak the language of honor, purity, obligations, etc., descended from ancient Sicily, while the Modernists speak the language of human rights, respect, etc., descended from Kantians.
because they constitute an important ingredient in the form of life of the user(s). They have "much to do with what that life is like, with what [the language users themselves] are like." (Stout, 1988, p. 71)

But moral language, like any other kind of living language is potentially dynamic and responsive. As Stout (1988) argues, it is possible for the Corleones through ethnographic study to come to understand the talk of the Modernist or vice versa. "In time, ethnographers from Modernity can learn the moral language of the Corleones as Corleone children do—from the ground up. That option is always open when initial efforts at direct translation fail. If the Modernists then wish to translate Corleone moral discourse into their own native tongue, they are free to enrich Modernese by weaving sentences and using words in unfamiliar ways, creating new linguistic contexts within Modernese for expressing Corleone thoughts." (p. 64) This insight is very important for moral education in a pluralistic society, where the project of education is often frustrated at the start by a lack of common ground, or more often, a mistaken presupposition of where the common ground lies.

Moral education is concerned with helping students to live a moral life. We have shown that there is a relationship between the moral life that one can live and the moral language one has to live that life. Thus moral education must be concerned with moral language learning. Not only because we are talking about moral language but also because we are talking about education, education for moral language learning cannot be simply a matter of giving people competence in the use of some fixed linguistic form. Moral education should be concerned with helping students to learn a rich moral language which involves gaining a rich repertoire of conceptual resources for moral understanding, expression and future learning, and a rich sense of the various ways and styles of life which support this moral language. But the measure of richness is not gross accumulation and enrichment is not equivalent to arbitrary expansion. Stout (1988) argues that

It would be a mistake . . . to think that we should be seeking the broadest possible conception [of morality]. We could, of course, let any discourse on any topic count as moral discourse, but that would make the notion useless, not richer. A broader conception is richer only if it allows us to tell better stories of how we got to be where we are, to engage in more fruitful dialogue with other cultures, and to make sense of all extant moral languages as members of a single family connected by intelligible relations of family resemblance. (p. 70)
In a pluralistic society, people with different moral language backgrounds will interact so that their moral languages will be mutually changed. Diversity should be appreciated but not artificially preserved by isolation or forced fossilization. Some moral languages or language-games may die out as interaction proceeds and as new contexts lead to new practices and ways of proceeding accompanied by new conceptual resources and language-games. If, as I have argued, creating a moral community in our pluralistic society should be the broad aim of moral education, then we cannot protect moral diversity by trying to avoid real moral interaction between groups and individuals who see and live differently, and who thus may face significant moral conflict and misunderstanding. Instead, a commitment to moral education must be based on the view that diversity should not be constituted by a static state. Furthermore, such a commitment should be based on a confidence that diversity will survive because moral life is creative. While we share a lot and may continue to seek more commonality, we will always have infinite capacity for difference. Education that equips us with rich resources (not moral Esperanto)\(^6\), that encourages openness and creativity will allow us to maintain a dynamic diversity in which interactions with different others are seen as opportunities for continued moral growth for us as individuals and as participants in a living moral community. This view accords with Stout's (1988) statement that "to find oneself in a cultural tradition is the beginning, not the end, of critical thought." (p. 73) Moral education should seek to initiate people into moral life, so they may be critical participants of their moral community.

The central place of concepts in language, thought and understanding

As I have noted many times already linguistic richness is very much bound up with conceptual richness. Here I will examine more closely what this means and what the implications of this relationship are for our project of education. In order to do this we must ask questions about what it means to have a concept, what kind of thing a concept is, how this thing is related to words in a language, to our thoughts, our understanding and to changes in our language, thinking and understanding.

We begin with an examination of what we mean when we say that someone has a concept. This question is more basic than what might otherwise seem the natural starting point of our study—the

question, what is a concept—because concepts are abstract entities whose existence depends entirely on our relationship to them. Understanding how concepts are of use to us is a way toward understanding what they are. Hamlyn argues that "to have the concept of X is to know what it is for something to be X," and this knowledge presupposes some kinds of know-how as well as propositional knowledge. This notion that having a concept involves knowing-how as well as knowing-that is emphasized by J.R. Coombs and Peter Geach (1957) when they argue that having a concept involves being able to apply a rule which allows one to distinguish cases of X from non-cases of X. Such a rule need not be formal or formalizable. It could act like a paradigm especially in the case of concepts like the concept of game which has no set of necessary or sufficient conditions for application. (We will discuss the possibility that moral concepts, like the concept of morality itself, are mostly like the concept of game in this respect.) Hamlyn argues that a creature capable of having concepts must be capable of making judgments. Given our working understanding, it is clear why this would be so.

Looking back on our characterization of what it means to have a concept, we see that concepts are individuated not only by their content, but also by their role in a language or language-game. This does not mean that we can divide concepts into their conceptual content and their conceptual role without problems, but there are times when it may be helpful and significant to talk about conceptual content as distinct from conceptual role when talking about concepts. With this in mind, what can we say about the kind of thing a concept is? They have been described as "the fundamental building blocks of cognition," or "categories into which we group phenomena within experience."(Martorella, 1991, 370, 372) The first characterization is similar to my understanding of concepts as materials or resources for constructing thoughts. But this does not tell us enough about them. The second characterization contains the notion of concepts as what allows us to somehow package our experience into meaningful units. This characterization is in accord with the etymology of the term concept which is constructed from the prefix con- meaning "together", "fully", or "completely" (from the Latin cum meaning "with") and cep- a variant stem of -cipere, combination form of capere meaning "to take or seize". A concept then is an abstract grouping of phenomena that allows us to take them together to form some kind of coherent and meaningful unit.
Concepts are held together or given integrity by some human purpose. Here the links between concepts, notions and ideas are clear. In fact, one can often use these terms interchangeably. The central case of a notion, however, tends to imply something vague, indefinite or whimsical so that there are times when using the term 'notion' to replace the term 'concept' would be inappropriate. We tend to call notions the ideas that we use to make our first imperfect attempts to address our concerns. Given the definitive nature of the concept of a square, it would be odd, in most cases, to talk about our notion of a square. On the other hand, the central case of an idea is more complex than that of a concept. Most ideas involve the complex relating of a number of important concepts. Also the central use of the term idea is to refer to ideas that people dream up for purposes that are often not so clear. So we would not say, "Last night I had a concept of how to better approach moral education," but would instead refer to it as an idea. While it may not be self-contradictory to say that one has dreamt up a concept, it does sound quite odd.

So concepts are meaningful (purposeful) units constituting the stuff of thoughts. They are more definite than most notions and more basic than most ideas. How are they related to the other human creation linked to thoughts and thinking? How are they related, that is, to human language? In particular, to words? Concepts, as we have defined them, are not equivalent to words; and according to Hamlyn (1978), there is no compelling reason to limit conceptual capacity to language users. (p. 75) There will be times when one uses a concept for which there is yet no corresponding word in one's language. But the public nature of language—its basis in background agreement, which makes possible truth and objectivity—as well as the level of stability (based on its proven ability to address its originating concern(s)) achievable by such a public symbolic system is very important for communication and for the development of complex abstract thoughts. Thoughts that involve connecting phenomena which are otherwise (spatially and temporally) disparate; thoughts that require us to abstract from our immediate circumstances; thoughts that involve new applications of a concepts, and seeing complex inter-relationships between concepts are all dependent on stable concepts.

Linguistic concepts, that is, concepts that have been given a home in a language—usually, one's symbolized by words in a language like 'education' or 'morality'—are able to support these kinds of

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7See also, Murdoch (1970), p. 29.
thoughts and, being a part of a public symbol system, are communicable without further mediation. An example will illustrate the significance of this point. When a new concept is first being constructed, as often happens when new theories are being formulated to explain some phenomenon, it is often difficult to keep this concept stable from application to application. This is frequently the case when medical conditions are initially posited. The concept has yet to acquire the stability which will make it a useful tool for explanation, further reflection, etc. Before the researcher gives this concept a name, the situation is usually even worse. Each time, the researcher approaches the problem which she hopes this new concept will significantly illuminate, the concept she uses changes. Over time, and with the aid of stable linguistic concepts, the researcher will stabilize her concept, giving it content and a role appropriate to her purpose. This stabilization (to a certain degree) is a necessary condition if the concept is to be useful for aiding understanding of the original problem, for communication, as well as other forms of expression.

There are, however, other consequences of this stabilization. When a concept becomes so well established in a language-game and when this language-game becomes entrenched in the life of its community of users, it can be quite difficult to effect conceptual change. Stability is a conservative force and even those initiating change will be in danger of "back-sliding". Because of the significant role that our language plays in our thinking, trying to alter our conceptual landscape while using the old words may prove to be too overwhelming. Until the changed construct becomes sufficiently familiar through extended use, the threat of the conservative force will continue. Sometimes this threat will be judged too great and a new term will be created to replace the old one considered too encumbered by association with unwanted or outdated views. This may be the evaluation of people who advocate that we stop using the term "mankind" to refer to the human race or that we replace the term "chairman" with "chairperson" or "chair".

Here it will be helpful to recall a distinction I made earlier, that between concepts and conceptions. It might be argued that we are not talking about concepts, as I have delineated them, but rather of changing conceptions. Concepts that have attained public status in a language are abstract objects, they are artifacts of human creation and we can speak of them in objective terms. Conceptions, being the articulation of these public concepts by individuals or groups in their contexted use of the
concept, can be located on a continuum of objectivity. Common conceptions (shared by individuals and groups) depend on sharing contexts and contexts can be described in varying degrees of objectivity. As Murdoch (1970) has argued, when people use concepts, especially moral concepts, they take them "away into [their] privacy . . . . and what use is made of them is partly a function of the user's history." (p. 25)\(^8\) It is consistent with most uses of the terms that when a conception attains such wide acceptance that people begin to accept its articulation as fundamental to the concept, it reaches a point on the objectivity continuum where it is indistinguishable from the concept.

The public-social context of language is also important to meaning. Here, the term 'concepts' will be used to refer to linguistic concepts, as we can only speak of meaning as applied to symbols. Symbols acquire meaning only within a context shared with others. "Meaning is use" must be understood in this way. We can only speak of the meaning of a term when sufficient agreement exists as to its proper use, and sufficient commitment exists in using it accordingly. This agreement and commitment may be historically distant but it must have existed at some time when the term was a part of a living language for us to speak of the meaning of a term. Terms only have meaning to people.

But surely I could make up a word and give it a meaning without anyone else knowing the word or what I mean by it. Here I think that we need to distinguish between what I mean by a term and the meaning of a term. What I mean is a matter of my use of the term, the conceptual content and role that I use the term to express. The meaning of a term is a matter of general usage, or social convention, which is not free from historical context and change. A word that I make up will not have a meaning in the second sense described because there is no general usage for it. If I want it to acquire such a meaning, I will have to make a case for its acceptance in a language-game that people can recognize or come to recognize. This requires establishing sense relations with other aspects of the language in use and the form of life embodied by that language. To use a term with a literal meaning in a way that deviates from that meaning, as is done in irony, poetry, metaphor and such, is yet another way in which use can affect meaning without definitively fixing it. Here the linguistic relations of the term are brought into play to

\(^8\)While she does not make the distinction between concepts and conceptions, I believe that it is a useful distinction to help us fully understand the implications of her work.
produce the desired effect. For example, the following passage from Victor Hugo's Les Misérables is filled with metaphor and imagery that requires non-literal interpretation.

We have already peered into the depths of that conscience and must now do so again, although we cannot do so without trembling. Nothing is more terrifying than contemplation of this kind. Nothing discernible to the eye of the spirit is more brilliant or obscure than man; nothing is more formidable, complex, mysterious, and infinite. There is a prospect greater than the sea, and it is the sky; there is a prospect greater than the sky, and it is the human soul.

To make a poem of the human conscience, even in terms of a single man and the least of men, would be to merge all epics in a single epic transcending all. Conscience is the labyrinth of illusion, desire, and pursuit, the furnace of dreams, the repository of thoughts of which we are ashamed; it is the pandemonium of sophistry, the battlefield of passions. To peer at certain moments into the withdrawn face of a human being in the act of reflection, to see something of what lies beyond their [sic] outward silence, is to discern struggle on a Homeric scale, conflicts of dragons and hydras, aerial hosts as in Milton, towering vistas as in Dante. The infinite space that each man carries within himself, wherein despairingly he contrasts the movements of his spirit with the acts of his life, is an overpowering things. (Hugo, 1862/1976, p. 208)

The significant meaning to be considered in such cases is not so much the literal conventional meaning of the terms themselves, but individual meaning of the passage or phrase in which each term is used in these special ways.  

It is important to understand the complexity of meaning if we hope to attain cross-cultural understanding generally, but working in the moral realm, there is another kind of meaning, not unrelated to the kinds discussed above, that is particularly significant to life in a pluralistic society. I refer here to the meaningfulness, of a term, a language, a language-game and of life. Lovibond (1983, p. 34) argues that the meaningfulness of a term, especially a moral term, language or language-game has to do with its potential to be expressive of our concerns, interests, needs, etc. This view is in keeping with our characterization of the other senses of meaning. One must be able to bring the different parts of the meaning system together, the subjective, intersubjective and objective. If a pluralistic society is interested

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9 These ways of talking about meaning may be correlated to Katherine Nelson's (1985) tripartite division of our meaning system into subjective meaning, shared meaning and objective meaning. She argues that "these represent, respectively, individual, social and cultural meaning." Subjective meaning here I think does not contradict the view that meaning is basically a social phenomenon but refers of the subject's apprehension of meaning—that is, meaning from the individual subject's point of view. (p. 11-12)

10 I believe that Putnam's insistence that we abandon the spectator point of view in ethics expresses his agreement with Lovibond that meaningfulness a central moral concern and understanding it requires that we talk a participant point of view. Putnam (1987), p. 77. See also Thomas Nagel (1986) for a discussion of the tension between the spectator and participant points of view.
in providing contexts in which all its members have a real potential to find meaning in life, it must provide a repertoire of concepts sufficiently rich in expressiveness.

So there are two features of a concept that allow it to be useful. The first is the relative stability—which, in particular, linguistic concepts or concepts with a home in some established language-game have—required for intelligibility and practical utility (useability). The second is the dynamism required for the responsiveness and living expressiveness which allows it to be meaningful to its users.

In a pluralistic society where resources from different cultures are available offering alternative concepts and conceptual networks for perception and understanding, but where members seek to participate in an inclusive dialogue, we must examine the conditions under which concepts may be meaningfully transplanted into a new language for this discourse. The conditions that make language possible and those required for its actual use are precisely the same conditions that make different concepts and conceptual networks available for newcomers—a shared "deep Background" or what Lovibond (1983) calls "our defining situation."11 This commonality defines "the natural limits of language". Human languages can only make sense within the context provided by this commonality. The other conditions are, to varying degrees, local. They are the conditions that we can, to varying degrees, manipulate. They include certain knowledge, experiences and know-how that underpin our understanding of particular conceptual resources and systems. For example, Murdoch (1970) argues that a very central condition is the sharing of contexts of attention. (p. 31-33) In a pluralistic society, we can arrange for the sharing of such contexts of attention. In chapter four and five, respectively, I will discuss the relationship between these spheres of potential commonality and the possibility of deepening our understanding of moral concepts, and how educators can help students to acquire a rich repertoire of moral concepts with depth for sensitive moral perception. A further question I will examine in chapter four addresses the contingency indicated by my cautionary phrase, "to varying degrees". That is, we will examine just how radical conceptual relativity in the moral realm can be and what this means for pluralistic societies and their approach to creating a moral community.

Concepts and the components of moral learning

Before going on to examine the distinguishing characteristics of moral concepts, I would like to revisit the components of moral learning that I proposed in chapter two. Given what we have said so far about concepts, language, thinking and understanding, how might our understanding of these components be further informed?

*Moral perception*

Recall that we characterized moral perception as perception from the moral point of view—that is, perception whose representational content involves moral concepts. Thomas Kuhn (1970) argues that "something like a paradigm is pre-requisite for perception itself. What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see." (p. 113) Concepts can act like paradigms for perception. Putnam's (1987) moral images are good examples of how such conceptual paradigms can affect our moral perception. Moral images such as supported by the notions of "sisterhood and brotherhood", "autonomous agency", "civic republicanism", *jen* ("human heartedness" as offered by Confucian ethics), etc., all shape our moral perception by making it possible for us to see our situations and relationships in certain ways.

If our goal is to enhance moral perception, the simple accumulation of conceptual resources is not enough. There are situations where a concept can, in a way, overpower us. What Murdoch (1970) describes as "the siege of the individual by concepts."(p. 32) Some have argued that this has happened with the concept of 'rights'.

There is a danger in becoming too attached to seeing with certain concepts. As Kuhn (1970) argues in relation to scientific paradigms, "a paradigm can . . . even insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies."(p. 37) With some adjustment, we can see how viewing all relations between people as involving a struggle to balance rights can blind us to those aspects of relations which are not covered by such a view, aspects such as compassionate responses which are not properly or most fittingly described as "giving up one's rights."

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12See for example Sumner (1987).
Another example of this occurs with the concept of 'racism'. Lawrence Blum (1991) argues that, "like the boy who cried 'wolf,' the inflation of the concept of racism to encompass phenomena with questionable connection to its core meaning desensitizes people to the danger, horror, and wrongfulness of true racism."(pp. 3-4)13 Understanding that concepts can serve to desensitize as well as to sensitize is very important for the moral educator interested in enriching moral perception. It is especially important to be wary of concepts that tend to desensitize us to the personhood of those who are conspicuously different from us. Descriptions that turn into labels, which become convenient stereotypes, often do this. For example, a person may be disabled in some way, but we have seen that to label that person 'disabled' often desensitizes us to the abilities of this person. 'Disabled' becomes not a description of the particular disabilities of the person but of the whole person. We begin to view the 'disabled' as somehow defective as persons. It is this concept, the one we use to label people, that serves to desensitize.

So we need to be careful not to assume that the relationship between conceptual resources and enriched moral perception is one of straightforward accumulation. As Stout (1988) argues, "moral bricolage" starts off "by taking stock of problems that need solving and available conceptual resources for solving them. Then [the bricoleurs] proceed by taking apart, putting together, reordering, weighting, weeding out, and filling in."(p. 75) Sometimes we can resensitize people by using these suspect concepts in ironic ways. Or we may use language associated with different concepts to force a different view, as people seek to do who advocate the use of terms like "physically challenged" to replace "disabled".

On the other hand, it is also true that a critical familiarity with concepts can help us to perceive things not included in these same concepts in the same way that familiarity with the established paradigm can help scientists to be more sensitive to anomalies.14 This is an important point for moral educators interested in helping students to gain the abilities necessary for critical moral perception. Familiarity with the available concepts can help us to perceive their inadequacies in light of our present experiences and

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13He goes on to define racism in terms of domination and injustice. He then distinguishes other related concerns that antiracist education might address without calling them truly racist.
14"And even when the apparatus exists, novelty ordinarily emerges only for the man who, knowing with precision what he should expect, is able to recognize that something has gone wrong. Anomaly appears only against the background provided by the paradigm. The more precise and far-reaching that paradigm is, the more sensitive an indicator it provides of anomaly and hence of an occasion for paradigm change." Kuhn (1970), p. 65.
concerns. In this way, experiences made possible by the concepts we already have can be the catalyst for conceptual change and enrichment, leading to new experiences for ourselves and others.

Thus we see that learning to see right in the moral realm is not merely a matter of learning to see one thing or another. It is learning to see with the concepts that fit the situation. This learning cannot be achieved by learning abstracted concepts because it involves know-how; it can only be achieved by learning concepts fitted into our experience—that is, learning them by seeing them appropriately applied to experience in experience. There are three educationally significant aspects of this desired outcome (1) having the abstract conceptual resources, (2) being familiar with the practice (of fitting concepts to our experiences) and (3) having the discipline to carry out the practice with sufficient rigor. If we are to teach moral concepts to enrich moral perception we must be careful to address all these aspects.

Feelings

Moral feelings refer to our physically based expressions of our evaluations. Because these feelings are manifestations of evaluations, they cannot be identified without conceptual representation. Furthermore, there are some complex feelings whose reception require a certain understanding of things and so requires conceptual representation to trigger. For example, there is a deep sadness that is triggered by a fairly profound understanding of the phenomenon of war—the social costs, the human costs, the environmental costs and their relationships, the psychological scars, the wasted energy, materials and lives; the potential for alternative routes or approaches to resolving conflicts. This kind of an understanding of war supports a certain perception of war as very tragic and sad. (It can also have significant influences on the way one perceives and feels about the "enemy"). This is not the sadness resulting from the superficial knowledge that a lot of people die in wars or that families (even those of the enemy) are separated by war.

Besides allowing people to perceive (and thus evaluate) in certain ways necessary for triggering certain moral feelings, the conceptual framework that links feeling terms with evaluations can help children to develop their capacity for rationally appropriate feeling responses to moral situations. It can

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give children the resources with which to assess their initial reactive feelings, allowing them to respond in a way that reflects their best understanding of the situation. For example, suppose a child comes to the understanding that one can be angry that certain events have happened without being angry with the person causing those events, if one judges that person to be blameless for those events. Then when this child is hurt accidentally by another, he or she will have the resources required to see the situation as one where no one is to be blamed. Anger aimed simply at events does not have the consequences of anger aimed at persons.

Finally, having a rich and deep conceptual repertoire can help us to better perceive others' feelings; it can provide the resources required to imagine what it is like to see and thus to feel differently from the way we do. These are all important aspects for the development of a person's capacity for moral feelings—for mature emotional responses in the moral realm.

Discipline

Discipline requires an Intentional (with a captial i according to Searle's (1983) use) context for its realization. Our characterization shows that much of moral discipline is realized with the aid of certain moral concepts and involves developing a familiarity with moral concepts. The moral virtues are good examples of concepts central to moral discipline. These notions are themselves about moral discipline. They bind moral concerns with ways of proceeding that have proven responsive to those concerns. To acquire the concepts of these virtues as part of moral education must mean more than to know the austere definition of the terms we use to refer to these virtues. It must require that we know what it means for a life to be characterized by these virtues. It must require that we understand these virtues as requiring disciplined practise, as demanding that we attend to certain concerns when living our lives.

Moral reasoning, as a central moral discipline, is about making the very best use of our moral concepts so that our perceptions are as clear and "perfect" as we can make them, given our present resources and imaginative capacity. Often this continuous effort to perceive at our best brings us to new ground, helping us to conceive of new resources or alter the way we use old ones and extending our imaginative reach. That the present resources of our culture include those that help us to progress beyond them confirms that tradition has both conservative and transformative capacities. It makes, at least,
intuitive sense that we must know where we are if we are going to have any hope of progressing beyond it. Moral reasoning as a practice is always historically located, but as Stout (1988) argues (with Mary Midgley), "to find oneself in a moral tradition is the beginning, not the end, of critical thought." (p. 73) I would add that it is also the beginning, not the end, of moral living. Our reasoning traditions provide tools for progress. The extent to which we take advantage of those tools is perhaps the most neutral indication we can have—once we give up the idea of absolutely Objective standards of reasoning—of the quality of our moral reasoning. To see moral reasoning as the concerted effort to make better and better use of moral concepts by exploring the semantic depth that these concepts can reach in the context of use, is to see it as part and parcel of a moral life. Given this characterization, it makes no sense to talk about teaching moral concepts and teaching moral reasoning as if they were two different things. We must do the one in doing the other if we ever hope to do either with any success, for moral concepts and moral reasoning are inextricable interwoven in moral life.

Conclusion

Moral diversity can be viewed significantly as diversity in moral perceptions and coordinately in moral feelings and understanding which often lead to different conduct and actions. This comes down to differences of a certain kind in the NetBack: conceptual differences as well as related differences in the local Background—for example, the different language-games in which these different concepts find their home. Even moral reasoning can look very different and result in very different judgments depending on the conceptual resources used by the reasoner. Being able to identify where the difference lies may help us to decide whether the difference in question is acceptable or not. Sometimes we will decide that it is not. In any case, understanding the root of the difference will allow us to check and correct, when appropriate, our initial feelings of aversion, mistrust, etc., which often comes when we encounter moral ways of life significantly different from our own.

The effort just described is offered as itself situated in moral language use in moral living. It is extremely important, if we want to bring students to full and mature membership in a moral community—that is, if we want to morally educate our students—that teaching moral concepts as a part of this education be done in conjunction with practising moral ways of life. Especially in a pluralistic society, moral
education can achieve its aim only by helping students to acquire a rich conceptual repertoire to bring to their moral experiences, reinforcing those moral concepts that enhance openness, sensitivity and respect by providing such a moral context for them to learn in. That is, moral educators must help students to see themselves as part of a community of fellow participants in moral learning. Rather than seeing their learning as pre-moral in the early stages, as some theories and approaches suggest, I am arguing that we must see their learning as fully moral from the very beginning if we want them to ever achieve mature moral status. As Hamlyn (1978) suggests, "one all-important factor in the development of children as persons is that they are treated as persons by persons." (p. 84) Something similar can be said about the development of children as participants in a moral community. This does not mean that we need to be insensitive to their developing status. To see their learning as fully moral means that we see moral learning as a fully moral activity. In the next chapter, I will show how this approach can be applied to our understanding of moral concepts learning.
Chapter Four

THE NATURE OF MORAL CONCEPTS AND THEIR ROLE IN MORAL PERCEPTION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the potentialities of viewing the acquisition of moral concepts as central to moral learning. What are the characteristics of this class of concepts? How does a consideration of these characteristics add to our understanding of the importance of conceptual resources in moral learning? And how may such understanding contribute to an adequate conception of the teaching of moral concepts as part of moral education in a pluralistic society?

I will argue against reductionist views as well as non-cognitive views of moral judgment. I will characterize the moral point of view as distinct and not reducible to other points of view but not by virtue of being non-rational. This characterization will provide the background that my account of moral concepts must accommodate as well as illuminate. It will constitute the moral glue which binds our class of concepts together meaningfully while providing the background understanding which suggests solutions to questions about these concepts.

My account of moral concepts will explain their irreducibility as well as explicate how they function in practical moral judgments (moral perception, feeling and understanding). This account will also allow me to tell a reasonable story of moral difference and the rationality of moral change and development. It will explain the relationship between moral concepts, moral principles or rules and moral reasons. And it will situate the feature of semantic depth in the open-texture of moral concepts thereby showing how, as I suggest in chapter two, moral reasoning can achieve improved moral perception.

Finally, I will consider the possibility that there is some basic (minimum) set of moral concepts that we need to teach if we want our students to be able to take a moral point of view. That is, are there minimum conceptual requirements if students are to be participants in any moral language-game? The answer to these questions will be significant to educators in a culturally diverse society and must inform the teaching of moral concepts in such a context.
The moral point of view

If we are going to posit a significant class of moral concepts and spend time and energy studying this class, we had better be sure that we are not wasting our time. We had better be sure, that is, that the moral point of view, which moral concepts are supposed to make possible, is not reducible to other points of view. What would it mean for the moral point of view to be reducible? It would mean that the picture of the world which constitutes this point of view could be depicted in morally neutral terms. As J.M. Brennan (1977) puts it, "the critical point which must be settled is whether or not there is something to be understood in ethical matters qua ethical, or if the cognitive possibilities are exhausted when all questions of logic and morally neutral fact have been settled." (p. 9) One argument in support of reductionist views offers as evidence the fact that we require people to identify a 'factual' difference between two cases if they are going to judge the cases differently from the moral point of view. Brennan agrees that this certainly is true but argues that this does not support reductionist views. Morally neutral facts are simply facts that we can recognize without reference to our moral standards but that does not mean that they are morally irrelevant. In pointing out the (morally neutral) 'factual' difference in support of a moral distinction, one is saying that this is a morally relevant difference. Reductionist views apply only if this fact about moral judgments implies its converse. This clearly isn't the case. Just because I cannot judge two identical acts differently, one as cruel and the other not, does not mean that all cruel acts are factually alike. Unless we can accept that a morally neutral description of a situation can in-itself imply a moral view; unless we believe that it is possible to get moral conclusions from morally neutral premisses, reductionist views cannot hold.

But non-cognitivist views put a slight twist on all this. The non-cognitivists argue that the moral point of view is not reducible to other points of view exactly because it prescribes a moral judgment on a morally neutral set of facts. But their idea of what constitutes a moral judgment is simply the ascription of rightness or wrongness to categories of otherwise neutrally describable situations. On their view, to say that it is cruel for a man to beat his wife for not remembering to buy milk for his coffee, is simply to add

1This use of 'factual' is written with inverted commas because it is used to oppose 'value' and this author does not subscribe to that (ontological) fact/value distinction.
"this is wrong," to the morally neutral description of the act. But this is clearly inadequate. When we make the _moral_ judgment that it is cruel for a man to act thus we are saying at least why we think this act is wrong—because it is cruel! To avoid being compared with emotivists (who argue that moral judgments are simply expressions of approval or disapproval), non-cognitivist have tried to structure our use of moral language with notions like universalizability and impartiality. I contend that this does not solve the problem. The moral point of view is distinguished by its driving concern which is not sufficiently characterized by the need to ascribe rightness and wrongness to acts—not even together with the need to ascribe goodness and badness to character. We judge things from the moral point of view when we judge them to be right or wrong, good or bad, for morally relevant reasons; and we cannot determine what are morally relevant reasons without reference to moral standards. That is, we know which acts are cruel because we know why these acts are wrong. We could not identify the class of acts prior to understanding our reason for the classification, and that reason is a moral one.\(^2\)

Having argued that the moral point of view should be accepted as a distinct and irreducible perspective for viewing the world, the question remains what is it that distinguishes this point of view? I contend in chapter one that morality originates in human goodness and that this continues to be its driving concern. But as a point of view, how can it be distinguished from other points of view which are driven by concerns of goodness? Many philosophers have sought to answer this question. Several themes seem to repeat themselves in these answers: (1) a concern for human good (and by implication human harm), well-being, flourishing, and the like, (2) its attention especially to the social dimension of human life, to human relationships or to community and (3) the seriousness, relative importance or overriding nature of moral considerations.\(^3\) Needless to say these three themes are related. Without trying to frame them into a coherent view of "the object of morality" I want to accept the validity of these aspects as typical distinguishing marks of the moral point of view.

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\(^2\)See Brennan's (1977) more detailed argument against reductionist views and non-cognitivism, especially his treatment of Hare's example of 'good' and 'doog' where 'doog' is 'good' without the prescriptive element. (pp. 40-52)

But inevitably the question "why these?" will echo, at least, in the back of one's mind. This question can be reformulated to read, "What is the context which makes this characterization of the moral point of view meaningful?" Here the answer is given by reference to some description of "the human predicament" (as Warnock (1971) and others have called it or what Lovibond (1983) calls "our defining situation") which includes some view of human nature and what constitutes flourishing or human good, an account of the environmental (physical, social, psychological, intellectual, etc.) conditions we live in and some view of how the two are related. Lovibond's (1983) characterization adds something more to this which I believe poignantly expresses why the moral point of view, *qua* a point of view, is so very important to human beings regardless of the particular content in their version of the human predicament. This suggests something that transcends the differences and binds all human beings together through morality. She argues that the moral point of view exhibits "the unconditional concerns arising out of our vision of an intrinsically admirable life" and that on the possibility of viewing things in this way rests the possibility of our finding a meaning in life. French (1979) argues similarly that "human beings can exist without morality and in a world without goodness, but the lives they then lead are neither of worth nor very long."(p. 130)

Given this identification of the distinguishing marks of the moral point of view and its importance to us, the next question is what exactly do we do when we view things from the moral point of view? Should we take a consequentialist view or an intentionalist view of moral deliberation? Is morality founded on actions or character? Which is more important or more basic to the good life? Particular moral theories will emphasize one or the other, but my view of morality (or what constitutes the moral point of view) makes room for both concerns without suggesting that one is always more basic or more important. In fact, as French (1979) argues, "morality is simply far richer than either an act-oriented or agent-oriented version of its contents will support."(p. xvi) Besides, the two interests are clearly related. I will borrow Cua's notion of how a certain quality can pervade a person which is the result of something else about the person.\footnote{He uses this notion in talking about the distinctive Confucian virtue *jen*. He argues that, when realized, *jen* refers to "a quality of a life of moral excellence--a pervasive or supervenient quality, superadded, so to speak, to the presence of particular virtues. In this sense, *jen* does not literally include particular virtues,}
from acting (not just behaving) regularly or characteristically in certain ways. Thus a kind person is not
only one who performs acts of kindness now and again, but one who, by making this sort of acts a way of
life, acquires a certain personal quality. This way of viewing character traits and actions helps us to
appreciate their relationship without reducing one to the other.

In viewing something from the perspective of morality, we appraise action as well as character.
We are interested in encouraging or discouraging certain ways of proceeding and in promoting or
circumventing the development of certain character traits—that is, promoting the development of virtues
and circumventing the development of vices. Wallace argues that we should view moral considerations as
they are involved in character traits because moral judgment is a practical matter and we approach
practical problems with characteristic ways of proceeding embedded in our character. This understanding
is especially important to moral educators and I certainly would not want to deny the essentially practical
nature of moral deliberations, but sometimes we make moral judgments which are not meant to solve an
immediate practical problem. We often judge our own past actions or the actions of others on whom we
have no influence. These judgments do have practical consequences but we cannot say definitely what
those consequences must be. So I believe that it makes sense to consider the moral point of view as
interested in appraising two different, though related, things; and taking Wallace's point, keep in mind
that such appraising itself is a practice embedded in our ways and may best be broadly understood as a
character trait.5

The struggle between act- and agent-oriented views of morality has also been expressed in terms
of the struggle for moral supremacy between the right and the good. This struggle has at times been so
lopsided that there is a use of the term 'moral' which circumscribes only the judgment of actions as right
or wrong. Admittedly this is an important aspect of moral judgment but, as many have argued, it simply

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5French provides a detailed argument for the significance of the appraisal of character which is based on
the view of human beings as essentially social with natural affections for each other. He argues that this
view explains why rational self-interest can never lead us to morality. I think we had better rid ourselves
of the notion of pure self-interest completely if we want to avoid falling back into the radically
individualistic and isolationist trap of the Hobbesian view. On a more adequate understanding of human
ways of life, this notion is no longer tenable. Using it will only serve to confuse arguments by
surreptitiously introducing elements of this old view. See French (1979), pp. 126-128.
isn't sufficient. My point is that they are both important and, though related, are irreducible. Being 'moral' (by doing right) does not imply being good. It is possible for a person to be generally 'moral' but not particularly good. Morality is an open-textured concept. We wouldn't call a person who just minimally meets the standards of morality a paradigm of morality. This means that goodness is a moral concern, and not a peripheral one. On the other hand, being (morally) good does imply that a person generally does right. But certainly it implies more than that. Moral ideals involve going beyond the minimum requirements of morality. We consider acts as paradigmatic when they go beyond the call of duty, to achieve an excellence of some sort. They invite us to do likewise by giving us a glimpse of the possibilities of human flourishing.

Moral concepts

What I will call moral concepts are those concepts formed for the purpose of expressing the moral point of view. In this sense, they both create and are created by the moral point of view. It should be no surprise, given the above analysis of the moral perspective, that I will, with French, posit two subclasses of concepts corresponding to the two central concerns of morality. French calls the first subclass, those concerned with the appraisal of actions, moral concepts and the second subclass, those concerned with the appraisal of character or motives, euergetical concepts. Because I find this terminology rather awkward and because I tend to agree with the cautions against dualisms, I choose to adopt a more technical symbolism which will allow me to keep the class of moral concepts united under its common name. I will call the first subclass—those dealing centrally with actions—moral$_{act}$ concepts and the second subclass—those dealing centrally with character or motive—moral$_{character}$ concepts. I do not want to claim that this categorization exhausts the subject matter of morality. There are clearly concepts important to morality not covered by these moral categories. Instead I want to argue that these concepts are essential to the moral point of view, so the moral educator cannot afford to ignore them.

Moral$_{act}$ concepts

The concepts which allow us to appraise actions from the moral point of view include such concepts as murder, lie, justice, insult, incest, rape, racism, sexism, and terrorism. Note that these concepts classify together actions "which are judged to be right or wrong for the same [moral] reason."
(Brennan, 1977, p. 38, his italics)\textsuperscript{6} The appraisal of an action as right or wrong does not admit to degrees. Rightness and wrongness do not shade into one another. An action is either right or wrong or neutral from the moral point of view; it cannot straddle between right and wrong. This does not imply a 'black and white' view of the world. We are able to say that one case of murder is more heinous than another, that one sexist act is more reprehensible than another, that one lie is more devastating (destroys more of our sense of trust) than another. What this does imply is that when an act is a rape, it is not partly wrong and partly right. From the moral point of view, it is simply wrong. Although this is not all that can be said of the act from the moral point of view—as the examples show, it is possible for two clearly wrong acts classifiable as of the same type to differ in a morally significant way—it certainly is an important thing. Understanding where the shades of grey can reasonably be included in the moral picture is important. My characterization of moral concepts will show that we do not need to give up making moral right/wrong judgments to account for our common sense understanding that things are not always black and white.

\textit{Moral character concepts}

The concepts concerned with appraising character or motives include virtue and vice concepts as well as what might be termed moral ideal concepts. These include such concepts as honest, generous, merciful, benevolent, compassionate, charitable, 'moral', cruel, kind, loving, forgiving, heroic, courageous, saint/saintly, noble, responsible, and respectful. French (1979) argues that these concepts are concerned with the "manner in which acts are performed and their result in terms of happiness promoted. . . with whether persons exhibit in their actions any of a number of specific qualities or attitudes gathered under the umbrella of the term 'kindness.' "(p. 117) French has a rather special meaning for this use of the term 'kindness' which more or less equates it to the best of 'human kind'. While I do not find most of his analysis particularly revealing, (especially his attempt to explicate what this notion of kindness might mean in terms of kind acts) I do believe that his main point is well taken, that this aspect of morality is equally important and is what explains the poverty of accounts from rational self-interest. He argues,

Other persons must be met as fellow rational strategists, but also as fellow human beings . . .

\textsuperscript{6}My analysis of moral concepts is based on Brennan's analysis of moral\textsubscript{act} concepts. I find that most of his point are valid as well for moral\textsubscript{character} concepts.
We can see from the accounts given of the purpose of morality and the potential results of acting with kindness that the world of moral persons and kind persons will be (1) ultimately the only world in which the species or community can flourish and (2) the most comfortable place in which to abide as persons among persons. Our moral and euergetical concepts are the products of the (perhaps sometimes faintly) perceived vision of not only the necessity of preserving, but the beauty of, the world realized when individuals take the risk of acting morally and kindly. (French, 1979, p. 153, my italics)

I agree with Murdoch that this "magnetic" aspect of morality, which French aptly describes as interested not only in maintaining a world we can live in, but in creating a beautiful world to live in, is an essential part of our morality. With this in mind, Hare's (1963) suggestion that moral ideal terms are logically like aesthetic ideal terms has some credibility. He argues that moral ideals come into play when a person regards "his own life and character as a work of art, and [is] asking how it should best be completed." (p. 150) But the line between what we would call a moral virtue and a moral ideal is not a clear one. I believe that there is a better story to tell of how the class of moral character concepts, by virtue of appraising on a good-bad scale, allows us to take the positive characteristics unified by virtue concepts as ideals to work toward. This way of viewing the relationship avoids, what I take to be, the mistaken view that ethics and aesthetics are one, or even that one aspect of ethics is equivalent to aesthetics. It suggests instead that some aesthetic concepts can be sensibly borrowed in ethics to reveal something important about it.

This accords with the observation that, unlike moral act concepts, these concepts do admit to degrees. A person can be more or less honest, generous, kind, and cruel. This is because these terms appraise on a good-bad (or evil) scale rather than the right-wrong scale; and a good-bad scale is a continuum. One is not either honest, dishonest or non-honest. This subclass of concepts reflects the fact that we are not simply discrete-act-generating devices. We are human beings who act for reasons, with more or less consistency. We don't simply act; meaningful actions must be understood as part of our way of life, and for any particular person, as expressing a part of that person's character, his or her style of life. That our moral conceptual system provides such concepts is evidence that we are interested in being excellent in this important area of our lives. And that should be no surprise.

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7For a very interesting account of how morality is embedded in way of life and how, despite this, we have room to be moral innovators by having our own style of life, see Cua (1978).
Moral mixed terms

Notice that some of the terms used as examples for the one subclass above, also belong to the other. This is because the two areas of concern are intimately related. Often this relationship is so close that a moral action is partially defined by reference to the motives of the agent. In these cases, we often use the same term to refer to both the action and the character/motive of the agent. This is the case with a term such as cruel or similarly when we condemn a person who commits rape by calling him a rapist. But I don't think this need threaten our classification system. The same term can be used to symbolize two different concepts. And there are clearly concepts which are centrally intended to address one of the two concerns and only by extension the other. This is true, I believe, of the concept of a saint.

The fact that there are terms we could include in either class, shows that these two subclass cannot be completely divorced from one another. I have distinguished them here for the sake of analysis; this should not be viewed as implying any kind of ontological separation. As I have suggested with my framework model in chapter two, we could not understand the one without the other.

Having looked generally at what distinguishes these two subclasses, I would like now to examine more deeply the nature of these concepts. To do this I will re-merge the two subclasses and talk again about the class of moral concepts, only subdividing it again when important differences require highlighting. To establish a basis for rationality—against the views of the non-cognitivists—and criticism in our creation and application of moral concepts we must argue for the interpersonal validity of these concepts. Based on my arguments about language in chapter three, and accepting moral concepts as (at least potentially) a part of (public) language, when we use moral concepts seriously we must be making some objective claims; otherwise no one could understand us. The question is whether these objective claims are claims about the validity of the standard of judgment implicit in the concept.

When we make a moral judgment using a moral concept, we are saying that the moral standards implicit in the concept apply in this case. This is an interpersonal claim about the validity of those standards. Brennan (1977) argues that it has universal intent. What he means by this is that although, in a particular case, other people may not agree with me, what I mean to say when I say that this is cruel, is not just that I think it is cruel, but that it is cruel. "What is being asserted when we make a moral
judgement is the claim, which may or may not be justified, that anyone who considers the case properly ought to agree that what we think to be right is right. . . . in the making of such a judgement, one believes that one is applying a valid standard correctly. (Brennan, 1977, p. 74) All this is true, but I think we need to recognize that there are times when we make moral judgments we are not so sure about. In such cases, people's reluctance to universally prescribe their views is understandable. This does not take away from the applicability of Brennan's notion of universal intent so much as it reminds us of the, often messy, concrete contexts in which moral judgments are made and how this can emphasizes the distance between universal intent and universality attained. A different caution is required for the case when people choose to act in ways that they believe to be "beyond what can be expected" of others because they have chosen to adopt a personal ideal of conduct. I believe that they are still making a claim to validity with universal intent when they judge a person S to be, say, saintly. Universal intent should not be understood, in such cases, as characterizing the moral intent of the judgment—that is, the universal intent involved in judging a person to be saintly is not the intention to universally prescribe the character of this person. Rather it characterizes an intention involved in making the judgment—the intention that the judgment be universally valid. So, while not all people can (or should) be saints, all who are relevantly like S are saintly. In this way, the genuine and sincere use of all moral concepts makes objective claims.

But obviously this cannot mean that there is no room for disagreeing with these claims. We may disagree with the moral standards implicit in a moral concept yet still recognize the objective claim being made when someone else uses the concept ingenuously. We can also use the concept intelligibly in a non-literal—for example, ironic—way but this still requires that we understand its literal meaning. I will discuss this option in more detail later in the chapter.

Two other concerns are central to demonstrating the rationality of moral concept use (1) an adequate understanding of consistent use and (2) establishing the existence of independent criteria for arbitrating disputes about applicability. Brennan's treatment of both these concerns for moral act concepts is highly illuminating. In what follows, I adapt his analysis to talk about the whole class of moral concepts. Addressing these concerns will require us to look more closely at the nature of moral concepts.
The open-texture of moral concepts

Brennan's arguments are based on the claim that moral concepts are open-textured. This fact is also the basis of Platts' discussion of moral concepts and their capacity for semantic depth. What does it mean for a concept to have open-texture? Brennan (1977) suggests that "moral terms, unlike geometric terms, are 'open-textured'—which means that one cannot state the necessary and sufficient conditions for their correct application." (p. 114) This view, although intuitively plausible is not uncontested. French (1979) has argued that this view of moral concepts is wrong headed. (p. 83) The consequences of his view for the two concerns I noted above will be discussed as they arise in comparison to those from the open-textured point of view.

Using the example of the concept of 'murder' as a moral type, Brennan argues that it is given moral unity by its rationale which embodies the standard(s) of judgment allowing us to recognize the relevant concrete features of a situation that make it a case of murder. This rationale controls the use of the moral term and is not usually expressible in any other terms. In the case of a moral character term such as 'cruel', we are similarly guided by such a rationale. It embodies the standards that will allow us to pick out the features of a person's character (or, in this case, actions) that will determine the aptness of describing this person as 'cruel'. This rationale will involve something like our reasons for finding it generally contemptible to be a person who gets satisfaction from, and/or makes as a way of life, harming others. Here it might be argued that to be a cruel person is simply to be a person who gets satisfaction from harming others. Often French can be read as taking this stance. 8 This view is prefaced on the perspective that the rationales of moral concepts are determinate or, as French argues, that the meaning of moral terms are determinate. It is difficult to see how French can take this view while asserting elsewhere that moral concepts are irreducible. Even if one could give necessary and sufficient conditions using other moral terms, the problem would only be pushed back a step. Brennan (1977), on the other hand, argues that this indeterminacy of the rationale is just one aspect of the open-texture of moral concepts, he argues, because moral concepts do not provide us with a finite list of relevant features that we are to look for in identifying specimens. . . . it places upon our conceptual resources the

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8See for example his treatment of the concept of murder. French (1979), pp. 84-85.
burden of enabling us, not only to recognise the presence of relevant facts . . . but also to validate the relevance of unprecedented features. (p. 100)

French's account fails to provide for this last point. If the rationale of a moral concept is determinate then we would be able to state necessary and sufficient conditions for its proper application which would contravene the flexibility that moral concepts seem to have. On this view, any addition of new features would constitute a modification of the concept which must be justified, according to French, by reference to the broad purpose for which the class of concepts that this particular concept belongs to was invented. This is a great leap. Brennan's view gives us more steps to land on. He posits a 'formal' concept which provides a loose unity by identifying the broad concern that the concept is meant to address. This 'formal' concept "provides the frame for any possible discussion of [rival] standards; it sets the terms of reference for the discussion, the limit beyond which the discussion cannot go. . . . it ensures that [the rivals] are playing the same game even if, as it happens, they are following different rules."

(Brennan, 1977, pp. 62-63)

Here we can add to our distinction between concepts and conceptions by distinguishing two ways in which the notion of a concept can be understood. Two cultures can be said to have different concepts (not conceptions) of cruelty, when they have the same (or similar) 'formal' concepts—that is, they have concepts that address the same basic concerns—but different 'material' concepts—but these concepts address those concerns in different ways. This also addresses the question about just how 'radical' differences between cultures can be, while still preserving the possibility of recognizing each other as having a morality, by providing an upper limit. Two cultures can be said to have some concept of murder if they both recognize that killing another person requires special justification and thus have a concept that serves to distinguish justified from unjustified killing. But they can be said to have a different concept of murder from us if the rationale that guides them in making this distinction is sufficiently different from ours. An assessment of the degree of difference within this limit must make reference to the 'material' concept, the concept that people actually use. What distinguishes two 'material' concepts with the same 'formal' frame is the different rationale according to which the user of each concept selects elements to be considered as cases of the concept.
So Brennan might argue that while we can often give very good descriptions of the kinds of situations (actions, character, motives, ideals) that our moral concepts pick out, descriptions that work for us in most of the situations in which these concepts apply, arguing that we can give necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of a concept destroys the possibility of truly questionable cases—that is, cases for which a resolution is a moral achievement. The resolution of these cases will involve reference to the underlying *rationale* of the concept framing the problem and our only way of making a decision about applicability will be to examine the morally relevant features, not the morally neutral features, of the situation which the concept helps us to pick out. In other words, Brennan is suggesting that there exist real problematic cases whose resolution cannot be achieved simply by reference to our existing explication—that is, by imitating previous applications—of the relevant moral concept. For example, I may believe that being honest requires only that I never lie except when a person very close to me will be hurt by the truth because all the cases I have had to face so far has been easily guided by this explication of the concept of honesty. But a new situation may come along where someone I am not close to may be hurt if I reveal the unadulterated truth and yet I feel uneasy about doing so. In these cases, our moral concepts can continue to guide this resolution through its *rationale*. Brennan argues that this is not a feature special to moral concepts. A concept as simple and straightforward as 'table' similarly has indeterminate *rationale*. On French's (1979) view, on the other hand, moral concepts are simply time saving devices which, when applicable, free us from having to make substantial moral judgments—or in his words, moral concepts eliminate "the need to make discriminatory judgments." (p. 102)

Clearly French has a point. Moral principles (which he equates with moral concepts) do, in a sense, free us from something, but I will argue that they do not free us from having to make substantial moral judgments. Brennan argues that moral principles and rules are our explications of the *rationale* of moral concepts. They attempt to describe in morally neutral terms what features of situations would meet the standards in the *rationale*. In Brennan's words, "such explication is necessary if our moral concepts are to 'come to grips' with actual situations." The golden rule can thus be understood as a very general rule of conduct that tries to describe in morally neutral terms how we might meet a very general moral standard implicit in many moral concepts (e.g., respect). Thus, moral principles and rules save us from
having to reconsider in every case what features of a situation would meet the standards set out in the
rationale of a moral concept. They call our attention to the potential applicability of the moral concept.
They function as signposts or warnings or advice, rather than as the "hardened" moral judgments" that
French takes them to be.\(^9\) Some people may take moral principles in this rigid way. This would explain
how some "principled" people can act so immorally. In such cases, one fails, in a significant way, to be
moral. But French's view is not without its intuitive appeal. Sometimes we do seem to take moral
principles as guides to action. We do sometimes simply 'act on principle'. Murdoch (1970), in arguing for
the importance of attention for sensitive moral perception, addresses the fact that despite her emphasis on
moral perception as the way toward appropriate action,

we may sometimes decide to act abstractly by rule, to ignore vision and the compulsive
energy derived from it... To decide when to attempt such leaps is one of the most
difficult of moral problems. But if we do leap ahead of what we know we still have to try
to catch up. (pp. 43-44)

The decision to act on principle, then, is itself a substantial moral judgment. Thus neither moral concepts
nor their explications in moral principles or rules can free us from the responsibility to make substantial
moral judgments.

The relationship between rationale and explication that Brennan identifies holds as well for
moral character concepts since they also have open-texture and are distinguished centrally by their
rationale. We are able to pick out relevant facts which allow us to properly apply the term 'cruel' or
'benevolent' to the character of a person when we understand the rationale implicit in the concept. An
explication of these concepts would involve a description in morally neutral terms of what features of a
person—given the context we live in now, have lived in before or can imagine we might live in later—
might meet the requirements of the rationale. That is, what might it take for us to call a person 'cruel' or
'benevolent'?

French's failure to attend to the rationale of a concept may be the cause of his missing a second
way in which open-texture enters into the picture. Because moral concepts do not stand isolated from the

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\(^9\)This idea, that moral principles don't tell us what to do so much as warn us that doing certain things
have transgressed important values and trampled on important concerns of ours thereby giving us cause to
reconsider our plans, has appeared in the writings of many philosophers. Among them are R.S. Peters,
J.R. Coombs and Richard Rorty.
other conceptual resources we have for understanding the world and our place in it, the rationale of a moral concept can change when changes occur in other relevant areas of the conceptual network. And because the conceptual network is intimately related to the background way of life, changes in this can result in changes in rationale.

To summarize, the rationale is the core of a moral concept—what gives it its unique 'sense'—moral principles and rules explicate this rationale by stating in morally neutral terms the features that would satisfy the standards set out in the rationale. Sometimes we identify a concept with its rationale but as Brennan (1977) suggests, "we can consider a moral concept as encompassing both the rationale and its explication."(p. 135)\(^{10}\) I want to suggest that the more detailed and context dependent this explication is qua an explication the more it would be appropriate to call what we have (the rationale + its explication) a conception (rather than a different concept) of the relevant moral concept. This distinction will help us to pinpoint the degree of separation between the moral views of two different cultures or subcultures and help us to find a point of departure for attempts to resolve conflicts and promote understanding.

This notion of the rationale underpinning the use of a moral concept gives a name to what has often been implicitly referred to by moral philosophers. This naming, and the analysis in which it is embedded, allow us to see more clearly the nature of moral concepts and their use. Other analyses while hinting at the existence of a rationale miss important insights that Brennan does not. For example, because French (1979, p. 103) takes moral concepts to be equivalent to moral principles, his view supports a less than adequate explication of what it means to be consistent in using moral concepts and identifies the independent criteria required for arbitration too close to the surface where conflicts arise. My reasons for rejecting this view will become clear as I follow Brennan's arguments to make my case.

*The logical requirement of consistency*

Consistency in use is not a requirement special to moral concepts, but it does play an important role in our moral thinking. We often call others to task for being inconsistent in their moral judgments and most people can understand this criticism whether they think it valid in their case or not. In other words, they agree that consistency is a valid requirement. Brennan's characterization of what it means to

\(^{10}\)See also Brennan (1977), pp. 122-3.
be consistent in applying moral concepts works as well for other open-textured concepts. He argues that we are required to be consistent not in applying the rules of conduct or the moral principles that explicate the rationale of a moral concept (although generally such consistency is a consequence of the proper functioning of these rules or principles), but instead consistency in moral judgment resides with being true to the rationale of the moral concept. In fact, Brennan claims that being consistent with respect to principles and rules would often require us to be inconsistent with respect to rationale. When an unprecedented case comes along, we are often required to modify our principles or change our rules in order to be consistent. It is important that students come to understand consistency in moral judgment this way. In discussions of moral issues with students, I have encountered responses where students, seeking to be consistent, finally refuse to modify their previously stated principles despite recognizing the force of challenges that highlight the inadequacy of those principles for the case under discussion. Their problem is not that they don’t recognize the need to be consistent, for they obviously do, but they have a flawed understanding of what it takes to be consistent here. Unlike French’s view, the proposed view does not justify the modifications by arguing “that after the changes are made, then we can judge more consistently, but that consistency requires that we make the changes.” (Brennan, 1977, p. 103) On this view, the logical requirement of consistency can actually be a dynamic rather than a conservative force in the application of moral concepts, and therefore in moral thinking.

Here we can see a third aspect of the open-texture of moral concepts. “The explication of [their] rationale[s] is, like the verification of a scientific hypothesis, an essentially incomplete achievable project. In other words, a term is open-textured if the set of the combinations of features which must be present to justify the use of the term is an open set.” (Brennan, 1977, p. 116) There are many things we can point to that can explain this fact. Some of these include our limited ability to apprehend all the possible ways and situations we might face for which the concept could have relevance and the fact that our explications are embedded in ways of life susceptible to change in ways that will require us to frame new explications. Furthermore, the applicability of our moral concepts depends on our understanding of a wide range of other concepts and on other non-moral beliefs (in particular, beliefs about cause and effect relations). So that changes in these can require us to modify our explications. These reasons will be familiar as the same
ones that explain the two ways in which open-texture is a part of the rationale. French's failure to recognize this aspect of open-texture can be traced back to his failure to recognize the important role of the rationale. If we equate moral concepts with their explanations, what would guide our application to new and unprecedented cases not covered by our explanations? To avoid this problem French had to argue that the explanations are complete, contradicting his claim that moral concepts are irreducible.

Brennan makes his argument for this third aspect of open-texture for moral \textit{act} concepts. Does it also apply to moral \textit{character} concepts? That is, is it also true that moral concepts appraising character are not completely explicable in morally neutral terms? If we think of these concepts as simply commending (or condemning) character traits that tend to maintain or support (or destroy) some independently existing vision of good, then it appears that we should be able to fully explicate these concepts in morally neutral terms. We might then argue that being a cruel person is simply being a person who gets satisfaction out of harming others. But as I have argued above, such a characterization of our moral concepts is flawed. This explication cannot cover all and only the cases to which the moral concept, 'cruel' applies. We would probably still call a person cruel who regularly inflicted harm on others but got no particular satisfaction from it. Would we describe a person as having a cruel character if he or she got satisfaction out of harming others without understanding what he was doing—as sometimes little children do? The fact that there are boundary cases, where reasonable people sharing the same public concept can have real disagreement, tells us that no easy solution such as appealing to a definitive explication exists. I will claim, without further justification, that moral \textit{character} concepts are open-textured in this third way as well—that is, our explication of them in morally neutral terms is necessarily without a final end.

\textit{Objective criteria for arbitrating disagreements in use}

Given the extent of open-texture we have argued for so far, it is easy to see how disagreements can occur. For there to be the possibility of a rational approach to resolving these disagreements, we must show that there are objective criteria capable of arbitrating in the efforts toward resolution. All we mean here by objective criteria is criteria that exist independent of the whims of those disagreeing. Objective criteria will only exist where some agreement exists. But as we have already argued in chapter three, disagreement can only occur against a background of agreement (at least, based on some shared way of
life). Here we must address the more specific question by saying more precisely what this agreement must consist in if rational resolution is to be possible.

Brennan follows Wittgenstein in arguing that this agreement is a matter of agreement in judgment. That is, we resolve our differences rationally by working from those cases where we agree on the use of the concept. If no such agreement exists, then no disagreement of this kind can exist either—though other kinds of relevant disagreements based on other agreements may exist. For example, if you and I agree nowhere in our use of the term triangle—you use it to refer to closed geometric figures with three straight sides while I use it to refer to large structures made of glass—then we cannot be said to disagree about the use of the concept of triangle. Obviously, we are not even talking about similar things. But if you think that triangles are what cause rain and I think the same, then we do disagree about something. One possibility is that two different concepts, as with my example, are being used. In order to deal with these problems, we must go deeper to find agreement in concerns (that is, in our 'formal' concepts) and work from there. But in the case where we share 'material' concepts the objectively existing bases for arbitration are precisely those objectively existing cases in which we agree on the use of the concepts. Brennan suggests that the fact that two people or groups are willing to seriously discuss the issue is evidence of further agreement—agreement in perceiving that it is, at least, possible that the concept does (or does not) apply. For example, if I am willing to discuss the possibility that what I have done may be racially discriminatory, then I must agree, with you, that at least some of the relevant features of racism are present in my actions—that it is possible (though wrong) to see my actions as falling under the moral concept 'racism'. This may only mean that I recognize that one morally neutral description of my action overlaps with an explication of racism. Or it may mean, more seriously, that the concerns central to the concept of racism are relevant to the judgment of my actions but . . . Brennan (1977) argues that the independent criterion we have for arbitrating such disputes about the extension of a concept is "the discoverable rationale behind the use of the word," which is based on established use. (pp. 107-108)

Before going on to discuss some of the implications of open-texture for moral learning, I want to mention the last two aspects Brennan describes in which moral terms are open-textured. These have to do with the open-texture of rules. Basing his argument on the work of H.L.A. Hart (in The Concept of Law)
who discusses the open-texture of rules of law, he argues that moral rules which are the explication of moral concepts, are open-textured in the same ways. First, some of the terms in which moral rules are framed will be, themselves, open-textured and second, there is no way to foresee and account for "every possible combination of circumstances in the framing of these rules." Brennan (1977) summarizes his conclusions about the open-texture of moral concepts quite succinctly.

Moral terms, then, are open-textured for (at least) the following reasons: (a) as is the case with words generally, the rationale which governs the use of a moral term is indeterminate; (b) this rationale is sensitive to conceptual modifications over an indefinite range of conceptual scheme, which means that it is itself subject to alteration because of conceptual changes elsewhere; (c) the rationale cannot be completely explicited in morally neutral terms; (d) its explication takes the form of moral rules which cannot be framed to meet every possible contingency; (e) these rules are expressed in open-textured terms. (pp. 123-124)

This description of the open-texture of moral concepts gives a clear picture of where disagreements can occur and the relationships set out by the picture give us an idea of how we might resolve these disagreements.

Based on this view, we don't recognize an action or person as a certain moral type and then infer the moral appraisal (right, wrong, commendable or contemptable) to inform judgments or decisions to act. Rather, all, or at least, most, of the moral work is done in the recognizing of the action or person as of a certain moral type. This view accords with my argument of the centrality of moral perception and my explication that moral judgment is a part of moral perception. Once we see that a situation is properly perceived according to a certain moral concept, there is no more work to be done to see that it is right or wrong, good or bad. This view is also the foundation of Platts' (1979) claim that it is the direct perception of moral facts that gives us a sufficient reason to act (without necessarily guaranteeing that we will so act).

(p. 159) Platts (1979) contends that moral concepts exhibit the characteristic of semantic depth. Starting from our grasp upon them through our knowledge of the austeres truth-conditions of sentences containing them, we have to struggle to improve our sensitivity to particular instantiations of them. This process proceeds without limit; at no point . . . can we rest content with our present sensitivity in the application of these concepts. (p. 249)
This accounts both for moral differences and for the continuous potential of moral learning. Semantic depth can be understood as the significant promise of the open-texture that Brennan describes. Because our moral concepts are open-textured, the process of gaining deeper and deeper understanding of them through our use of them in more and more varied situations is without end.

*Semantic depth*

According to Lovibond, semantic depth is the consequence of our limited awareness as individual language users of the applicability of moral terms. She identifies the community's conception of the 'ideal observer' as the source of authority according to which we judge our own competence. (Lovibond, 1983, pp. 70-71) I am more inclined to follow Wallace (1988) in highlighting the continuous change to which this conception of the 'ideal observer' is subject. Perhaps this is what Lovibond means when she says that the reach of intellectual authority in the moral realm may be relatively short. If this is the case, then there will be many times when we must chart a new course with our moral judgment. I want to argue that even when the course has already been charted by others in our community, the moral judgments we make as individuals that expand our understanding of our moral concepts are like the judgments that do actually chart new courses for the community at large. We do not simply acquiesce to the intellectual authority of the community when we make moral judgments of this kind. If we did then moral learning would simply be a matter of indoctrination.

Instead of using Lovibond's characterization, I suggest that we view an individual's moral learning as (in many ways) analogous to the moral learning/change of a community. The limited understanding of individual users can then be understood, through the analogy, as due to the same reasons--applied to the individual's working concept--that Brennan gives to support open-texture. Semantic depth can then be understood as the consequence of the open-texture of moral concepts at the community level as well as the individual level. Brennan (1977) admits that "it is true that the judgement that d is a

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11 Most of my discussions of moral learning and semantic depth refer to learning that is positive, learning that enhances our understanding of moral concepts. Clearly it is possible for our moral concepts to become less refined, for our experiences to cause us to become more narrow-minded. It is also possible for us to make mistakes as we try to be more sensitive, mistakes that temporarily blind us to important moral considerations. Educators must be aware of these possibilities so that they may recognize when students are taking these undesirable directions in their moral learning. But I think that the central guiding concern of educators must be positive learning and so I will speak mostly about this.
so-and-so, where 'so-and-so' is an open-textured term, will always be subject to question, and its grounds capable of indefinite amplification and clarification . . . "(p. 109) Thus, the characteristic of an individual's moral concept is, despite its limitedness in comparison to the understanding of an 'ideal' moral perceiver, precisely the same as that of the 'ideal' perceiver.

As a student makes new moral judgments by perceiving a novel situation as encompassed by a moral concept he or she already grasps, this student's understanding of the concept gains depth. Brennan's analysis of the open-texture of moral concepts allows us to see all the ways in which this semantic depth can be achieved: (a) through increased understanding of the rationale of the concept; (b) through increased apprehension of the connection between the rationale and other parts of one's conceptual system; (c) through having more detailed and complex explications of the rationale; (d) through an increasing understanding of the inevitable limits of whatever explications one is presently aware of and how explications depend on context; (e) through an increasing understanding of the open-textured nature of the important concepts we use in these explications. Moral deliberation or reasoning, which I have argued aims at improving moral perception, can do this by being the agent of conceptual change through promoting depth along the lines described above.

Thus, semantic depth is the conceptual correlate of depth of perception. At the conceptual level, it is the achievement parallel to that of enriched moral perception. To gain semantic depth, or to have one's understanding of a concept deepen, means to be able to recognize the moral characteristic that the concept picks out in more and more situations. It is to become more sensitive to the occurrence of this moral feature. This deepening does not occur in some isolated way divorced from our moral life, it is a part of that moral life. As we face situations, real or imagined, that require moral sensitivity the perceptions we achieve by directing our attention to the relevant aspects of the situation, using our moral concepts and asking ourselves the right questions, will embody enriched moral concepts. This enriching of our understanding of moral concepts through concrete experience brings them to life allowing our moral language to be a living language, a part of our form of life. Martha Nussbaum (1990) argues that this contextualization is essential to the functioning of these concepts as moral concepts. She claims that
a person armed only with the standing terms—armed only with general principles and
rules—would, even if she managed to apply them to the concrete case, be insufficiently
equipped by them to act rightly in it. It is not just that the standing terms need to be
rendered more precise in their application to a concrete text. It is that, all by themselves,
they might get it all wrong; they do not suffice to make the different standing terms
sufficient to be wrong. (p. 156)

Nussbaum's insight here can be elucidated by Brennan's notion of the rationale of moral concepts. The
point is that if we are going to teach moral concepts as moral concepts we cannot merely teach rules. The
moral virtue of being honest, does not inhere only in "telling the truth" or "not lying". The general
principle: "Be honest" or "Do not lie" is insufficient in itself to tell us how to respond sensitively in a
concrete moral situation—insufficient, that is, to get us to see and act rightly. In order for a particular act
of truth telling to be morally the right or commendable act, it must be (and I quote Nussbaum (1990)
quoting Aristotle's Nichomachian Ethics) "at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards
the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way."(p. 156)

I believe that the view I am proposing that sees moral learning as involving the introduction to
moral concepts and the subsequent continuous deepening of one's understanding of these concepts through
their contextual use in living, tells a better story of what happens when people encounter Kohlberg's moral
dilemmas than does his developmental stage theory. It explains how moral dilemmas can promote moral
learning by providing us with an opportunity to use our moral concepts in new and unprecedented ways.
In seeking to resolve the dilemma, we are seeking to achieve a perception of the situation free from the
conflict posed by the dilemma.12

But this picture of moral reasoning is quite different from the deductive reasoning from first
principles (usually coming down to those that express some self-interest) that is so prevalent both in moral
philosophy and in moral education. Moral reasoning is more appropriately viewed on the model of
inductive reasoning where air tight, final proofs are not the goals we seek. (Brennan, 1977, p. 95)13 This
tells us something important about the nature that moral discourse must have if it is to promote moral
enrichment and moral community. If we are interested in helping students to become mature participants

12This idea was suggested by my colleague Hee-Soon Bai in a paper we wrote and presented together at
13Here Brennan discusses the potential of likening moral reasoning to that in a S-e proof for continuous
functions as proposed by Lucas (1955).
of our moral community, then helping students to be competent at this kind of moral discourse will be an essential part of moral education.

*Conceptual relativity, new concepts and dissenting views*

But as we have noted, moral discourse in a pluralistic context faces pressing problems. How is the present view able to address these problems? People can bring different conceptual resources to bear on the same situation—the existence of conceptual relativity tells us that we cannot always (in fact, not even often) say that one set is right and another is wrong. Yet moral concepts have universal intent. How are two such people to engage in genuine moral discourse? Brennan suggests that if there is sufficient background agreement people can, in principle, work from this agreement toward further agreement. In the case of conceptual relativity, I believe that it is necessary to build agreement first by helping each to gain the conceptual resources of the other. But what does this entail?

"One acquires new moral concepts, as one learns new words in general, by defining them in relation to, and incorporating them into, one's present conceptual scheme." (Brennan, 1977, p. 94) So even new moral concepts are not created completely divorced from the existing set. As we have seen moral concepts have their roots in a whole host of other concepts and beliefs, a new moral concept may be created out of the interaction between our present conceptual resources and unprecedented situations, or it may require that we come to have other kinds of concepts (for example, religious concepts or environmental concepts) and understand what it means to have other kinds of beliefs (such as the Buddhists have about karma). We will not be equally familiar with all of our moral concepts, some of them will remain in a state of infancy because we seldom have occasion to use them. This may be the case with some of the concepts we learn from other cultures that are dependent on beliefs we do not hold or on ways of life we do not share. But there may also be times when we learn new moral concepts from other cultures which bring along with them new beliefs we wish to take on and potential ways of life we wish to adopt. As should be obvious, learning a new moral concept is a slow process. And adopting the concept into one's moral perspective will involve sensitively applying it in moral judgments (perceptions) and thereby giving it semantic depth.
Of course, it is not possible to do this with all conceptual resources from all the cultures that are a part of our pluralistic society. Sometimes an appreciation of our limited understanding of others' views requires that we be tolerant or accepting of those views (rather than respectful of them) to avoid transgressing a central moral value of ours, that of respecting others' freedom. This understanding, in fact, is a part of our understanding of the moral concept of 'respect for persons'.

In fact, this notion of respect is at the core of pluralistic moral communities. Because of it a pluralistic society can provide a home for moral conceptual richness at the same time that it provides a substantial moral image for the community. It is able to allow considerable dissent from this image without alienating the dissenters from participation in the moral community, because part of moral participation is criticism. Respect here is for persons as potential moral learners and innovators.

**Basic moral concepts**

The possibility of moral discourse depends on the existence of a moral language game. People can only participate in moral discourse if they, to some extent, are able to participate in that language game. This requires moral concepts. Despite all the diversity we have accepted as possible, is there not some basic set of moral concepts that a person must have if they are to be able to participate in the game at all? I think the answer to this question is, "yes and no". We would answer "yes" to the question if it is asking whether it is necessary to have some basic set of moral concepts in order to understand and participate in moral discourse generally. We would answer "no" to the question if it is asking whether there is a particular set of moral concepts—even conceived as merely 'formal' concepts—which any and all persons must have if they are to participate in any moral discourse. The answer must clearly be no if I am to maintain my claim that, from the very beginning, we should view moral learning as a moral activity and moral learners as participants in the moral community.

Given that no uncontroversial list of these moral concepts is possible—though there may be some examples I could give that are fairly uncontroversial, that is not my goal here—I turn my attention to saying something about how we would decide what to consider basic. What is basic to having a moral point of view with which to understand the human world. A set of moral concepts that address the basic moral concerns will include both moral _act_ and moral _character_ concepts. Concepts that express our concern for the
way we conduct ourselves with regard to the consequences of our actions on other people as well as the community at large and concepts that address our concern for being the kind of persons worthy of other's consideration and for building the kind of community in which such persons can flourish.

Given our view of the role that moral concepts play in moral learning and moral living, it should not be surprising that no substantial list follows or is needed. But given that some set of moral concepts can serve as a basic set—these concepts are what allow us to view the world from the moral point of view—and these concepts are open-textured so that our understanding of them is ever susceptible to deepening, what would justify the moral educator to teach alternatives to this set, rather than concentrating on helping students to enrich their understanding of the concepts they already have? Aside from the obvious answer, that dealing with (understanding) others who do not share the same basic set as oneself will require that we learn new concepts, I believe that sometimes one must learn alternatives in order to enrich the existing concepts and sometimes enriching the existing concepts amounts to the creation of new (alternative) concepts. One's conceptual resources are enriched when one is better able to understand others and address the concerns of moral living.

This understanding of moral conceptual influence on moral learning suggests that teachers must see to it that students acquire some basic set of moral concepts so that they may achieve the moral point of view. That is, they must see to it that students learn to play the moral language-game according to some set of rules. But students enter school with moral concepts they learn from their home and community. In a culturally diverse context, these may be quite different from the set used by the teacher in school. An important question to consider is what happens when you change the rules of the game before students are able to have even a tenuous grasp of one set of rules? We need to avoid the debilitating confusion that may result if we are not careful to consider this. On my view, teachers can be sensitive to the conceptual resources that students bring with them by finding a way to support this set of basic concepts, rather than ignoring them or trying to override them with concepts from the larger moral community. This will require that teachers find the common ground and build bridges from there. But because attention is given to the concepts that students already have, the stage is set for integration rather than opposition. This does not mean that there will never be situations where conflicts occur, but students will see that the way to
resolve these conflicts is no different than the way to resolve conflicts that occur within a single moral tradition. Respecting one's cultural background is not a matter of blindly following it, rather it is best expressed by seriously engaging with the resources from this background in living one's life and building a moral community. The pluralistic context itself will require that old ways and concepts be adapted to address the new problems and situations emerging from this context.

Conclusion

Moral education is interested in helping students to achieve a moral point of view. I have argued that this requires the teaching of moral concepts which are significantly open-textured. In order to understand what it means to teach these moral concepts, we need to understand more clearly the extent of this open-texture and how it affects moral thinking. Open-texture, while not uniquely a characteristic of moral concepts, is essential to the functioning of moral concepts *qua* moral concepts. This feature of moral concepts tells us how moral reasoning can aim at improved moral perception by helping us to make rational moral judgments which require a deepened understanding of the concepts involved in such perception. This explains why moral reasoning cannot be taught separately from the teaching of moral concepts.

But moral education is not simply interested in getting students to see from the moral point of view if that means simply to see according to a moral concept or set of concepts. This could easily be done by indoctrination or by other non-rational means. Rather, it is interested in helping students to achieve moral perception in light of their system of relevant moral concepts. This achievement will require students to understand their concepts in depth so they can face and solve relevance and conflict problems which can be exacerbated by the diversity of concepts present in a pluralistic context. In this chapter, I have given reasons for believing that such problems are, in principle, rationally solvable and have laid the foundation for suggesting how we should view the teaching of moral concepts so that students come to acquire the tools needed for solving these problems as they acquire an understanding of their concepts. In the next chapter, I turn my attention to explicating this view.
Chapter Five

TEACHING MORAL CONCEPTS: AN EMBEDDED VIEW

Introduction

Out of the considerations and arguments in the last three chapters, a particular conception of teaching moral concepts is emerging. This chapter is dedicated to further articulating this view and consider some of its practical implications. Of particular significance will be the capacity of this view to adequately picture this practice as embedded in the larger enterprise of moral education broadly conceived and to appropriately attend to this embeddedness. This in-depth view is of essential importance to educators as it will provide the guiding vision, the working rationale if you will, of our notion of teaching moral concepts (hereafter TMC).

I will begin by reconsiderning the root concerns that motivate and should guide the practice in question. These concerns have been mentioned in chapter two. The recharacterization that I offer here is the result of a deepened understanding of them emerging from the analysis in the intervening chapters. Using the insights from this analysis, I will suggest how these concerns can be addressed by the embedded practice of promoting the conceptual understanding of students. This discussion will prepare the way for a general account of my conception of teaching moral concepts. In this account, I will bring together previous insights to offer a crystallized view of the practice.

Once I have given this conception an initial articulation, I will be able to address some important pedagogical concerns. First, what amounts to success on this view? What is to be considered as evidence for achievement? And given this, what does this view tell us about the environmental conditions that would be conducive to success? Answering these questions will require further articulating the conception of TMC, providing a fuller picture of the practice.

It is possible to talk about teaching without expressly describing the particular activities that this teaching might involve. In articulating my conception, a natural limit is placed on the scope of the practice under this description, but I will not have thus far recommended any particular practices. In other words, we will have attended to the rationale but not yet explicated this rationale in terms of actual practice. In partial response to this need, I will consider the case of modeling as a prospective approach to
TMC and argue for the importance to this view of TMC of giving students a chance to have actual moral experiences.

Finally, I will consider whether this view meets the criteria set out in chapter one for a solution to the problem of moral education in a pluralistic society. Is it able to meaningfully address the individual, social and cultural aspects of moral life in a way that gives students the resources for living such a life as critical participants in a dynamic moral community? Does TMC help students to acquire moral concepts as part of practical wisdom? Does it do this without transgressing morality?

The rationale of TMC

I have argued that any program of moral education must have, as a root concern, the awakening of moral sense in students. We are now in a position to appreciate what that means in terms of moral concept learning. We are interested here in helping students to appreciate moral reasons and considerations. Given that moral concepts embody these, introducing students to moral concepts gives them the resources needed to achieve moral perception—to see from a moral point of view. One of the things we have argued is that on achieving this point of view depends the very possibility of finding a meaning in life. So while this may be just the first step in the process, not only do all the other steps depend on it but, in a sense, we take this first step again and again.

That is, moral perception is not achieved once and for all. And it is not achieved merely by having the conceptual resources required. Helping students to live a life of practical moral wisdom requires that we help students gain the know-how and discipline required to face moral problems and achieve sensitive moral perception in whatever situations they encounter. This means helping them to face moral problems regarding appropriate conduct and judgment of character. Wallace (1988) argues that moral relevance and conflict problems are real and require moral effort to overcome. (pp. 50-53) We can describe these problems as resulting from a variety of different causes of unclear moral perception.

Brennan (1977) argues that

1Sabina Lovibond discusses this notion of an "achieved reintegration" of the 'inner' and 'outer' perspectives which is the aim of moral reasoning for moral perception as I conceive of it. She argues that it "must result from the consciously willed establishment of an expressive relationship between ourselves and our public institutions," which in this case is our moral concepts. Lovibond (1983), p. 194.
There are . . . four basic types of moral problems: (i) When neither the rationale nor its explication is in question, but there is doubt as to whether the questionable case meets the specification. This is a question of fact. (ii) There is doubt about whether the relevant word in the explication ought to apply to the case in question. . . . (iii) The correctness of the explication is in doubt. . . . (iv) The rationale itself is in question. . . . (p. 135)

Each of these problems admits to a rational solution which depends on the nature of the problem itself. Because each problem is shaped by the previous agreement among the disputants, or the (presently) unquestioned premisses underlying the problem, finding a solution depends on finding the extent of this agreement and working from this unquestioned space. The following examples give us a sense of how the approach of conceptual clarification might look for each type of problem mentioned above. In each example, the concept of respect plays a central role.

An example of the first type of problem might arise when in pre-Civil War America a white woman, originally from the north, travels to the deep south where Blacks are regularly sold as slaves. She might consider how she should treat these slaves. Should they be accorded the moral respect she is used to giving to all White people? Or should they be treated differently, as the slave owners argue, because they do not feel pain, are not able to feel the sting of an insult, are incapable of human dignity in the same way as White people, and so on? Suppose her concept of respect is sufficiently sophisticated and not presently in question by her. What this women must find out is whether, in fact, Blacks are incapable of feeling pain, insulted, indignity and so on, as she herself does. This is a matter of factual clarification. The (moral) effort involved here is that required to resolve this non-moral question in order to solve the moral one. As I have argued before, non-moral beliefs and concepts do affect moral ones, and changes in the former can affect the latter. This first type of problem is the only one which can be solved without direct effort to clarify the moral concept in question. Conceptual clarification here is not of the central moral concept shaping the problem—that of 'respect'—but of other relevant concepts.

An example of the second type of problem might arise were this same woman, having resolved the first problem, to question her assumptions about what would constitute treating a Black person with respect. Would this require working to free them from slavery? Or even more radically, does respect require that certain more specific civil and political rights be granted? Answering this question involves a further explication of the concept of respect. This may occur in the course of the factual clarification.
required to resolve the first type of problem. That is, in seeking to find out whether Black people can feel insult, pain and indignity it may be necessary to clarify the concepts which occur in our explication of the concept of respect. In this way, the concept of respect is itself clarified.

In considering this problem our protagonist may face a problem of the third type. She may face opposition from people who believe that respect does not at all require that certain rights be granted. Or she may come to see that her former understanding of the concept needs correcting. She may come to doubt whether treating persons with equal respect comes down to treating them all in the same way. She may wonder, that is, about the appropriateness of, say, something like affirmative action policies. Solving this kind of problem will involve a re-examination of her working explication of the concept of respect.

In seeking guidance for this re-explication, our protagonist will look to her understanding of the underlying rationale of her concept of respect. She may face a problem of the fourth type if her rationale is challenged by others—especially if it is challenged in a context where the need for a social policy decision requires a resolution—or if such a challenge succeeds in revealing to her the limits of the working rationale underlying her notion of respect. In either case, efforts to resolve the problem will require that some other point(s) of agreement be found. These may be the underlying concerns that gave rise to the concept of respect in the first place—for example, some concern for human well-being, dignity and the like, given our social nature.

Perhaps this is why Nel Noddings' "ethic of care" has intuitive appeal.² Our moral concepts are (at least partially) motivated by our concerns, our caring if you will. It is only when this caring is alive and well that the terms will function fully as moral concepts, the way they were intended. Unfortunately Noddings chooses to argue that nurturing this care is contrary to teaching moral principles or helping students to be rational in living their moral lives. My view proposes quite the opposite relationship. In nurturing this care, we teach moral concepts and principles, and help students to be rational in living their moral lives. Even Noddings (1984) admits that the natural affection that we feel for others is insufficient, if left undeveloped, to achieve "ethical caring."(pp. 4-5, 104) My argument is that this

²See Noddings (1984). Noddings' point that all education must be the "maintenance and enhancement of caring,"(p. 172) is understandable in this context.
nurturing of natural care is a 'natural' part of human moral development and my conception of TMC is offered as the means of doing exactly this. Instead of discarding principles and justice, this conception suggests their appropriate place in a comprehensive picture of moral learning.

The efforts at conceptual clarification appealed to in the problems above are each part of an effort to clarify moral perception. As I have tried to show through my interconnected examples, often our moral problems will involve a combination of these basic types. It is important that students come to see and understand (not necessarily explicitly in these terms) where their problems lie and how to direct their efforts at resolution. Especially in the case of problems arising in the context of (moral) cultural diversity, locating the root of the disagreement may prove to be a most difficult problem. Too often arguments are offered which fail to address the real problem because they are premised on points that are themselves in dispute. Factual clarifications will not solve a problem rooted in disagreements about explication and no amount of eloquence or vehemence in stating one's position on an explication will resolve problems rooted in differences over rationale.

If we are interested in resolving our moral problems morally, we must do it by helping people to conscientiously transform their own perceptions. Conceptual clarification of the types illustrated provide the ways. Students need to develop the discipline require to make this effort at clarification. Part of this is a matter of practice and part is a matter of inspired motivation. Students need to be shown (not simply told) the importance of this effort so that conscientious moral reasoning becomes a meaningful part of their lives.

This concern is a part of the larger concern that students come to actualize their moral commitments in a way that brings meaning to their individual lives. It is possible to talk about the two concerns as if they were two separate issues, that of committing one's heart (or mind) and that of acting (committing one's body), but they are not so easily divorced in life. As we have just seen, committing one's heart can require a fair bit of effort. Yet the problem of acting on one's beliefs is clearly an important one. Together they constitute the problem of "moral actuation" that Cua (1978) talks about. That they are
important questions says something about why the notions of intrinsic worth and unconditionality are important to morality despite the arguments that Richard Rorty offers against them.\(^3\)

The problem of actuation is not the problem of self-love [or self-interest], but the problem of the dynamics of any moral doctrine or knowledge. It concerns the possibility for any moral doctrine to be an intrinsically living and moving force in actual conduct without any appeal to extrinsic considerations. (Cua, 1978, p. 24)

What can concept teaching have to do with this? Is it possible to inspire students to act in certain ways through teaching concepts?

Recall our discussion of akrasia in chapter two. One way in which concept teaching can influence action is through helping students to acquire their concepts with depth and to allow this deep understanding to prevail as the orientation enlivening their perceptions. This means helping students to acquire their moral concepts as part of a living moral language, expressive of their concerns and commitments. Our conception of teaching moral concepts, as involving more than helping students to earn the money to acquire a bag of tools we think are important, addresses this concern about action.

Moreover, I believe that moral ideal concepts, in particular, can be taught in a way that inspires action. And I contend that it is, at least part of, the aim of moral education--perhaps most important part--to do exactly this. Moral ideal concepts give students a sense of moral excellence. Such concepts are numerous and varied and the recommended ideals can be achieved in indefinitely many different ways. Part of living a particular moral life is finding one's own way to actualize moral being. As we have seen, no amount of guidance can remove the need for individuals to make responsible and responsive judgments (to make efforts, that is, to achieve one's own moral perception) about what to do and how to live. If we are to help students to seek and achieve moral excellence in their lives in light of the many different moral ideal concepts available--if we are to help students, that is, to create their own unique lives of meaning\(^4\)--we must teach these concepts not as mere ideas, but as real possibilities--so that they are understood with depth.

\(^3\)In particular at a lecture given at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, 1994.

\(^4\)Cua (1978) refers to this as a person's unique "style of life" and discusses how one person's style can inspire a new way of life for a moral community. (pp. 15-16)
Thus, moral ideal concepts are best taught through exemplars or paradigms which give students a sense of what it might mean to live a life manifesting these ideals.\(^5\) When taught in this way, (and when done well), I believe that moral ideal concepts can provide an inspiring force. They are not simply seen to apply or not apply in a particular situation. When a person sees the promise of a moral ideal (or the detriment of moral vices) as potentially real and meaningful, the notion takes on a kind of *transforming significance* that moral _act_ concepts do not.\(^6\) Cua (1978) argues that "there is a sense in which moral ideals function as points of orientation as distinct from those that function as policies of ways of life." (p. 48) This notion of orientation gets to the very heart of moral perception, as it is in orienting ourselves in certain ways that we influence our moral perceptions. In this way, a person's life is literally transformed by the notion in question. It acts as a magnetic force that can motivate effort to carry us through adversity. Iris Murdoch's (1970) otherwise mysterious claim, "that we all receive moral help by focusing our attention upon things which are valuable..." (p. 56) may be understood in this way. I will examine this further later in the chapter when I discuss the potentials of modeling as an approach to TMC.

**Teaching moral concepts**

It is possible, then, to understand the major concerns of moral education in terms of conceptual understanding. If TMC is to address these concerns, what overall picture can be given of this practice? It must be interested in helping students to acquire all the educational goods relevant to moral living. Teaching moral concepts must be seen not only as involved in passing on abstract conceptual resources, but also as helping students to acquire the know-how and discipline required to make use of the resources and as inspiring students with the appropriate moral spirit. To do this they must be taught embedded in the living practices and ways of life of the community. Moral concepts must be introduced as part of helping students to experience from the moral point of view. Rules and principles are important aids to helping students to understand and appreciate the *rationales* underlying these concepts because they

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\(^5\) For more on the significance of paradigms in morality see Cua (1978). Something similar can be said about "vice" concepts. Dr. Joyce Bellous pointed out to me that we come to understand why vices are to be avoided through seeing examples and exemplars as well. She noted that children learn something of the *rationale* underlying our notion of jealousy--why it is considered a vice--when they hear about the jealousy of Snow White's step-mother. Through the life (the thoughts, feelings and actions) of this character, children see what it might mean to be a person consumed by jealousy.

\(^6\) For the idea of a notion having a "transforming significance" see Cua (1978), pp. 49, 64-5.
connect this indeterminate rationale to concrete situations in students' lives. But it is important that students come to appreciate the rationales underlying moral concepts so that they will be able to face novel situations that require unprecedented judgments about the appropriateness of learned rules and principles. Only when students begin to develop a sense of this rationale will they be able to use the concept in question in moral deliberation. This rationale is what guides moral considerations and the continuous articulations and re-articulations of rules and principles which are part and parcel of achieving sensitive moral perceptions. These perceptions are what point one to the appropriate actions. In helping students to achieve these perceptions through disciplined practice inspired by example, TMC can help students to actually conduct themselves accordingly.

Given this view, it should be obvious that a course in moral concepts is not where the majority of this teaching must take place. Rather, my conception of TMC makes it plain that all teachers must be involved in this practice. Morality, more than any subject taught in schools, is not to be merely studied as an aside from one's daily life. If moral education is to help students to be participants in their moral community, TMC must be the concern of all educators in the school, and every teacher's classroom, as part of that moral community, must be seen as offering potential occasions for moral being and learning.

Evidence of achievement in terms of components of moral learning

The success of TMC is conceived holistically in terms of the moral life of students. This life is conceived of in dynamic, rather than in static, terms which is in keeping with the open-texture of moral concepts and the indefinite depth we can seek in understanding these concepts. TMC aims at enriching students' moral netback so that it may contribute to the whole system of moral being that the framework in chapter two illustrates. Familiarity with moral concepts is achieved through guided attentive use in real and imagined moral situations which are given meaning by context. Achievement in moral perception will be accompanied by appropriate feelings, understanding and action, and evidenced by students' abilities and dispositions to resolve moral conflict and relevance problems in rational ways—that is,

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7It may appear that this contradicts my intention that students should be viewed as moral learners from the very beginning, but it does not. My only point here is that when moral rules and principles are taught as fixed and final arbiters of judgment and action so that no sense of the underlying rationale is gleaned by the student, then the concept learned is, in a very importance way, not a moral concept.
through the conceptual clarification methods described above. It will also be evidenced by the increased depth of understanding that these achievements exhibit which can be brought to bear on future problems.

The woman in our earlier examples about respect, having achieved sensitive moral perception by working through the moral problems she faced, will be transformed by this experience. If her moral attention is sufficiently disciplined, her whole moral way of life may be changed by her achieved perception. She may find that her treatment of Whites from other social classes is also changed by her new understanding of respect. Furthermore, her understanding of other related moral notions (such as rights, racism, dignity, etc.) will likely be changed. She may not necessarily become an active abolitionist—that will depend on a whole host of other factors—but her attentive perception of a wide range of other moral situations are potentially transformed by this achievement. And the set of potential perceptions now available to her through further moral effort has been changed. This view of achievement is in keeping with our notion of educational achievement as well as compatible with our commitment to pluralism.

Two environmental conditions for success

Given this view of successful TMC, what can we say about some of the environmental conditions conducive to achievement? Often an over emphasis on the direct influences of success blinds us to deficiencies in background conditions. For this reason and because our conception of the practice we intend to promote allows us to look back and unearth these conditions with more acumen, I would like to discuss two important conditions that this view suggests: (1) a certain relationship of trust and respect between teacher and student and (2) a minimum level of physical health required to supply the energy needed for moral effort.

That a trusting and respectful relationship between teacher and student is a condition conducive to the success of TMC, is not something special to TMC. Some level of trust and respect is required for any really successful teaching. But two features make it especially evident that such a relationship is a pre-requisite for the success of TMC in particular, (1) the great importance of moral learning to the quality of life that students will be able to achieve, and (2) the intimate character of moral teaching and learning we

\textsuperscript{8}See Israel Scheffler (1985) on the notion of expanded potential as an important aim of education. Some may argue that this will involve eventually seeing that not only human beings but other species of animals should be accorded respect.
have described. In fact, Laurence Thomas (1993) argues that "moral agency . . . is characteristic of trusting relationships . . . " (p. 88)

Because much philosophical literature exists on the notion of respect, I will not attempt to further elucidate that notion here. The notion of trust, however, has not received the same attention. Thomas (1993) proposes the following characterization of a trusting relationship.

Minimally, we have mutual trust between two individuals when they are prepared to be vulnerable to one another with respect to some range of activities because both by their words and deeds have given one another reason to believe that each can be counted on not to harm the other, even when each could do so without loss or detection. (p. 88)

This notion of mutual vulnerability is essential to understanding the special quality of trusting relationships. I believe that Thomas (1993) is also right to say that the persons who participate in such relationships are, to some degree, conscious of this mutual vulnerability. I am less sure about his claim that what distinguishes trust from "mere prediction"—or what I think makes a better foil, "calculated risk"—is that trust "necessarily involves the giving and receiving of reasons for believing that a person will behave in a certain way, whereas [prediction] does not." (p. 88) I believe that what distinguishes trust (as in trusting relationships) from prediction is exactly that the risk involved in the former is an uncalculated risk. In the case of trust, one is vulnerable to the other person in the relationship and one is responsible for the other's vulnerability to oneself. In the case of a calculated risk, one is vulnerable to the probability of things going against one's hopes and one is responsible only to oneself.9 When someone breaks a trust, we are justified in feeling hurt or angry with him or her. When a calculated risk goes against us, we can only be justified in being angry with ourselves for taking the risk in the first place or for not calculating as well as we might have. This is because trust characterizes a relationship between persons, while prediction does not.

A teacher who does not have the trust and respect of students will not be able to successfully take on the role of guide much less manage to inspire students to make moral effort. It is only in practice that

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9Peter French's arguments against viewing moral thinking on the model of self-interested economic rationality includes a characterization of moral thinking as involving an uncalculated risk of just this kind. He argues that this risk is the risk of being moral and trusting that others will be moral. "Mutual benefit, despite alteration in utility values to allow, for example, for vicarious affects, in the end rests on the establishment of trust. Trust, however, is not always reasonable and in many cases even trusting the person known to be trustworthy is far from the rational thing to do. Mutual benefit often, if not always, calls for someone to do something that from his self-interested point of view is disadvantageous, and it further calls for all others to do likewise." French (1979), p. 146.
students will be able to meaningfully learn moral concepts. For a teacher to help a student to perceive
better through fostering conceptual clarification, he or she must show the students why it is important to
make efforts to improve their perception (commitment), show them how they might achieve this
improvement (practice) and help them to develop the discipline needed to actualize their commitments.
For example, one strategy that a teacher can employ to help students to deepen their understanding of the
concept of respect, is to ask them questions that get them to consider the feelings of others, the
consequences of their views and actions and so on. Sometimes the point of a consideration is not obvious
upon first examination. If the teacher does not have the trust and respect of students, students may not be
willing to persevere beyond this initial stage so these questions may not be given proper attention. As
well, trying out new things always leaves one vulnerable to the standards and judgment of others. Even if
the teacher manages to get students to try out the practices that can lead to increased moral conceptual
understanding, students who do not trust their teacher will not likely be open to this learning. If students
do not believe that the teacher has something worthy to teach them and are also afraid that the teacher is
only out to catch their mistakes and judge them, they will proceed with too much caution in their practice
and be too concerned with pleasing the teacher or meeting the standards of the teacher to fully appreciate
the point of the standards. For example, suppose a teacher were trying to help students to better
understand the concept of racism. This issue brings out many disturbing feelings in people—some feel
angry, some feel guilty, others feel sad and yet others feel defensive. If a teacher is to help students to see
clearly, beyond their own prejudices, insecurities and habitual reactions, to admit their own mis-steps
without fearing condemnation, if a teacher is to inspire students' efforts to really deepen their
understanding of this concept, having the trust and respect of students would seem to be invaluable.
Without the openness and receptiveness that comes with this kind of relationship, success will most likely
be only partial and unpredictable.¹⁰ Only if students feel safe enough and confident enough—confidence

¹⁰Often, partial success amounts to utter failure because it can serve to hinder the full success that is the
aim of moral education. This is obvious in the case where students come to take on moral concepts as
fixed and inflexible rules of conduct. Once this has happened, exceptional effort is require to correct the
problem. And the better they learned the partial lesson, the more exceptional this effort must be.
that is based on respect for the teacher as a teacher who is a moral human being—to enter sincerely into the practices will they likely lead to meaningful moral learning and achievement.

But it is not only important that the student trust the teacher, the teacher must also trust and respect the student. This is because of the nature of moral learning and moral being. A teacher who does not trust students to make moral judgments of their own will not be able to help students in making such judgments. And a teacher who does not respect students' abilities to learn through making judgments, even judgments that may oppose those of the teacher, will not likely help students to be critical participants in a moral community. For example, if a teacher will not trust students to see for themselves (given the proper guidance) what is wrong with racism or sexism, then they cannot help students to appreciate and deepen their understanding of the rationale of these concepts. Without such appreciation and openness to continuous renewal of one's understanding, sensitive use of these concepts in moral perceptions will not be achieved. Only in an atmosphere of trust and respect will students develop moral resources, know-how and discipline that they trust to help them make moral judgments for which they can demand respect. In fact, teachers who do not have any trust or respect for their students will not likely practise TMC as I have conceived of it.

In pluralistic societies where teachers and students may come from different cultural backgrounds, the cultivation of this relationship of trust and respect can itself require moral effort. But this poses no difficulty for our view because we have seen that moral effort can inspire reciprocal and/or additional moral effort. My point is only that moral learning is best nurtured in the context of a morally excellent relationship. In the absence of such a relationship, the solution would not be to give up our aims, but to make the effort required to develop the necessary relationship. If students are to learn to face the challenges and appreciate the richness of the pluralistic society as a whole, they must learn to do so in the more immediate environment of their school. If teachers and students cannot manage a respectful and trusting relationship, there is little hope that teachers will be able to help students to create a respectful and trusting moral community. Such a community, then, is both the condition and the achievement of the kind of moral concept learning that TMC seeks to promote.
The other environmental condition conducive to successful TMC has to do with the fact that moral learning/achievement of the kind we are after takes effort. The more difficult and novel the moral problem, the more energy and effort are required to achieve sensitive moral perception and to carry out the commitments thus revealed. Mental tasks—such as moral reasoning for improved perception—are realized through physical processes and thus require (physical) energy. Organized efforts by schools to feed children who otherwise come to school hungry, recognize the importance of nutrition to successful education. Children with nutritional deficiencies have problems paying attention in class. They may be hyperactive or sluggish or exhibit other problems that hinder learning. These problems do not only hinder the formal learning in schools, they can also hinder the capacity of children to attend to morally important features of their lives.

But while adequate nutrition is an essential ingredient for physical health, it is often not sufficient. Neither does the fashionable concern for physical fitness address the concern for health I mean to convey here. The concern for fitness nurtures energy for overtly physical activities. The physical health which is a condition for successful moral learning/achievement must provide energy for mental functions as well as physical ones. The better our physical health, the more energy we have available overall and the less energy we require to properly sustain our gross physical functions; and thus the more energy we have available to channel to moral (and other mentally expressed) attention. For example, traditional moral theorists have a point when they argue that passions can often get in the way of good judgment. When we are physically weakened, we are often less efficient in our use of energy. Sometimes we waste energy letting it drain away in emotional outbursts that we cannot control. These can cloud and distort our perceptions. Conceptual clarity, informing our moral perceptions at certain crucial points, can mean the difference between a morally sensitive response and a positively immoral one. And oftentimes, no amount of regret and remorse after the fact can ever undo the damage. Each experience of achieving

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11 In this way, mental health is really about the physical health required for normal mental functions and any talk of mental energy should be understood metaphorically as energy itself is a physically manifested phenomenon.

12 This helps us to understand why poverty conditions can generate morally hazardous situations.

13 Those who are focused on fitness consume their energy for overt physical display.
conceptual clarity at such crucial times adds to the meaningfulness of making moral efforts in this direction and helps to strengthen our commitment to moral being.

The discipline required to actualize sensitive moral perceptions and help us to act accordingly is manifested by our ability to direct our energy for moral attention and alertness. The better our physical health the more we are able to guide our energy appropriately. So the anger we feel at seeing racist discrimination does not consume us and make us hate in return, but instead helps us to do something that makes a positive difference. This is the physical health, that at a minimum level, is a precondition for successful moral learning and whose improvement is conducive to increased moral growth.

Practical recommendations for teaching: a partial explication of the rationale

In the articulated conception of TMC, I offered a rationale for the practice as well as a general picture of how the various individual aims fit together to form a coherent whole in keeping with this rationale. The particular activities, methodologies or approaches that will be effective in meeting the standards of this rationale will likely depend on many factors I cannot address here. However, a rationale is useless if it does not provide a guide for choosing these activities, methodologies and approaches. To indicate how our rationale might fulfill this role, I will examine how two particular approaches to TMC can be recommended by it. Other practices can also be given new life when seen as an articulation of this rationale. So we do not just follow them because they are in fashion, or because others do so, with only a vague notion of what they are supposed to accomplish and how they are supposed to accomplish it. Once a practice is seen as an explication of a rationale we will be able to see when it is appropriate to implement it as well as when, and how, we must alter them in a given context to address our concerns.

A case for modeling

The first approach I would like to examine as a potential articulation of our rationale is that of modeling. The term 'modeling' when used in educational vernacular is rather vague and we often do not distinguish two senses in which it can be used. Cua (1978) proposes a distinction that proves helpful. He argues that we should distinguish between persons as models and persons as paradigmatic individuals. (p. 48) I think our notion of 'modeling' does and should include both of these. There is a sense of 'modeling' in which students aspire to imitate the teacher. But there is also a sense of 'modeling' in which the open-
texture of moral concepts comes into play, where teacher's moral deliberations are seen as exemplars of good moral thinking not to be merely imitated--since imitation can never result in adequate responsiveness to novel situations--but to serve as a paradigm or standard of good practice. Furthermore, this sense of 'modeling' covers those situations where the teacher serves as a paradigmatic individual who inspires moral being through being moral themselves in their own unique way. The significant possibilities of 'modeling' in this second sense derive from its being a special case of what Cua (1978) describes as the inspiring force of paradigmatic individuals generally. (p. 37) Through seeing their living significance in the lives of these individuals, students not only get a sense of how moral concepts can be meaningfully used in moral living, they also get a sense of the potential transforming significance of moral ideal concepts. This way, a teacher does not only provide a model to aspire to, through 'modeling' he or she provides moral inspiration to the students.

The notion of inspiration needs further examination here. Cua's (1978) analogy perfectly captures my meaning and it should prove phenomenologically intuitive as well. He suggests that we liken inspiration to the "inductive process in electricity."(p. 33) The paradigmatic individual through the quality of his or her various feats of moral effort is the source of inspirational energy. If we are sufficiently receptive, this external source of energy can initiate similar energy movement within us--energy directed toward moral effort. So the teacher interested in TMC can influence students conceptual understanding through modeling good practice in conceptual clarification themselves, thereby exhibiting both excellent practice and commitment to excellence.

Through 'modeling', the teacher provides an instance of actuation which can inspire the same in the student. This is important as the moral understanding that TMC aims at must be a part of practical moral wisdom if it is to make a difference in the moral life of students. And as we have seen, because of their open-texture, enhanced understanding of moral concepts comes only through continuous effort to clarify and improve moral perception and understanding.

If a moral doctrine contains a set of rules and principles and ideals, there is a sense in which we know their significance and substantive constituents only when we have acted upon them. Thus the knowledge of the content of these principles, rules and ideals depend on the actions performed rather than on their [sic] prior understanding of their practical import apart from actual moral performance. What gives an actuating force to
moral doctrine is, in effect, the person who embodies this doctrine in his conduct. It is thus the moral agent himself who actuates his academic moral convictions. The moral knowledge that is consequent and posterior to action has an intrinsic feature of actuation, not in an abstraction from moral performance, but as an ingredient in the performance itself. To speak of the intrinsic feature of moral knowledge in a person's life is to speak of an abstract distillation of an aspect or dimension of a moral life. (Cua, 1978, p. 29)

If students are to become mature participants in their moral community, they must come to have this kind of posterior moral understanding—understanding that is a moral achievement. Through 'modeling', teachers can provide a concrete, historically situated and dynamically living source of aspiration and inspiration for students.

This means that rather than trying to be neutral, teachers must take moral stances when appropriate and they must treat their own views with the kind of seriousness and respect fitting such views. This is what approaches like Values Clarification fail to appreciate. Students do not only learn from what we say, they learn from what we do. Trying to impress on students the importance and seriousness of moral views while refusing to take any stance on important moral issues and while treating all views as if they were equally worthy, is like trying to help a fallen person up while sitting on top of them.

The importance of giving students moral experiences—real and imagined

From the discussion above, it follows naturally that students not only have models of actuation but must be given a chance "to answer [the] question of actuation [for themselves]" (Cua, 1978, 31) through their own actions and experiences. If moral concepts are to have a transforming significance for them, they must be given the chance to experience and interact with the world created by these concepts in their own lives.

Dewey's (1938) theory of experience, constructed around his belief that there exists an "organic connection between education and personal experience," provides some helpful insights for our discussion here. In particular, his description of what constitutes educative experiences can be helpful to the educator seeking to arrange such experiences for the moral education of students.

The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. . . . Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. An experience may be such as to engender callousness; it may produce lack of sensitivity
and of responsiveness. Then the possibilities of having richer experiences in the future are restricted. Again, a given experience may increase a person's automatic skill in a particular direction and yet tend to land him in a groove or rut; the effect again is to narrow the field of further experience. (p. 13)

The term experience can be used to refer to two distinct though related things. We can use it to point to the objective circumstances that a person faces (experience_{obj}) or we can use it to refer to the subjective state of the person facing these circumstances (experience_{subj}). The potential of an experience_{subj} to be educative is not something determined merely by the experience_{obj}. Experiences_{subj} are not things divorced from the people who have them. Whether, and to what extent, an experience (of either kind) is educative depends on what experiences (of either kind) a person has had before. Dewey recognizes this aspect of experience when he argues that "every experience influences in some degree the objective conditions under which further experiences are had."

These insights are clearly important to the moral educator interested in TMC. Because moral concepts are open-textured, helping students to enrich their understanding of these concepts by giving them the chance to experience moral situations, whose clear perception occasions a use of the concept that challenges their previous conception, is the approach to TMC. But deciding which experiences (of both kinds) will offer a particular student a significant chance for growth—which ones, that is, will provide the right degree of challenge—will require the teacher to be sensitive to the student's current state of understanding and discipline. This may seem a heavy burden for a teacher to bear, but I do not think that it justifies abandoning the cause. To say that a teacher is responsible for structuring students' experiences so that they will be educative, does not mean that the teacher must bring this practice to an exact science. Over-manipulation usually proves less than successful in these cases. Sometimes, a student will surprise us and successfully face a challenge that we would otherwise judge too great. Because students'

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14 I will only use these special symbols when it is necessary to emphasize that I mean experience in one sense rather than the other. Otherwise I will simple use the term without subscript and assume the context will make it clear what I mean.

15 Although I have argued that one's perceptions are determined by the concepts one has, it is possible to see clearly in one instance—thus, perhaps using a more adequate conception in that case—but not allow this better conception to inform future perceptions. Only when we allow our particular perceptions to transform our more stable concepts and conceptions—challenge them—will we develop conceptual resources with depth. We can all have moments of clarity, one of the goals of moral education should be to help us to have more such moments and to extend these moments into intervals enduring long enough to inform our actions.
experiences do not only occur in school—and then largely not in the presence of any particular teacher—and because students are living creatures whose intellectual, emotional and physical states are always in flux, there is no way for a teacher to know the exact state of a student's potential for learning. And such intimate knowledge is not necessary for a teacher to be successful. On the other hand, this view does require teachers to be sufficiently sensitive to students and this requirement places certain limits on the conditions (such as class size) in which successful teaching of this kind can be accomplished.

In a classroom with students from diverse moral backgrounds, the richness of the context will create opportunities for moral experiences whose precise educational value will be initially (actually, ever) unknown to the teacher. This initial inability on the part of the teacher to be equally sensitive to all students in the class is inevitable. We cannot expect teachers to know about all the different moral traditions from which their students could potentially come. But the teacher must be capable of coming to know his or her students better through these initial interactions and using this understanding to extract more educational value from future experiences. Sometimes a teacher will be learning with some of her students about the moral traditions of others. In exchange for some loss of initial control, the teacher (and students) in such an environment gains a rich source of moral concepts and opportunities for moral learning and achievement. Such an educational environment is perhaps more reflective of the broader educational context of students—their whole lives. Perhaps learning to extract what educational value one can from the unconstrained experiences one faces in life will be one of the important outcomes of such school experiences.

Because moral concepts are open-textured the mixing up of such concepts from different cultures need not prove merely confusing. As I have argued in chapter four, sharing moral experiences may help students to integrate concepts from different traditions thereby creating together, each through the process of enlarging their old concepts, new ones they can share.  

16 Students can be said to share experiences in two ways. (1) They can be said to share experiences. (2) They can be said to share what Murdoch terms "contexts of attention". Here students "share" in that they face similar objective circumstances and similar concepts direct the attention of each of them.

Students from different moral traditional backgrounds with different conceptual resources for perceiving and understanding moral situations can, by sharing an experience in the ways I have indicated, enlarge their conceptual repertoire, extending their traditional concepts in ways that can bridge the gaps among them. Each time students share contexts of attention a potential opportunity for finding common
orchestrate such shared experiences but to guide students in their response to experiences—their moral reasoning for improved perception—so that positive moral learning occurs.

There are recommendations as well about the kinds of experiences that would prove important for all students to have in pluralistic societies—whether the classroom itself is characterized by diversity or not. Laurence Thomas argues that in a "world of differences", it is important that all people have social interactions with those from a different social category. These social interactions must also be of a certain kind; they must involve an element of trust. (Thomas, 1993, p. 88) Thomas (1993) suggests that one particular kind of interaction—or shall we call it a relationship—has a transforming potential.

In an unjust world, one of the most important moral experiences that persons can have is that of earning the trust of an individual in a diminished social category group... and doing so to such an extent that the individual would authorise them to bear witness to others, not belonging to his group, about what it is like to be a member of his diminished category group. If nothing else, doing so acknowledges the moral agency of the diminished category person whose trust is being earned. . . .

Earning [this] moral authorisation... is a most transforming experience. This is especially so if the moral authorisation is given by a self-respecting diminished category person, who is not filled with bitterness and rancour or self-pity. For though such a person wants the other to understand, the person is not prepared to grant that such understanding has been achieved simply because the other is moved by a general sensac of moral sympathy when hearing about the suffering of diminished category persons. . . .

. . . if being sympathetically moved when presented with a truth about the suffering of others is a characteristic feature of a just person, self-examination is surely essential to staying the course as a moral person in an unjust world. And nothing occasions a more searching degree of self-examination like listening to the morally diminishing experiences of another as a means to earning that individual's trust. . . . Assuming sincerity, earning the trust of another is an exceedingly concrete way of taking the moral life of another seriously. . . . For as we seek to earn that person's trust, we would most like for it to be true that a review of our own lives reveals that we would have been worthy of that person's trust all along. (pp. 91-92)

Thomas goes on to say that this experience is also transforming as it requires us to listen to another's story in a way that leaves us open to their concerns, thus helping us to acquire new sensibilities. For moral concept learning, this may mean that we come to explicate our moral concepts in new ways that are sensitive to the different experiences of people from these groups, or it may mean that we come to see the inadequacy of the very concepts we had previously used to view these groups and their situations. For ground may be present. The conceptual clarification and moral reasoning that goes into achieving a sensitive moral perception in each of these situations are how we can transform our experiences as we transform our conceptual understanding. So while we always start from what we already have in terms of concepts and depth of understanding, our experiences need not be completely shaped by our past.
example, we may see self-respect where we used to see obstinacy; dignity and moral strength where we
used to see only victimization and powerlessness.

This discussion of listening to another's story to gain new sensibilities brings up my last point
about educationally significant moral experiences. There may be times when the actual environment in
which students live does not provide adequately diverse and challenging experiential opportunities for
students to learn from. In these cases, and as an important supplement to living experiences, teachers can
put in the way of students opportunities to experience, through imagination, morally stimulating
situations. This is what happens when the stories of others inspire moral effort which can result in moral
achievement. In this way, great literature has enriched readers' moral understanding and inspired moral
excellence. These episodes of moral imagination help to develop a student's capacity to imagine in the
moral realm because they require students to use moral concepts to create situations that transcend their
own actual life-experiences. By opening their eyes to these possibilities and helping them to acquire a
living appreciation of the dynamic potential of open-textured moral concepts, the moral imagination can
prove a crucial element in efforts to achieve sensitive moral perception in real-life cases.

Conclusion: How does this view meet the criteria set out for a solution?

Teaching moral concepts for moral education in a pluralistic society is thus a matter of initiating
students into a form of life characterized by certain concerns, expressed by a conceptual system and
certain ways of using this system to view the world. By giving students a sense of the enduring concerns
underlying moral language, this practice addresses the cultural concern of morality. Moreover, it does this
by initiating students into the existing, living moral language and the material moral concepts (rules,
principles and ideals) it makes available, and by helping them to acquire the ways and discipline needed
to participate in the moral community they inhabit. This way, it addresses the social concern of morality.
Finally, it helps students to learn this moral language (in particular its significant, open-textured moral
concepts) in a way that helps them to achieve meaningful moral perception and understanding in their
individual lives. This addresses the individual concern of morality. By teaching moral concepts in a way
that addresses the form, ways and styles of life they offer in concert, as they relate to and depend on each other, TMC will succeed in integrating the different concerns to address moral life as a whole.  

This approach to moral education through teaching moral concepts embedded in the moral life of the community, is able to address the socialization needs of morality. It is able to perform the reproductive function that helps new members of the community to attain the background agreement that is necessary to becoming a committed participant in the moral life of the community (and thereby for the development of the more mature critical moral participation). That is, it is able to address the needs of Sittlichkeit which is the basis of the living continuation of a moral community.

At the same time, in helping students appreciate the open-texture of moral concepts, TMC helps them to engage morality by taking responsibility for their particular uses of these concepts. It thus provides for critical participation in the moral community. So the moral community does not continue as a static entity, rather, through the reflective participation of its members, it continues as a responsive, dynamic community seeking deeper understanding and better ideals for itself. That is, TMC addresses the needs of Moralitat.

The approach of conceptual clarification in the context of meaningful use provides a way to find the root of relevance and conflict problems, allowing for rational resolution. This approach helps us to face such problems not only within our own moral tradition but provides a way to understand problems.

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17 See Cua (1978), pp. 11-15. Here Cua describes his notions of form, way, and style of life in a way that perfectly correlates with my cultural, social and individual concerns of morality.

18 This is what Lovibond (1983) calls a consciousness (of one's contribution to Sittlichkeit) that substantiates our "moral complicity." She writes, "Each time we take part in the practice of talking about the objective world, under whatever aspect (moral, physical, etc.), we in effect identify ourselves with the institutions in which the relevant language-game is embodied: by 'putting our minds where our mouths are' -- assuming, of course, that we are in fact doing this, i.e. that our participation is ingenuous -- we breathe into those institutions the 'spirit' without which they would be expressively dead. With these considerations in mind, we can say of linguistic practices -- as Collingwood said of civilizations -- that they depend for their survival on the continuing will of individuals to participate in them. And this is no less true of those language-games which lie towards the factual end of the fact/value continuum than of those which lie towards the evaluative end. Each one is, in principle, dispensable; just as 'any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us' (OC, 475), so any language-game -- irrespective of its subject-matter -- can be subtracted from our total repertoire 'without apology' if we can continue, as a community, to function without it. Subject to that one qualification, nothing constrains our choice of how to live or what linguistic systems to maintain in use; and to those who recognize this, their participation in any existing way of life will henceforward appear under the aspect of moral complicity." (p. 119)
that occur between and across cultures. A revisit to one of the difficulties mentioned in chapter one will help us to see the advantages of the TMC approach.

In chapter one I mentioned the difficulty faced by a teacher committed to gender equity when confronted with a student whose cultural background defends the practice of female circumcision. Before proceeding, it is important to remind ourselves that this conception of TMC does not promise, and was not meant, to make all such difficulties disappear. Rather, the contribution I hope to make with this conception is to help to see us through these difficulties by providing us with an alternative to irrational and immoral methods where we must fail to treat the other as a fellow participant in our moral community.\(^{19}\) What the conception does is change the way we look at the problem. When a teacher recognizes all people's moral understanding as evolving and views her job as seeking to engage the student's views and understanding with her own rather than as imposing her own views or challenging others with her (supposedly superior) views, the difficulty changes from a moral one to an educational one. How, that is, would it be best to do this? Of course there are moral constraints on the solution, but there is no moral dilemma preventing us from seeking a solution.

In the case of female circumcision, it is clear that the notions of respect and personhood are in need of clarification. Furthermore, a broadening of the student's sense of what constitutes human suffering would seem to be in order as well as some investigation into how female circumcision affects those on whom it is inflicted—what would it be like to be forced to live with those experiences? Because this is such a difficult and complex issue, it would likely be wise for the teacher to find out how this practice fits into the overall social and cultural life of the societies that subscribe to it. In engaging the student, it will be necessary for the teacher to get at the underlying values that this practice is meant to uphold. Are there any of these that we (the teacher's moral tradition) share? How is this practice supposed to address those concerns? Finally, if this engagement is to help students to come to a better view, one thing a teacher can do is offer as a real possibility a different way of life able to address the deepest interests and concerns of her students which at the same time is able to avoid hurting people. In other words, the teacher must help

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\(^{19}\) Lovibond (1983) describes this as "switching from a participant to an objective attitude towards that person." (p. 178)
the student recognize the possibility of a meaningful way of life that does not involve hurting women through female circumcision. It is important that the teacher does this not in a challenging and judgmental way yet at the same time modeling a firm commitment to standards of clarity and consistency. If students are not open to this kind of engagement and the moral reasoning it seeks to promote, it will be the teacher's job to (patiently) show students why they should be so engaged. By practising this approach as well as teaching it, the moral educator exemplifies the moral practice he or she promotes, helping students to see the relevance and significance of these practices to a particular moral life. This non-aggressive approach to education through conceptual clarification does not require that the teacher allow students to behave in ways we do not find acceptable in our society, rather it seeks to apply the same non-arbitrary standards to the all moral views and practices, our own as well as those of others.

This fitting use of 'modeling' as a teaching method, together with its capacity to teach moral ideal concepts without indoctrinating, means that TMC can help students to develop meaningful private moral values. In this way, it addresses up front the concern for character development and personal moral ideals—those things that help to complete the meaningful moral life of an individual. Thus, my conception of teaching moral concepts meets all the criteria set out for a solution to the problem of moral education in a pluralistic society.
Chapter Six

CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTS

Introduction

I have sought to solve the problem of moral education in a pluralistic society by reconciling pluralism and education in a conception of moral education that is explicated by my vision of the contexted teaching of moral concepts. In articulating this view, I seek to tell a reasonable and promising story of how an individual moral life is led from the very beginning, and how moral change and growth can be understood from the point of view of the individual seeking it, the educator seeking to foster it and the society seeking both.

Having come to the end of my project, I realize that the context of diversity, and the challenges it has posed, has provided the occasion for me to deepen my understanding of the open-textured concept of moral education (doubly open-textured because both the concept of morality and the concept of education are open-textured). In the course of seeking an improved perception of the practice of moral education, I have myself used the approach of conceptual clarification in this thesis. My strategy has been to enrich my conception of moral education by explicating it with a conception of the embedded teaching of moral concepts. Whether, and the extent to which, I have succeeded in taking a step toward my aim is open for review. It also appears to me that this context of diversity, together with the concerns of education and human flourishing (a root concern of morality), is what has led us to develop the notion of, and at the same time a commitment to, pluralism. If I am right about this—that common concerns are at the root of these concepts—then the aim of my project (reconciling the values of pluralism and education) is a natural one.

In explicating the concept of moral education with my view of teaching moral concepts, I have tried to show the appropriate place of concept teaching in the larger enterprise of moral education. While concepts and language have been highlighted, I believe that my view, exactly because it is rooted in something larger, escapes the potential failings of narrowly concerned, conceptually focused approaches. This embeddedness is a virtue from both the perspectives of theory and of practice. In fact, my concern
has been to bring the theoretical insights of moral philosophy to a philosophy of moral education that can guide classroom practice.

In what follows, I will endeavour to summarize and highlight my conception, touching on how it affects some central problems and reflecting on what new questions and challenges it opens up for us. It will be clear that while I paint a seemingly idealistic picture of the possibilities of moral education, educators who wish to bring this vision to realization will need untold patience, resourceful effort, committed perseverance and profound trust.

Summary

Moral education is never easy but doing it in a context of diverse cultural, traditional, religious and experiential backgrounds emphasizes certain particular problems. On top of the fact of diversity our context includes a commitment to pluralism. The kinds of difficulties that arise in this context are various. There are practical-technical concerns as well as concerns about how we should view this enterprise given our commitment to both pluralism and education. The work of this thesis addresses the latter concerns.

Rather than weighing the concerns on each side and deciding which ones are more important—thus justifying the neglect of the other—I have sought a different kind of solution. My challenge was to propose a conception of moral education able to harmonize these relevant concerns. It had to address educational concerns for excellence, be morally conscientious and virtuous, and provide a way to conceive of sensitive response to diverse moral views and practices that often come into conflict.

I began by sketching a vision of the broad aim of moral education in a pluralistic society that will form the background understanding unifying my work. I argued that this aim is to help every student to be a sincere participant in the moral community. It is to help each of them to find meaning in this participation and to be committed members capable of critical engagement. Thus, it must address both the concerns of Sittlichkeit and Moralität.

In seeking to give a more concrete educational articulation of this broad aim, I propose a framework for understanding the components of moral learning and how they are related to each other and to the usual concerns in moral education. This framework model brings together the concerns for moral reasoning, moral feelings, moral character and moral perception, showing how each of these
contributes to moral life as a whole. In this framework, I propose that educators attend to the relevant conceptual resources, practices or ways of life, and discipline needed for moral living and I argue for the centrality of moral receptions (and the primacy of moral perception) to understanding the dynamics of moral life.

In chapter three, I examine the link between moral language and the components of moral learning in the framework. I argue that our capacity for language is deeply implicated in all our morally relevant capacities. Both language and morality depend on our social nature. To play a moral language-game one must not only have acquired the linguistic forms involved, one must also know how their expression relates to the social practices of which they are a part. In particular, language is a primary influence on the concepts we have for moral perception. Thus, I argue, educational effort here has the potential to significantly influence the growth of moral learning and sensitivity.

In particular, moral concepts would seem to be central to the very possibility of moral perception—that is, of seeing from the moral point of view. In chapter four, I investigated the nature of moral concepts, arguing that they are open-textured. Moreover, an understanding of the dimensions of this open-texture reveals that moral concepts can be understood with increasing depth. It reveals how different kinds of moral conflicts can be understood as rooted in disagreements over what are relevant concerns, over the rationale and/or explication of moral concepts, and over the very applicability of a moral concept to a situation.

Given this understanding of the open-texture of moral concepts, I propose a conception of teaching these concepts that views the introduction and clarification of moral concepts in context as its central goal. It depicts this practice as embedded in moral life according to the possibilities of moral learning proposed by the framework. In particular, I argue that it is important for teachers to help students to acquire a working rationale for each of their moral concepts together with the understanding, openness, commitment and discipline required to continuously deepen their understanding of this rationale and sensitively articulate it in new moral situations.
The problems of moral education in a pluralistic society illuminated

It begins at the beginning. Over-emphasis on the rational aspect of moral being, which perhaps came as a response to the problem of indoctrination, made it appear that we could not morally educate children until their "rational capacities were fully developed." This views rationality as a "naturally" emerging trait in human beings, independent of social human influences such as education and socialization. My broad view of moral education proposes that it must begin much earlier and should be seen as beginning with the first human interactions--as soon as a separate human being exists for us to interact with in human ways, for us to have personal relations with.

In keeping with our liberal democratic concern for autonomy and freedom, my view of moral education offers us access to a deepened understanding of the inadequacies of indoctrination. Not only would it be against our independent concern for autonomy and freedom but, on my view, indoctrinated moral views would fail to be fully moral views. Not only is it that an indoctrinated person would not be able to critically participate in our moral community and fail, therefore, to be a moral agent, but he or she would be incapable of grasping moral concepts fully (in all their open-texture) or using them to perceive morally—that is, to achieve moral perceptions. On my view, no paradox exists. Indoctrination and other anti-rational, anti-critical approaches are not even tempting.

In fact, this view helps us to understand more deeply the meaningfulness of our values of autonomy and freedom. That moral perceptions must be achieved by each individual through the sensitive use of moral concepts as he or she faces moral situations, is premised on autonomous responsibility. That each individual, in living a moral life, helps to sustain the moral life of the community and is responsible for critically assessing this life and contributing to its change and improvement, is premised on freedom.

The view I propose also brings together the concerns for moral reasoning, moral feelings and moral action in a way that allows us to legitimately pursue all of them, in concert. No more do we need to abandon the others in order to justify the pursuit of any one, or sacrifice the others in order to adequately

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1I take indoctrination to be essentially based on outcome. That is, we distinguish indoctrination by defining the nature of the outcomes it produces, tends to produce or seeks to produce. Indoctrinated beliefs are characterized by unquestioning adherence and a tendency to ignore views and evidence to the contrary, and a disposition not to revise those beliefs in light of available evidence. This view is proposed and defended by Coombs (1985)
achieve one—indeed, on my view, we cannot. We can see character education and critical reasoning not only as compatible and harmonious but as mutually dependent if they are to contribute to moral education broadly conceived. To acquire moral concepts as critical resources for seeing and thinking about moral situations is to develop a certain kind of character; on the other hand, without using critical moral resources, a person would have no way to exhibit moral character. For example, to be a morally sensitive and responsible person requires that one have the moral concepts for articulating one's moral concerns in context. Without such concepts, a person would not be able to respond appropriately to the needs and interests of others. On the other hand, having the concepts but having no desire, inclination or will to use them when relevant is not to have them as living critical resources. If the resources are not activated by our character, they are but lifeless artifacts, not the moral concepts that are the object of my conception of TMC. They are not the open-textured concepts we can understand with increasing depth, instead they are untextured and dimensionless.

Moreover, it is this artificial division of these concerns—for critical reasoning and for character—that has made it so difficult to address our concern for commitment. The problem of how education can influence commitment is partially demystified by the illumination of the notion of meaningfulness as well as the notions of discipline and inspiration. By connecting abstract beliefs and views to the life of individuals through their concrete perceptions and experiences of the world, and showing how through discipline and inspiration we can help students to acquire their conceptual resources in this way, my view begins to illuminate the possibilities for educational influence on commitment.

The problem of commitment is especially poignant in multicultural societies such as ours where children are often torn between their commitments to two different (moral) cultural traditions. Where traditions are seen as competing for allegiance, commitment to any one can put a person in the position of conflict with those committed to a different one. Many people have chosen to take on a naïve-relativistic stance because of this. In order to avoid being intolerant, or being viewed as intolerant, people will espouse a relativistic view at the same time that they vigorously commit to one tradition. Any inconsistency between these two positions is scrupulously avoided.
To avoid such relativistic escapes and still address this concern for commitment, we must help students to understand across cultures. That is, we must help students to find the common ground that links all viable human cultures, a place where different traditions are not in competition for their commitments. Once some common ground is found, it will be possible to build bridges for understanding between traditions so that different commitments at a more superficial level will less likely be considered an occasion for oppositional conflict—at least not the kind of conflict that destroys community.

But I speak too hastily. Perceiving our common humanity can be achieved generally, but it is more the cumulative outcome of many separate instances of coming to see the common ground we share with particular others than it is a once-and-for-all-time perception of our common humanity. So education must seek to give students chances to repeatedly experience this. Sometimes this will require giving students chances to have certain new experiences that will give them the background needed to meaningfully grasp an otherwise alien concept. They can then compare it with familiar ones to find the common roots. Being open to having these experiences will be an important quality to encourage. For this reason, the primary concern of education should not be to make sure students understand across all cultures, but, through helping them to understand across some cultures, to nurture the capacities, dispositions and commitments—the resources, practices, orientations and discipline—required to understand across cultures when they need to or when they want to. And as I have indicated, this involves learning a basic set of moral concepts and learning to continuously enrich one's understanding of them as one applies them in new experiences.

So far I have talked mainly about what is possible. This is the purpose of philosophy, the practical importance of which is too often missed by non-philosophers. I want to argue that seeing what is possible is not just something for idealists to dream about. While it does not directly address some of the problems that practitioners often face in their classrooms, by helping the educator to see clearly where the root(s) of problems lie, it does provide important educational insights as to where appropriate avenues of

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2Here I do not mean to imply that we can know precisely what this common ground is, or that there is a precise piece of common ground. Our understanding of our commonality is itself changeable and open to deepening. Nor is it the case that when we do have a sense of our commonality, we need be able to clearly articulate that sense. But neither of these qualifications weakens the significance of having this sense.
amelioration might lie. For example, one kind of problem that practitioners often pose for philosophers of education can be traced to the entrenched nature of the beliefs and practices that students often already have. When these beliefs and practices are of the sort that not only hinder growth but are positively objectionable or reprehensible, practitioners want to know how concept teaching, as I have conceived of it, is supposed to help them to teach such students better. For example, what is one to do with such entrenched negative attitudes as racism, caused by entrenched bad habits such as always looking at others through rigid stereotypes, and inattentive (lazy or half-sleeping) ways of proceeding such as adhering blindly to one interpretation of one moral code and 'solving' moral dilemmas with prudential rather than moral considerations? Such problems have no easy solutions. Each case must be assessed in terms of the concepts the students have, the ones they tend to use and the way they use them. The entrenched nature of their beliefs and views have to do with the way they are using their resources, but often these same students also have minimal understanding of conceptual resources that can open their eyes to the limited nature of their perceptions, if only we could get them out of the rut their habits have created. This requires discipline which can often be given an initial boost by inspiration. If change is to be meaningful—the more meaningful that we can make it, the more effort students will be willing to put into disciplining themselves out of their entrenched beliefs, views and practices—we must help students to see the shortcomings of their previously held views and ways by helping them to acquire or deepen their understanding of relevant moral concepts through experience, rather than imposing what we consider to be more enlightened views on them. The more entrenched the beliefs and views, the more patience and persistence will be required of the teacher to awakening or reawakening the moral spirit in such persons; it is not easy to get out of deep holes.

Some further comments

Because my conception of TMC is offered as an explication of my conception of moral education, it is embedded in a way of viewing moral education that has certain implications for its practice. In particular, I want to note how well this practice would fit in with a view of schools as microcosms of the larger society. If we look at schools in this way, then the practice of TMC can be viewed as part of an effort to create a moral community in the classroom. This view provides new challenges to teachers. In
particular, there is the challenge of creating a moral atmosphere in the classroom where each student can feel included and accepted as an integral member. Democratic values and principles naturally find affinity with the aim of educating for moral participation as I have describe it. We know that it is possible to superficially abide by these principles without making their practice a meaningful part of the educational process. It will be a challenge for teachers and researchers to find ways to integrate democratic styles with the practice of TMC so as to improve the chances of successfully educating students to be mature moral participants in their moral communities.

Each student can be seen to potentially belong to various moral communities ranging in size and association from local to global. The global education movement has been described as trying to educate students to be participants in a global moral community. The idea that students will become participants by being given a chance to participate, together with the idea that schools are, and should be, continuous with, rather than isolated from, larger communities, support the premise that helping students to be moral participants of their classroom community is an appropriate approach to helping students to extend their participation to the larger communities to which they belong. The wisdom of this approach is documented in the classical Chinese essay called "The Great Learning". It claims that

The ancient who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. When things are investigated knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world.

This text provides an ancient vision of how moral education links individual moral being to participation in moral communities of various sorts and how this can be achieved in practice. In keeping with its

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This essay is considered with three others to be one of the "Four Books" that constitute the core of Confucian teaching. Its date and authorship are contentious issues in the field but it has been attributed to authors who lived between 500 and 200 B.C. (Chan, 1973, p. 85)
wisdom, I believe that building a global moral community must begin with cultivating moral beings who can participate in the building of local moral communities. These local communities in turn participate in building regional moral communities contributing to national communities and ultimately to a global moral community. We will only know how to build such a moral community with people very different from ourselves if we can first build it with those less different and extend our sensitivities from there. Further investigation into how this vision should inform global education programs is needed. The ordering is a logical one which has ramifications for the temporal ordering of practice that are not necessarily straightforward. As Hamlyn has argued with respect to learning concepts, "where having one concept presupposes having another this has no necessary consequences for the temporal order of their acquisition, except that if A logically presupposes B one cannot be said to have A in the full sense before having B in the full sense." More research needs to be done to see precisely what are the practical implications of this for learning to be a participant of the various moral communities.

In particular, the view proposed in this dissertation has certain implications for cross-cultural studies. It clearly suggests that one of the most significant goals of cross-cultural studies should be helping students to learn about others to better understand and live with them. To this end, one of its main purposes must be to help students to appreciate the various ways in which common concerns can be articulated in life. It will be able to do this by using difference to teach about commonality so that students can see with depth and by helping students to gain a strong sense of commonality from which sturdy bridges can be built between disparate cultures. In particular, cross-cultural studies can help us to see that different moral traditions are not as alien as they may at first seem by helping us to understand how historical, social and environmental contexts can affect the concrete, historically articulated moral views of different peoples. This kind of understanding can serve to enrich our understanding of moral concepts. But it will work best when the scope of the studies is adjusted in light of the students' other learning. For example, if too many details about differences are studied before students have some stable sense of human commonality, cross-cultural studies could end up feeding fear rather than fostering appreciation.

5Hamlyn, 46.
Cross-cultural studies have also been thought to aid in promoting open-mindedness. The essential importance of this orientation is reaffirmed by my conceptions of moral education and TMC. Moreover, my conceptions renew the challenge to the educator to avoid causing narrow-mindedness and to nurture a moral maturity where open-mindedness, the critical spirit and critical resources work together to produce sensitive moral perceptions for moral living. My conception of TMC can help educators to see how seeking this aim might be conceived of in practice. It can not only give them a sense of the possibilities but also enrich their understanding of the significance of open-mindedness to moral learning. While further work needs to be done to discover the probabilities for different specific teaching activities, this enriched understanding can serve to better guide us in this endeavour.

Finally, my conception of moral education and TMC has serious implications for teacher education. It has been argued that teaching is a moral enterprise. Given my arguments in this dissertation, the moral dimension of teaching is deeper than is simply implied by the fact that teachers interact personally and socially with their students and so enter relations with them that fall properly within the moral domain. It is deeper than is implied by the fact that teachers are in positions of superior power with respect to students and so must be careful not to abuse that power. I take schools and teaching to be primarily concerned with education and education to be concerned with the interdependent goals of human survival and human flourishing. In this way, teaching is a moral enterprise because its specific goals are part of a larger, morally significant aim. The role that teacher education programs should (and can) take in preparing teachers for such an enterprise must be further investigated.

Teachers need to be aware of their moral influence on students. They must come to understand that whatever subject they are teaching, their actions—their responses to morally significant situations—are witnessed by students. Their position of authority highlights their views and responses in a way that can have transforming significance for students—while this is especially obvious in the case of younger students, it is possible for the influence to be just as strong if not stronger at other crucial points in students' lives. We know that we teach students not only propositional knowledge but practices and ways of proceeding as well. Our views and responses call students' attention to certain things while bypassing others. Furthermore, since there is no way to teach without espousing and assuming values, teachers who
take a naïve relativistic stance can unreflectively and haphazardly indoctrinate their students in their own personal values. Their relativistic view not only frees them from addressing moral values responsibly—since this is not possible on such a view—but it frees them to "commit" uncritically to whatever values they happen to fancy.

Thus it is important for teachers to understand that they are moral influences whether they wish to be or not. If we want them to be good (moral) educators, able to help students to learn moral concepts in a way that allows them to be critical participants in their moral community then we must ensure that teachers themselves are reflective and critical moral participants. This does not mean that we must ensure that they take particular moral stances. If, however, we find that their moral stances demonstrate a lack of critical resources and/or a disinclination toward reflective and sensitive practices, then their particular moral stances must be considered relevant to our assessment of them as educators. The issue of how to deal with a teacher who opposes pluralism is an important moral issue in the field of moral education. It is not an easy issue to resolve and its resolution will reflect the values of our moral community. We must be careful to address these problems with moral sensitivity, neither allowing ourselves to slide into naïve relativism nor dogmatic absolutism. The vision guiding us—that of creating a pluralistic moral community—holds a unique promise for moral living, one well worth our exceptional efforts to bring to fruition and one that we abandon to the peril of our deepest moral commitments and to the serious diminution of our own view of our best selves. We should not be surprised that such an important project will often require, individually and collectively, our extraordinary effort. It follows naturally that teacher education programs should come to reflect this concern if we want moral education, as I have conceived it, to have a chance at success.

Conclusion

By showing the fitting place of moral language learning and, in particular, the teaching and learning of moral concepts in a conception of moral education sensitive to the concerns of pluralism and education, I hope to engender understanding that will help teachers to direct their efforts in moral education more cogently and productively. Understanding the open-texture of moral concepts has serious implications for our view of what it means to teach them as well as what it means to use them in moral
living. I have argued that this understanding has the potential to transform our whole view of the enterprise of moral education in a morally and educationally significant way. It poses a great challenge to each of us as special contributors to the maintenance and betterment of our moral community.
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