PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND COMPULSORY LIBERAL EDUCATION

by

YOLANDE MARY PARTRIDGE

B.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 1972
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1976

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Faculty of Education)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
December 1979

© Yolande Mary Partridge, 1979
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Education

The University of British Columbia
2075 Wesbrook Place
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1W5

Date Dec. 27, 1979
ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to justify on paternalistic grounds the compulsory imposition of liberal education on children. In opposition to the increasingly influential views of many educational theorists in the "sociologist of knowledge" tradition, it is argued that liberal education benefits students because it contributes towards the development of personal autonomy. Personal autonomy is accepted as both an extrinsic and an intrinsic good, and its development is taken as the most defensible aim of compulsory education.

Because compulsory education clearly violates a student's *prima facie* right to non-interference, the thesis considers the kinds of cases in which the right to non-interference can be justifiably overridden. It presents an argument for the justification of paternalistic intervention based on the forfeiture of rights through consent. Because this argument permits us to impose an enormous range of studies and activities on students, some criterion is required to help us choose curricular components. The development of personal autonomy is chosen as that criterion.

Three conditions are taken as necessary for the presence of personal autonomy: freedom of choice, rational reflection, and strength of will. Breadth and depth of knowledge in the traditional disciplines are considered necessary for satisfying the rational-reflection condition of autonomy, and compulsory liberal education is taken as the best way to help students obtain breadth and depth of knowledge.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  LIBERAL EDUCATION</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II  NON-INTERFERENCE</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Right to Non-Interference</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overriding the Right to Non-Interference</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Enforcement of Morality</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Preventing Harm to Others</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Cases of Consenting to the Forfeiture of a Right</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Justifying Paternalism</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III PERSONAL AUTONOMY</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Meaning of 'Personal Autonomy'</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Freedom of Choice</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Rational Reflection</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Strength of Will</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Value of Personal Autonomy</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rival Candidates</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV AUTONOMY AND COMPULSORY LIBERAL EDUCATION</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. White's Proposals</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Specific Components</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Objections to White's Components</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Liberal Components and Personal Autonomy</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Dr. Jerrold Coombs, Dr. Le Roi Daniels, and Dr. Murray Elliott for their generous assistance in the preparation of this thesis.
INTRODUCTION

Many educators question the value of a traditional liberal arts curriculum for students. Some propound the view that children should study only what they want to study. The purpose of this thesis is to justify from a purely paternalistic point of view the imposition of a compulsory liberal arts curriculum on students in school.

The grounds on which people argue about what should be taught in schools are numerous and varied. Sometimes they argue from considerations concerning the promotion of worthwhile states of mind as, for example, do Paul Hirst and R. S. Peters. Others, such as John White, emphasize the promotion of personal autonomy. Still others suggest that the initiation of students into the traditional disciplines is undesirable because it leads to the suppression of lower socio-economic groups by the established order. One notices, however, a common thread among most of the discussions about what should be taught in schools: it is the belief that course content should be determined with students' best interests in mind. Hence, the whole enterprise of education may be viewed as paternalistic in nature.

Any interference in people's lives—paternalistic or otherwise—needs to be justified. Chapter one is a brief, selected survey of the literature for and against the imposition of a liberal arts curriculum on students. Chapter two is an attempt to establish conditions under which an individual's prima facie right to non-interference
may be overridden. I conclude in chapter two that there are good
grounds for viewing many kinds of educational interference in chil-
dren's lives as morally permissible—a rather uninteresting conclusion
in itself, but a necessary piece of groundwork if we accept that every-
one has a *prima facie* right to non-interference.

Because I am advocating a compulsory liberal arts curriculum
from the point of view of students' best interests, our beliefs about
what it is worthwhile for children to learn must be examined. This
is the task of chapter three. There I suggest that in the absence
of conclusive arguments to show that any particular pursuit simply *is*
more worthwhile than any other, people ought to be allowed (from the
purely self-regarding point of view) to be their own final judges of
what is worth pursuing and what is not. Non-autonomous persons, how-
ever, are not in a very good position to judge for themselves what is
worth pursuing and what is not. Personal autonomy, I suggest, is
almost always extrinsically worthwhile for everyone; *i.e.*, it is a
universal instrumentality in the Rawlsian sense. In chapter four I
argue that a liberal arts curriculum is of major importance in helping
students become autonomous persons, and in chapter five some practical
implications of the study are considered.

It should be made clear that I am not necessarily defending
institutionalized state intervention in the lives of children for
educational purposes, although I think a good defence can be made for
such intervention. Instead, I am defending the imposition of certain
kinds of learnings (for want of a better term) on children. To ask
whether the state has the right to compel students to go to school is to ask a question about the source of the authority of the state, an issue I do not explore. My justification for a liberal arts curriculum is intended to hold whether or not the state has very much authority and whether or not there is a state at all. Even if there were no government as we know it, we could propose components for a compulsory educational curriculum to guide whomever undertook the education of students.

Nor do I argue the case that we are morally required to educate children in the way that we are morally required to perform some paternalistic acts for children such as feeding, clothing, and housing them. But such a case could, I think, be argued successfully.

My arguments in favor of a compulsory liberal arts curriculum are, of course, *prima facie* arguments--not conclusive ones. The distinction between *prima facie* argument and conclusive argument is a distinction I borrow from Brian Barry (1965, pp. 31-32). Barry says that an argument in favor of X is not a conclusive one when it could be overridden by other more important considerations (which ordinarily occur only in abnormal circumstances). Although it can be overridden, a *prima facie* argument is an argument that purports to be, under normal conditions, the most important and significant argument.

Although I am trying to justify a compulsory liberal arts education, it should be pointed out that compulsion does not imply coercion. Many classroom teachers regularly impose compulsory activities on students without ever resorting to the use of coercive techniques.
such as threats, bribes, and punishments. To what extent and under what circumstances the use of coercive techniques is morally permissible is a question I shall have to leave aside. In other words, I am not here concerned with exploring effective means for ensuring curriculum implementation, but with establishing, as far as possible, what ought to constitute the content of a compulsory curriculum.

In various places throughout the thesis I refer to the justification of compulsory liberal education and to the justification of paternalistic interference. In chapter three I try to justify our adoption of personal autonomy as a personal ideal. The concern of this thesis is not, of course, with the meaning of 'justification' but with the task of justifying—i.e., with finding the actual reasons for the judgments and actions with which we are concerned.* It may be thought that the task of justifying, as opposed to talking about the notion of justification, is an undertaking that cannot be fruitfully conducted until all conceptual confusions have been cleared away. But this is an extreme and, I think, untenable position. Although the business of conceptual analysis is prior to the enterprise of justification in the sense that we have a better chance of doing a good job of justification after the relevant conceptual problems have been cleared away, one who is interested in justification need analyze only those concepts which are essential to making his case. That is, he needs to resolve

*For a useful discussion of the meaning of 'justification' see Paul Taylor's Normative Discourse, pp. 68-188.
only those conceptual confusions which stand in the way of his developing an adequate justification.

Although I emphasize the rather obvious distinction between justifying a value judgment and talking about what it means to justify a value judgment, I am aware that one is unlikely to develop an adequate justification without some conception of what an adequate justification consists of. Consequently, I have adopted the criteria of adequate justification presented by Benn and Peters. These criteria are relatively non-controversial and accord with the average person's intuition of what counts as a good justification. The criteria state that any restraint must stand up to objections of the following types:

(i) in the case of a particular application of restraint, that the act in question infringes no rule;
(ii) in the case of a general application of restraint, by a rule,
   1. that the object of the rule is bad;
   2. that while the object of the rule is good, the means proposed cannot reasonably be expected to attain it;
   3. that though the object is good, and the proposed means would secure it, it is not of sufficient importance to warrant the degree of restraint proposed.

(1959, p. 262)

As Benn and Peters point out, these are formal principles rather than guides for conduct. In applying formal principles the substantive details must be supplied. The substantive details include the proposed conduct, the attendant circumstances, and an evaluation of the object of the proposed restraint. We shall turn to those details very shortly.

In ontological disputes there is a distinction that is made
between questions about what there is and questions about what a
given statement or theory says there is. Quine points out that
although it is little wonder that ontological controversy should tend
into controversy over language (we withdraw to the semantical plane
in order to find common ground on which to argue), we must not jump
to the conclusion that what there is depends on words. He says:

Translatability of a question into semantical terms is no
indication that the question is linguistic. To see Naples
is to bear a name which, when prefixed to the words 'sees Naples', yields a true sentence; still there is nothing
linguistic about seeing Naples.

(Quine, 1961, p. 16)

Somewhat similarly, questions about what we ought to teach in schools
are not essentially linguistic questions. No amount of analysis of
the meanings of words will relieve us of the burden of making one
value judgment over another in the end. The concern of this thesis
is not with the meta-question of what it means to make a value judg­
ment but with making and defending one. This is not to suggest, of
course, that the reader will find no analysis of key concepts in the
thesis. A lengthy analysis of the notion of personal autonomy, for
example, forms a central part of the thesis on which the success of
the larger work depends.

The task of justifying the compulsory imposition of a liberal
arts curriculum on paternalistic grounds is, I believe, a very
important one. For one thing, the justification of paternalistic
interference has been a highly neglected area in philosophy. One
would think this topic should be of central concern to philosophers
of education, yet so far very little has been published on it. In
this thesis, an argument for paternalistic interference based on the forfeiture of rights is presented. If it is successful it may help to fill this gap in the educational literature. But there are other gaps which, in the process of offering a justification for liberal studies, the thesis helps to fill as well. Very little has been written analyzing the notion of personal autonomy—another topic which, one would think, ought to be of central concern to philosophers of education. In the thesis, a fairly detailed analysis of that concept is presented. In addition, some important arguments are brought forward against the view that liberal studies necessarily introduce or re-enforce bias because they are the tools of the power elite. These arguments are important because the view that alternative rationalities are possible seems to be gaining in popularity and influence, and it is, I believe, an ill-founded view.

It may be helpful to the reader if the argument of the thesis is summarized in advance. That way, the central parts of the thesis can be kept in focus as the reader proceeds. The argument has six major premises:

1. An individual's *prima facie* right to non-interference can be overridden when the following conditions hold:
   (a) The individual consents to forfeit his right and his consent is not caused by the interference nor is it the result of his being irrational, i.e., having distorted beliefs, irrational compulsions and the like.
   or

   There is a reasonable expectation that the individual would consent in the future if he were rational and in possession of the information relevant to justifying the interference.

   (b) The interference promotes the good of the individual in some way, this good is more significant than the harm resulting from the interference, and the interference is either necessary to or is the best way of promoting the good.
(c) The interference is not morally objectionable on grounds other than its infringing the right to non-interference.

2. Because the imposition of a wide variety of studies and activities (including liberal studies) could meet the conditions specified in (1) above, and since any curriculum can accommodate only a limited number of studies and activities, some criterion is needed for identifying the most significant goods to be promoted for students.

3. The development of personal autonomy is the good to be promoted by compelling students to study the liberal arts. It is assumed that such development is sufficiently valuable to outweigh any harm that is likely to result from compelling students to take liberal arts studies. (Freedom of will, rational reflection, and strength of will are taken as necessary conditions for personal autonomy.)

4. The development of personal autonomy is a more desirable or significant educational objective than any other that might be secured by imposing other sorts of studies. It is assumed that there is little reason to believe that the activities excluded by the imposition of liberal studies are logically or empirically necessary to the development of autonomy.

5. A liberal arts curriculum, when taken as a set of attainments, is necessary to the development of personal autonomy because it is necessary to the development of rational reflection, i.e., it is not possible to secure any significant degree of rational reflection without such attainments.

6. A liberal arts curriculum, when taken not as a set of attainments but as a set of courses of study (taught by whatever methods are deemed effective and desirable), is the best way of achieving rational reflection.

Therefore, we are justified in imposing liberal arts curriculum on students for their own good.
CHAPTER I

LIBERAL EDUCATION

The boundaries of liberal education are loosely defined, but as Hirst has suggested, whatever else a liberal education is, it is not a vocational education, not an exclusively scientific education, and not a specialist education in any sense. Hirst argues, however, that the meaning of 'liberal education' is not entirely negatively derived, and that there is a positive concept of liberal education based fairly and squarely on the nature of knowledge itself (Hirst, 1975, p. 30). I shall argue later that Hirst's delineation of the forms of knowledge does not provide us with a justification for the compulsory imposition of a liberal arts curriculum on students, but I shall rely largely on this delineation to help pick out the kind of curriculum I wish to justify. Such a curriculum includes the study of mathematics, science, the arts, history, and philosophy. One might argue whether history, for example, is a necessary part of a liberal arts curriculum, or whether there is such a thing as religious knowledge that ought to receive attention as well. These are important issues but they need not be resolved before we attempt to justify imposing a curriculum on students that consists largely of the humanities, mathematics, and science, rather than vocational or technical training. In so far as a traditional academic curriculum
can be distinguished from a vocational or technical curriculum, a fairly loose interpretation of liberal education should not be problematic.

Neither the idea that a liberal education in some way frees the mind nor the idea that a liberal education should be compulsory for all students is new. In his *Republic* Plato advocates the compulsory imposition of something like a liberal education on students. All students, he believed, should be taught reading, writing, poetry and drama (highly censored for younger students), and gymnastics. Students would then branch out, depending on their natural abilities, to pursue the military art or the sciences and dialectic—the search for a fundamental principle that explains all of reality. Eventually each student would be sent into the state to perform the functions best suited to his abilities. Plato has a three-part justification for his theory of education based on ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological concerns:

1. He holds that the just state and the just individual are good.

   The goodness of a member of a class is the resemblance between it and its form—i.e., its Idea which exists in a supernatural realm. The Form of human beings is the pattern into which the parts of the soul fall when each is fully developed. The Form of the state is the pattern into which the parts of the state fall when each part performs its proper function. In so far as the individual comes to resemble the Form of humanity he is good and just, and in so far as the state comes to resemble the form of states
it is good and just as well. Plato's education system was designed to achieve Goodness in both the individual and the State.

2. Plato held that to some extent no individual can help but possess the three abilities of reason, appetite, and spirit, and no state can help but perform the three functions of legislation, economic production and distribution, and law enforcement. These abilities and functions, he believed, are required by the supernatural Forms. Hence Plato has a metaphysical explanation for the facts about human nature and society upon which he rests his educational recommendations.

3. Plato held that we cannot know the world of sense experience; we can know only the Forms in their logical connections. The entire realm of becoming is a copy of the supernatural realm of the forms. Thus the pursuit of knowledge is not an infallible guide to Reality, but it is better than relying on mere opinion, prejudice, and superstition.

Although this brief summary of the grounds on which Plato justified liberal education hardly does justice to his theory, few would attempt to support a compulsory liberal education for students today with doctrines of metaphysical and epistemological Realism like those of Plato. When we say today that someone has a Platonic notion of education we usually mean either than he has a preconceived notion of the Good which a particular kind of education helps one to obtain, or that the enterprise of education ought to be conducted by
hierarchically sorting students into appropriate slots.

In the fourth century, St. Augustine made another significant attempt to justify liberal education. Augustine proposed universal compulsory liberal education as the means for achieving salvation. He included the study of philosophy and theology in his curriculum for only the most rational students—those destined for positions in the church—because he held that the only requirement for salvation is true belief (not knowledge) about the nature and order of the universe and about God's relation to man. Augustine believed that the liberal arts should be taught in an authoritative manner because true belief can be most efficiently achieved through indoctrination.

There have been many variations throughout the centuries on the Christian justification for liberal education introduced by Augustine, but significant and interesting secular attempts to justify compulsory liberal education have not been advanced until modern times. Of these I shall briefly discuss the positions of Philip Phenix in Realms of Meaning (1964), Paul Hirst in "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge" (1974, pp. 30-53), and Robin Barrow in Common Sense and the Curriculum (1976). In restricting the discussion to the works of philosophers, I shall not discuss such well known defenses of liberal education as the Harvard Committee Report: General Education in a Free Society (1946), but this is not to suggest that no valuable insights are contained in that report or others like it.

Philip Phenix argues that there is a finite number of ways in which human beings order their experiences in the world. He says the
distinct realms through which experience becomes meaningful are symbolics, empirics, esthetics, synnoetics (personal knowledge), ethics, and synoptics. Each realm has its own subdivisions. Symbolics and synoptics are subdivided as follows:

- **Symbolics**
  - Ordinary language
  - Mathematics
  - Nondiscursive symbolic forms (signals, bodily gestures, ritual, dreams, etc.)

- **Synoptics**
  - History
  - Religion
  - Philosophy

It is Phenix's position, very roughly, that children ought to be initiated into all six realms *for the simple reason* that human experience becomes meaningful through these and only these perspectives. It is desirable, holds Phenix, that human experience be meaningful, i.e., that destructive skepticism, depersonalization, and alienation are counteracted. The way to achieve this aim, supposedly, is by initiation into the six basic realms of meaning. Phenix's position is interesting and worthy of attention, but we shall have to reject it as a guide for picking out curricular components for at least three reasons:

1. It is not clear that Phenix is correct in his claim that there are six and only six realms of meaning and that their differences have been articulated correctly.

2. Even if there were only six realms of meaning, what reason could
there be for imposing all six realms on students? Why must every student learn to order his experience in all six ways? Phenix does not really offer us an answer to this question. Initiation into the realms of meaning is, for Phenix, more like an unquestioned starting point than anything else.

3. Phenix seems to assume that initiation into the realms of meaning is the solution—or at least a major part of the solution—to the problems of destructive skepticism, depersonalization, and psychological alienation. This is, I think, an untenable position. The claim that one's mental health improves in direct proportion to one's acquisition of knowledge is, to say the least, a little rash. Either it is a questionable empirical generalization or it presupposes a notion of mental health we need not accept.

Similar in many ways to Phenix's categorization of realms of meaning is Hirst's categorization of forms of knowledge. Hirst has argued that all the knowledge we have can be broken up into logically distinct categories: mathematics, science (physical science), aesthetics, personal knowledge, morality, religion, philosophy, and history—although history is deleted from Hirst's later (1974) account. Hirst offers four necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for distinguishing a form of knowledge:

1. Each form of knowledge must have its own peculiar concepts.
2. Each form must have a distinct logical structure.
3. The statements of each form must be testable in some distinct way against experience.
4. Each form develops its own particular techniques for exploring
experience and testing the truth of its statements.

Parallel to Phenix's view that initiation into the realms of meaning enables the student to get "meaning" from experience in all possible ways, we have Hirst's view that the acquisition of knowledge is the development of mind itself. The same point is made, I think, in a different context by J. F. Bennett when he says "... a person's reality is largely an epistemic matter—how much there is of him is largely to be measured by how much he knows. . . ." (Bennett, 1975, p. 18). It could be argued that in so far as we value the development of mind we will value initiation into the logically distinct forms of knowledge. Who could be opposed to the development of mind? Objections arise, however, similar to those we made in considering Phenix's realms of meaning:

1. It is simply not clear that there are only seven (or eight) logically distinct forms of knowledge, nor is it clear that if there are distinct forms of knowledge they are in fact the ones that Hirst picks out. For example, many people think there is no such thing as religious knowledge. What grounds could there be for including religion in the list but not, say, transcendental meditation? I am not, of course, trying to claim that Hirst is wrong—only that he has not made his case, though since we are searching for good grounds on which to base a liberal education, it can really make no difference to us whether Hirst is wrong or whether he is right but simply has not made his case.
Either way, we are without good grounds on Hirst's account.*

2. Even if we were to accept Hirst's categorization as legitimate, we might question why we should initiate every student into all the forms of knowledge. Are there not some aspects of the mind we would want to develop more than others? If so, then we need some criterion for determining which forms of knowledge are more important than others. The task of chapter three is, in effect, to isolate that criterion, but rather than approach that task as an upshot of the limitations of Hirst's position, I approach it later from an entirely different angle.

Robin Barrow suggests that we pick out curricular content on a utilitarian basis. An activity, a pursuit, or a way of life is desirable, says Barrow, in so far as it promotes pleasure and minimizes pain. "But, in assessing the degree of pleasure promoted," he states, "we have to take account of the extent, intensity, duration and fecundity of pleasure" (Barrow, 1976, p. 92). The utilitarian hypothesis, he says, fits not only the facts of our experience but also our linguistic conventions. Barrow uses the maximization-of-pleasure principle to pick out compulsory curricular components not unlike traditional school curricula. The curriculum he proposes falls into four stages:

The primary stage involves health training, moral training, and the development of numeracy and literacy. The secondary stage involves initiation into the natural sciences, mathematics, the fine arts, history, literature and religion. The

*For further criticisms of Hirst's views see Elizabeth Hindness, "Forms of Knowledge," 1972.
tertiary stage involves the continued study of history and literature and the introduction of vocational and social studies—all as compulsory elements. In addition it is at this stage that a wide variety of options, such as classics, cookery, carpentry, modern languages and the continued study of such things as mathematics, the fine arts and the natural sciences, are made available. The quaternary stage adds philosophy as a compulsory study to the continuing programme of the tertiary stage.

(Barrow, 1976, p. 107)

We need not look at the details of the compulsory curriculum Barrow proposes because there are at least two reasons why the pleasure principle is unacceptable as a basis for prescribing curriculum content. The first is that even if we did accept the maximization of pleasure as our ultimate value it is a difficult (perhaps impossible) empirical problem to ascertain what things should be taught in schools in order to maximize the pleasure and minimize the pain in people's lives. Different people obtain pleasure in different ways. That difficulty, though, does not in itself amount to a very substantial objection to the utilitarian thesis because whatever basis our choices might have we can expect to face difficult empirical questions. The serious objection to the utilitarian thesis is that utility (happiness, pleasure, etc.) is not always our highest value, and we do not necessarily agree that we ought to accept it as such. If we really valued a way of life that is conducive to the maximization of pleasure above all else then we would have no objection to a Brave-New-World kind of existence. But in fact we have profound objections to Brave New World for the simple reason that there are some things we value above and beyond the maximization of pleasure—our personal autonomy, for example, about which I shall
have more to say later. So we must reject the utilitarian criterion for determining curriculum content and look for a more acceptable one.

Before proceeding with that task we should, perhaps, look briefly at some of the arguments adduced by those who oppose compulsory liberal education. Historically, there have been a number of philosophers—Locke and Dewey, for example—who have opposed universal, compulsory, liberal education. There is, however, little point in our trying to discuss all positions opposed to compulsory liberal education, so we will restrict ourselves to two influential contemporary views.

One such view is that course content should depend largely on student interest. Letting the curriculum be determined by student interest is sometimes considered the progressive thing to do. At least two responses can be made to this claim. First, no one is born with a particular parcel of interests. Interests arise as a result of the kinds of experiences we have in life. A child brought up with intellectually active people, surrounded by books and stimulating conversation, will probably have radically different interests from a child brought up in a home where beer and skittles provide the stimulation. The latter child may not be interested in the most creative achievements in art, music, literature, mathematics, science, and philosophy, but can't we as educators create interests where they didn't before exist? If we allow the curriculum to be determined by pupil interest alone, what chance does a child have of ever coming to know the richness of intellectual pursuits if he has not already been
somehow initiated outside the school? If, after he has come to know them, a child chooses to reject aesthetic and intellectual pursuits, I am sure we have no right to force our preferences on him; but should we not at least give children the opportunity to decide for themselves which activities they would eventually like to pursue for their own sake? One does not have such an opportunity unless he is aware of the available options.

Peters argues in "Education as Initiation" (1973, pp. 81-107) that the commonly heard complaint that a liberal arts curriculum is irrelevant to students' lives, shows a lack of understanding of academic subjects. The study of history, literature, philosophy, physics, and so forth, has enormous relevance to all our lives because proper initiation into these subjects helps us to look at the world in a different light. As one's beliefs about the world change so do one's feelings. The more one has been initiated into the various forms of thought, the more significance one sees in ordinary objects and events. If present attempts to initiate students into traditional forms of thought are not having any effect on how students think or feel about the world, then the proper conclusion might be not that academic subjects are irrelevant to life, but that students are not adequately initiated into academic subjects at school. This should not be surprising, for many classroom teachers themselves have been only very superficially initiated into the subjects they teach. Rather than condemn academic subjects as irrelevant, perhaps we ought to look seriously at the ill effects of the
blind leading the blind.

A second view arises from a growing school of thought that argues against liberal education from a Marxist perspective. It includes such people as Michael Apple, Walter Feinberg, and Michael Young—sometimes referred to as sociologists of knowledge. Their main line of argument seems to rest on the view that because all knowledge is man-made, not only is there nothing sacred about initiating students into traditional forms of knowledge, but also it is downright oppressive.

One of Michael Apple's concerns is the problem of the hidden curriculum—especially the subtle and subversive ways in which it contributes to the maintenance of the existing social order. His basic claim in "What Do Schools Teach?" (1977) is that the type of knowledge selected for the curriculum and transmitted through the hidden curriculum is conservative in character and contributes to the perpetuation of the status quo in political, social, and economic life. He quotes Michael Young who says there is a

... dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimate certain dominant categories and the process by which the availability of such categories to some groups enables them to assert power and control over others.

(Apple, 1977, p. 30)

Apple adds:

In advanced industrial societies, schools become particularly important as distributors of this cultural capital and play a critical role in giving legitimacy to certain categories and forms of knowledge.

(Loc. cit.)
Young speaks of 'dominant categories' and Apple speaks of both 'categories' and 'forms of knowledge'. The notion of category is very obscure so I shall have to ignore it completely. But there is not the same difficulty with the notion of forms of knowledge. Here it is clear that Paul Hirst's forms of knowledge (religion, philosophy, logic, physical science, aesthetics, history, knowledge of other minds) or something like them are implied. In the article from which Apple quotes Young above, Young speaks directly of Paul Hirst's forms of knowledge. He says that critiques of philosophers of education start from

\[\ldots\text{certain a priori assumptions about the organization (or forms) of knowledge}\ldots\text{their criticisms focus either on new topic-based syllabi which neglect these 'forms of understanding', or on new curricula for the so-called 'less able' or 'Newsom child' which they argue are consciously restricting them from access to those forms of understanding which in the philosopher's sense are 'education'. The problem with this kind of critique is that it appears to be based on an absolutist conception of a set of distinct forms of knowledge which correspond closely to the traditional areas of the academic curriculum and thus justify, rather than examine, what are no more than the socio-historical constructs of a particular time. It is important to stress that it is not 'subjects' which Hirst recognizes as the socially constructed ways that teachers organize knowledge, but forms of understanding, that it is claimed are 'necessarily' distinct. The point I wish to make here is that unless such necessary distinctions or intrinsic logics are treated as problematic, philosophical criticism cannot examine the assumptions of academic curricula.}\]

(Young, 1977, p. 23)

The trouble is that Young does not tell us in what way Hirst's categorization of the forms of knowledge should be treated as problematic. Does he mean that because the forms of knowledge are socio-historical constructs they are somehow lacking in validity? Why does he lament the fact that we interpret our experience through the
use of such constructs? Since nearly all our concepts have some sort of history (i.e., some time and place in which the conceptual distinction was first made as well as changes in concepts through time) then our conceptual distinctions are necessarily socio-historical constructs. We might ask Young how else we are to interpret our experience if not through socio-historical constructs.

Also in the excerpt above, Young accuses Hirst and others of having an "absolutist conception" of the distinct forms of knowledge. He probably means that Hirst has some metaphysical view of the forms of knowledge as parallels to some kind of external Lockean 'real world'. If so, his accusation is ill founded, as Hirst makes clear in his discussion of the acquisition of knowledge and the development of mind. Hirst says that to acquire knowledge is to come to have a mind, and that the mind is not "an entity which suitably directed by knowledge comes to take on the pattern of, is conformed to, some external reality" (1974, p. 41). In discussing liberal education he adds: "It is however no longer supported by epistemological and metaphysical doctrines that result in a hierarchical organization of the various forms of knowledge" (1974, p. 41). It is possible that Apple and Young have incorrectly inferred from their belief that the forms of knowledge have nothing to do with some kind of real world beyond the world of the senses, that the forms of knowledge therefore constitute an arbitrary categorization scheme which we ought to change, so that people whose experiences are not made intelligible by reference to the criteria for truth inherent in each of the
traditional forms of knowledge will get their fair share of wealth, status, and power, by legitimizing other categorization schemes. But any question about whether we ought to legitimize other forms of knowledge and delegitimize the traditional ones is foolish if in fact we cannot do so. And I believe we cannot--on the grounds that the traditional forms of knowledge are "the basic articulations whereby the whole of experience has become intelligible to man, they are the fundamental achievements of mind" (Hirst, 1974, p. 41). This is not to suggest that persons who have not studied history, science, philosophy, etc., have no mind, but it is to suggest that if sociologists of knowledge hold that we ought to legitimize forms of knowledge other than the traditional ones, then they are under some obligation to offer candidates for this role. Although we might argue whether history, say, constitutes a fundamental form of knowledge, no sociologist of knowledge has produced a categorization of basic forms of knowledge for our consideration. Apple makes a few stabs in the direction of alternative forms of consciousness, but he offers no alternative to the traditional forms of knowledge. Again, it is not clear what Apple means by 'forms of consciousness', but he clearly does not mean forms of knowledge in Hirst's sense because the main candidate he offers for an alternative form of consciousness is "a realistic approach to the nature of conflict" (1975, p. 115).

At this point it might be useful to summarize the setting of the scene so far. Plato had both a conception of liberal education and a justification for it. His justification is inadequate as is
that of his disciple, Augustine. Contemporary writers like Hirst and Phenix—when pushed—really have no justification at all: they try to make their conception of knowledge do the job for which a justification is needed. Barrow offers a justification, but it is a justification we cannot accept. A cursory look at contemporary critiques of liberal education indicates that opponents have no coherent and convincing justification for their position either. If we are going to impose liberal studies on students in schools, however, then we ought to have an adequate justification for doing so. Providing such a justification is the task this thesis is designed to do.

Any justification for compulsory education should, I think, start by justifying the overriding of a person's right to non-interference. The imposition of compulsory liberal education clearly violates that right, and unless our reasons for violating it are acceptable there is no point in discussing what form our interference should take. But the justification of a compulsory curriculum has not been completed simply by showing that it is morally permissible. Many kinds of interference in children's lives are morally permissible that have little or no educational significance, e.g., making a child brush his teeth before he goes to bed. What we need to sort out are those kinds of interferences that are priorities for educational purposes.
CHAPTER II

NON-INTERFERENCE

The purpose of chapter two is to find good grounds for the right to non-interference, and to suggest conditions under which the right to non-interference may be overridden. The points I shall make are about prima facie rights only and not about actual rights.

1. The Right to Non-Interference

We should keep in mind that there are two ways of taking the expression 'X has a right to Y'. One thing that might be meant by the expression 'X has a right to Y' is that as a matter of fact there is some established practice whereby X is guaranteed some entitlement to Y. If you make a term deposit of $1000 at a bank that pays a simple rate of interest of nine per cent per annum, then the bank guarantees that it will pay you $90 per annum for investing your money there. You are entitled to $90 for letting the bank use your $1000. In other words you have a right to $90. On this conception of rights, to say that X has a right to Y is to make an easily verifiable empirical claim. Either there is or there is not some established practice whereby X is guaranteed Y. But we are not always talking about established guarantees when we talk about rights. If we say X has the right to be treated with respect we are not necessarily saying anything about established practices whereby X is in fact
guaranteed of treatment with respect. The claim 'X has the right to be treated with respect' is quite compatible with a state of affairs in which X is very seldom treated with respect. Such a claim, because it need not have anything to do with what is in fact the case, is making some sort of statement about what ought to be the case. On this account, the statement 'X has the right to be treated with respect' means the same as 'X ought to be treated with respect' or 'We should have some established practice whereby X is in fact treated with respect'. Although I am not certain that the limits of what we can sensibly mean by 'X has a right to Y' are exhausted by the two accounts I have given, I believe that they are. Believers in natural rights may suggest a third interpretation, but since claims about natural rights need to be cashed out in terms of what ought to be the case in the world, there is no need for us to consider natural rights. On the account I am offering, an ordinary claim about rights such as 'X has the right to a guaranteed annual income', for example, can be taken in either of two ways: as a claim about what in practice X is guaranteed to have or as a prescription about what X in practice ought to be guaranteed.

What then are we to make of the meaning of the claim that people have the right to non-interference? We might mean that, as a matter of fact, there is some guarantee that people will not be interfered with under normal conditions—that there is some sort of guarantee that an individual's free choices will be respected—or we might mean that there ought to be a guarantee that other people's choices will
not be forced upon us without good reason. In either case we can ask whether the practice of guaranteeing non-interference to people is a good idea, and whether everyone ought to be afforded this right.

It could be suggested that people possess the right to non-interference only in so far as they are rational. But this suggestion is probably untenable on the grounds that we would, I think, regard it as wrong to deprive even madmen of doing what they want to do unless we have an acceptable reason for interfering with them. How then can we determine who has the right to non-interference and who has not? Do all human beings have this right? Or all sentient beings? Michael Tooley offers us a theory of rights which, if we accept it, provides grounds for the view that very young babies, among others, have no right to non-interference while polar bears do have such a right. Professor Tooley offers us an account of what constitutes a violation of A's right to X. An important point to note is that unless something could count as a violation of A's right to X, it would make no sense to say that A has a right to X. Tooley claims that an action can constitute a violation of A's right at time T that state of affairs S obtain at time T* if and only if one of the following conditions obtains:

1. The action is performed at time T, it prevents state of affairs S from existing at time T*, and individual A desires at time T that state of affairs S obtain at time T*;
2. The action is performed at some time T, it prevents state of affairs S from existing at time T*, and although individual A is incapable of desiring at time T either that S obtain or that S not obtain at time T*, A did desire at time T that S obtain at time T*, where T is the moment of time immediately preceding the time interval in which A is incapable of desiring either that S exist or that S not exist at time T*. (Time T* may be either simultaneous with
3. The action is performed at some time $T^1$ and prevents state of affairs $S$ from obtaining at time $T^*$, and although individual $A$ does not desire at time $T^1$ that $S$ obtain at time $T^*$, either because $A$ is incapable of having the desire at that time, or because there is some relevant information that $A$ does not possess at that time, there is some later time $T$ at which $A$ will exist and at which he will desire that state of affairs $S$ exist at time $T^*$

4. The essential idea [of condition 4] is simply that actions to which an individual does not object—either because he is incapable of desiring at the time that they not occur, or because he lacks relevant information, or because his desires have been 'warped' by psychological or physiological factors—may nevertheless violate his rights if there is some time at which he is or will be capable of wishing that the action had not been performed, and at which he would so wish if he had all the relevant information and had not been subjected to influences that distorted his preferences.

(Correspondence, 1973, pp. 420-424)

Condition one above covers cases that are determined by a subject's present desires. Condition two covers cases that depend on a subject's past desires, such as cases involving the rights of persons who are dead or unconscious. Condition three covers cases that depend on a subject's future desires, e.g., cases involving the rights of future generations. Condition four applies to cases in which a subject's rights are violated because of certain potential desires, e.g., cases of violation of the rights of slaves who have been conditioned in some way or another to condone discrimination against themselves.

If Tooley's analysis is correct, then non-rational individuals such as madmen and young children possess the right to non-interference to the extent that they desire, have desired, will desire, or would desire not to be interfered with. Newborn babies, however,
probably do not possess the right to non-interference because the possession of certain relevant concepts is a necessary prerequisite to having desires, and newborn babies possess very few concepts. A more startling claim is Tooley's belief that a newborn infant does not possess any serious right to life on the grounds that it does not possess the concept of a self as a continuing subject of mental states and experiences. Tooley would claim that since nothing can count as a violation of a newborn baby's right to life (or to non-interference), it makes no sense to claim that a newborn baby has such rights.

But as it stands, Tooley's theory is unacceptable. The fact that most people adamantly want to confer the right to life on newborn infants—normally to the point where the prima facie right becomes an actual right—is enough to defeat it. When a theory of this kind fails to explain the phenomena we have two choices—we can either reject the theory or somehow bring the phenomena into line with it. The latter alternative would lead us to conclude that our thinking about newborn babies and the right to life has been inconsistent in the past and that infants do not really possess the serious right to life. This would not imply that killing an infant would be necessarily morally permissible; it simply means that if such a killing were to count as a violation of anyone's rights it would count as a violation of someone else's rights—not the infant's. A parent, for example, who wants the infant to live suffers a violation of rights if it is killed. Since such a position is a little too bizarre for most people's taste, our natural inclination is to reject Tooley's
theory rather than adapt our thinking to fall into line with it. Still, I think there is something to be learned from Tooley’s insightful way of connecting rights with desires, but we will have to look elsewhere for arguments supporting the right to non-interference.

It can be plausibly claimed, as Mill claims in his essay On Liberty, that there is great utilitarian benefit that accompanies the observance of the principle of non-interference. People are generally inclined to be happier when they are permitted to pursue the means and ends of their choice. Few people want to be ordered about or subjected to the arbitrary will of someone else. Even very young children feel insulted and resentful if their opinions are always discounted, if they are treated like objects instead of people. Great satisfaction is gained not only in thinking for oneself and making one’s own decisions but in being treated by others as someone who is capable of thinking for oneself and making one’s own decisions.

Although many of us would agree with Mill, his claim that general happiness is increased when people are allowed to pursue the means and ends of their choice (Mill excludes children and barbarians however) is a contingent claim; it is therefore open to refutation through counter evidence—and in this case there is, perhaps, a sizeable amount of counter evidence that could be produced.

Most people are familiar with Eric Fromm’s view that human beings are basically afraid of pursuing the means and ends of their choice. Fromm’s psychological thesis is that freedom makes people insecure. People would rather be led by others than determine their
own destinies. They prefer to have someone else take responsibility for them. No doubt this is true of all of us to some extent in our lives, and some people may even prefer to act non-autonomously most of the time, but it is always possible that people who fear freedom can be taught to be autonomous and to derive satisfaction from making autonomous choices. On the other hand, people can also be taught to enjoy domination by others. So we still have the empirical question of which state leads to the greatest happiness. But even if Mill is right that autonomy brings more happiness than does domination, his utilitarian argument does not provide us with any conclusive justification for the principle of non-interference because if utility (or happiness) is taken as the ultimate goal of life, then non-interference will be valued only in so far as it is instrumental in promoting human happiness. If Brave New World were a technologically viable alternative to our present way of life there would no longer be any need to adhere to the principle of non-interference. But since most of us are not prepared to buy into a Brave-New-World way of life, we are not prepared to opt for happiness at any price. This is not to diminish the importance of the empirical claim that observance of the practice of non-interference does in fact contribute to human happiness, but it is to suggest that if we seek a conclusive argument in favor of non-interference we must again look elsewhere.

We might try looking at Rawls' contention that non-interference is a principle any rationally self-interested person would choose to live by if he were choosing a way of life from behind a "veil of
ignorance" (1971). That is, says Rawls, if we were choosing a set of principles for people to live by, knowing that we will have to occupy some position in the world but not knowing what that position will be, we would naturally prefer observance of the right to non-interference for everyone in order to ensure that our own right to non-interference will be respected. We may question Rawls' contention that a principle is justified if it would be chosen by rationally self-interested persons from behind a veil of ignorance, but even if we agree with Rawls on this point it is not necessarily true that rationally, self-interested persons would choose that everyone live by the principle of non-interference. Some daring individuals might be willing to allow the practice of non-interference only for the very rich or the very powerful on the gamble that they might obtain some privileged position in the world. So we are still without a justification for the practice of non-interference.

We might also look at R. S. Peters' well known transcendental argument. He claims that the principle of non-interference is logically presupposed by a commitment to rationality in the sense of rationally deciding what one ought to do. According to Peters, anyone who is seriously concerned with answering questions of practical policy must demand the freedom to do what there are good reasons for doing. If we join with other rational beings in seeking answers to those questions we must demand freedom for them as well. But Peters is wrong in suggesting that one is logically required to demand freedom for others by simple virtue of the fact that one seriously
asks the question 'What ought I to do?'. All that seems to be logically required is that one demand freedom of action for oneself to pursue what there are good reasons for pursuing. One may not be very wise in not demanding freedom for others as well as oneself, but the requirement of freedom for others is not obviously needed to maintain logical consistency.

But maybe there is an indirect way in which one could be legitimately accused of logical inconsistency if one seriously asks the question 'What ought I to do?' while demanding freedom for oneself but denying it to others. The inconsistency lies in the fact that the Principle of Equality (no distinctions without relevant differences) requires that one cannot demand freedom for oneself without also demanding it for others because to do so would be to make distinctions without relevant differences—and observance of the Principle of Equality is itself required by a commitment to rationality, for it is the Principle of Equality which gives point to practical reasoning (Peters, 1966, pp. 120-126). There would be no point in asking for reasons unless one were committed to non-arbitrariness or no distinctions without relevant differences. This being so, the question of the justification of the right to non-interference is as odd as the question 'Why be rational?'. Just as one cannot seriously ask 'Why be rational?' without already being committed to rationality, neither can one ask 'What ought I to do?' without already being committed to the practice of non-interference. On this view, commitment to the principle of non-interference does
not require justification any more than a commitment to rationality requires it. In short, Peters shows that in so far as we are committed to seeking good reasons for acting in one way rather than another, we are committed to the practice of non-interference. And who could be opposed to seeking good reasons? The right to non-interference, then, should be regarded as a basic starting point that is used to help justify various other rights and practices. In fact, the exercise of any right always either protects or restricts the liberty of someone, and usually it does both.

In addition, it should be pointed out that some people believe that a satisfactory justification of the right to non-interference can be made on moral grounds as required by the principle of respect for persons. In response to this belief we might ask why the principle of respect for persons is less in need of justification than the right to non-interference. Perhaps it is not, but most people would probably agree that the principle of respect for persons is the fundamental moral principle from which all other moral principles are derived—at least when morality is considered as interpersonal (or inter-sentient being) morality. To have respect for persons is to have respect for the rights of individuals to pursue their own purposes, aims, and interests in the manner they choose. To interfere with the free choices of another without adequate reason is to treat that person as a means to some end of ours rather than as an autonomous end in himself. It is to treat him as less than a person in the full sense of that word. In other words, the moral right to non-
interference is logically implied by the principle of respect for persons. Since the restriction of one's liberty is a prima facie affront to the moral principle of respect for persons, good reasons must be given for interfering with an individual's free choices. In other words, the onus of proof in cases of interference lies with those who would interfere. We now turn to the question of what constitutes a good reason for interference.

2. Overriding the Right to Non-Interference

I believe all the cases in which an individual's prima facie right to non-interference can be justifiably overridden by someone else can be slotted into a three-part classification scheme. The three kinds of cases are sometimes mutually exclusive but they are not necessarily so. They are:

a) cases of enforcing morality
b) cases of preventing harm to others, and
c) cases of consenting to the forfeiture of a right.

This is not to say, of course, that all cases of enforcing morality or preventing harm or forfeiting a right, justify our interference. Each of the three kinds of cases in which the right to non-interference may be overridden provides only prima facie grounds for interference which do not become actual grounds without at least the proviso that the interference does not do more harm than good. I shall discuss each of the three kinds of cases in turn.
A. The Enforcement of Morality

I am restricting morality here to interpersonal morality—that is, to the view that both not harming people and relieving their suffering are fundamental to morality. On this view the enforcement of morality (provided the enforcement does not do more harm than good) would be acceptable to most people. Other bases of morality—for example, religious tenets or majority opinion—do not provide a view on which the enforcement of morality would be acceptable.

The Principle of Enforcing Interpersonal Morality is the principle that the liberty of an individual ought \textit{prima facie} to be interfered with if the individual's conduct is morally wrong. On what grounds can this principle be justified? Is it a self-evident, analytic proposition true by virtue of the meaning of 'moral wrongness' as Mill thought it was? Surely not. As we have just seen there can be different conceptions of morality. It might be the case that one is always subject to moral censure of some sort if only from oneself when one acts immorally, but the right to enforce morality does not appear to arise from the meaning of the term 'moral wrongness'. From where then does it arise? The strongest argument in favor of the enforcement of morality is the view that people have the right to protect and preserve their own existence and well-being in a way that is analogous to the way in which an individual has the right to employ various means of self-defense if his existence or well-being is threatened. (This is not to argue, however, that groups have the right to defend and preserve the existence of the group as such.) If
you meet a murderer on the street who is about to shoot you down, and you beat him over the head in self-defense, we do not ask whether you have the right to protect yourself and preserve your own existence and well-being. It is clear that you have this right. Similarly in the case of groups of persons. It is clear that groups of persons have the right to protect and defend themselves whether they are attacked from within or without their own ranks. Thus prohibiting immorality is a case of persons protecting themselves and defending their own existence. This is not to suggest, of course, that whatever the powers that be in a society regard as immoral ought prima facie to be prohibited. The problems involved in distinguishing between what society regards as immoral and what is actually immoral in any given circumstance are immense and only tangential to the thesis. The important issue is whether the actual enforcement of morality (as opposed to what some people take to be the enforcement of morality) counts as self-protection and self-defense on the part of society, and I believe it does—with regard to interpersonal morality, that is. On the interpersonal account of morality, an issue is a moral issue only in so far as other people's (or other sentient beings') interests are at stake. To act immorally is, by definition, to act without adequate justification in opposition to other people's interests. Just as an individual is sometimes right in stopping others from acting against his own best interests, people are sometimes right in acting collectively in stopping others from acting against their best interests.
At this point, the question could be asked why the right of persons to defend themselves should be taken as more self-evident than the right to non-interference. No doubt it should not be, especially since the right of persons to defend themselves is a sub-case of the right to non-interference in general. Once the right to non-interference has been accepted, however, the *prima facie* right of persons to defend themselves immediately follows. Since we were led to the acceptance of the right to non-interference in the previous section, we are justified in accepting the right of persons to defend themselves as not in need of justification here.

B. Preventing Harm to Others

There are many cases in which we would agree that people's freedom of conduct ought to be curtailed on the grounds that it is harmful to others whether or not moral wrongness is involved. Mill's Principle of Liberty states that the freedom of action of an individual ought *prima facie* to be interfered with if and only if the conduct in question causes harm to others. But perhaps we should distinguish between conduct that causes harm to others and conduct that may be regarded as harmful though it does not itself cause harm. If a capable adult willingly refuses to rescue a drowning child from a nearby swimming pool, for example, even though little or no danger is posed to the rescuer, we would want to call the conduct harmful, but we do not have a case of conduct that directly causes harm. Because most of us would probably agree that if there were some way of compelling such an adult to rescue the child then he should be so
compelled, we would probably want to amend Mill's principle to "The freedom of action of an individual ought \textit{prima facie} to be interfered with if and only if the conduct in question is harmful to others."

The distinction between "is harmful" and "causes harm" probably does not matter very much in the present context, however, so I shall simply subsume all conduct that causes harm to others under the broader heading of harmful conduct. The more important distinction to be made is between conduct that is morally wrong and conduct that is generally harmful. While the former are always cases of the latter, the latter are not always cases of the former. If someone accidentally trips and falls down stairs knocking someone else over as he falls, he may seriously harm the person he knocks down, but because the event was an accident he is not guilty of moral wrongness. We could easily imagine circumstances in which we would be fully justified in barring people from using dangerous stairwells not only for their own protection but for the protection of others as well. Often we are justified in interfering with people's liberty to prevent accidents or other harmful occurrences that are not necessarily morally wrong.

C. Cases of Consenting to the Forfeiture of a Right

If an individual has a \textit{prima facie} right he can in most cases forfeit that right if he so chooses. Leaving aside cases in which an individual might choose not to exercise a right but not to forfeit it either, we are concerned with cases in which a right is given up altogether. If, for example, some particular customer has the right
to be served next at a department store counter because he has been waiting in line longer than anyone else, he can choose to forfeit that right if he wishes. Perhaps the customer behind him is loaded down with parcels, so he generously steps aside letting the next customer be served first. The first customer cannot then reclaim his right while the second customer is being served. Once forfeited, a right is gone forever. It could be argued that our generous customer's right to be served first is not gone forever since he regains the right to be served first after the customer behind him has been served, but all that has really happened in such a case is that two customers have exchanged rights one for the other—the right to be served before some particular person and after someone else. So the forfeited right is indeed gone forever, though in the example at hand another is bestowed in its place.

This is not to suggest that we have the power to forfeit all of our rights if we so choose. Perhaps our right to freedom of thought, for example, is not something we would have the right to give up even if it were within our capacity to do so. That is a debatable issue. In fact, the right to freedom of thought may not be a coherent notion. The point of this discussion, however, is to lend plausibility to the claim that some rights can be forfeited through consent, and to suggest that the right to non-interference that is overridden in the case of compulsory education seems clearly to be a right that can be forfeited through consent.

When we interfere with someone whose right to non-interference is forfeited through consent we are not, strictly speaking, overriding
that persons' right to non-interference since he no longer has such a right. He has chosen to give it up. As long as we keep this in mind, there is no harm in availing ourselves of the convenience of talking about overriding the right to non-interference in cases of forfeiture through consent.

We have said that the right to non-interference that is prima facie infringed by compulsory education seems to be a right that can be forfeited through consent. The obvious objection to using this consideration as grounds for interfering with children's lives is that children do not always consent to our trying to educate them. If they did, this thesis would be solely about the value of liberal education and there would be no need to discuss the right to non-interference. So our problem is to get from the fact that a right can be forfeited through consent to a justification of the compulsory imposition of liberal education.

Given the fact that in general people are inclined to forfeit their right to non-interference when they believe it benefits them to do so, justifying the compulsory imposition of liberal education on children should not be an impossible task. Suppose for the moment that compulsory liberal education is in fact a benefit for the child. (The task of chapters three and four is to lead us to this conclusion.) If liberal education is a benefit for the child, and if in general people can be expected to consent to the forfeiture of their right to non-interference when it is to their benefit to do so, then people can be expected to consent to the compulsory imposition of liberal education. That someone could be expected to consent to the
imposition of a liberal education, if he believed in its benefits, is not, however, sufficient grounds for our imposing a liberal education on him. It is conceivable that someone could, of his own free choice, consent to be tortured, but his consent (or expected consent) would not necessarily permit us to torture him. It is further required that our interference to be neither immoral (on grounds other than those having to do with immorality as a result of the violation of a person's right to non-interference—otherwise the case begs the question) nor harmful to others in general. I suggest, then, the following line of reasoning as part of a satisfactory justification for the compulsory imposition of liberal education:

1. Given that we can reasonably expect people to consent to forfeit their right to non-interference when they recognize that it is for their own good to do so, and

2. given that liberal education is good for people (The reader is asked to grant this claim for the moment. The purpose of chapters three and four is to argue for its acceptance.), and

3. given that students can be brought to recognize the good of liberal education and therefore consent to the interference, and

4. given that imposing a liberal education on students is neither immoral (on grounds other than those related to overriding the right to non-interference) nor harmful to others, then we have good reasons for the compulsory imposition of liberal education on students.

There are two points about this argument that should be empha-
sized. First, we should notice that number three above reads "Given that students can be brought to recognize the good of liberal education and therefore to consent to the interference. . . ." This implies that there must be a causal connection between recognizing the good of liberal education and consenting to the interference. Consent that is the result of indoctrination, conditioning, or beliefs that have been distorted in some other way is effectively ruled out. Consent given under duress is not genuine consent; i.e., it is not given for the appropriate kinds of reasons.

Second, where the phrase 'liberal education' appears, a case could be made for substituting 'vocational training' or 'athletic training' or 'technical education', and the argument might work just as well. So in effect the argument from the forfeiture of rights permits much more than the compulsory imposition of liberal education. The next major step in the argument, therefore, is to isolate some criterion that will help us pick out curricular components from the very wide range of studies and activities that the argument from the forfeiture of rights permits us to impose on children. The task of chapter three is to argue for the development of personal autonomy as that criterion. But first there are other matters to be considered.

Since we are proposing the compulsory imposition of liberal education on students for their own good, our argument is essentially paternalistic in nature. So some excursion into the literature on paternalism and its justification might be useful at this point. Very little has been written on the justification of paternalism in general,
although many articles have been written on the justification of paternalism in particular cases (in law and medicine, for example,—but not, oddly enough, in education). We shall look at the general literature on the justification of paternalism, sparse as it is, leaving aside questions in medicine and in law that are not central to our topic. In it we shall find strong support for the argument from the forfeiture of rights presented in this section. Before turning to that literature, however, there is an interesting objection to the three-part classification I have offered that has been suggested to me by J. R. Coombs. The objection is that there might be a further kind of case in which a person's liberty may be overridden—namely, the kind of case in which we aim to promote the public good or welfare. We are compelled to pay taxes for the building and maintenance of public roads and highways, for example, and this is a case of promoting the public good. Clearly laws which enforce compulsory taxation for building roads and highways are not justified on the grounds that they prevent harm or relieve suffering. Perhaps a case can be made, however, for subsuming this kind of case under those cases in which we consent to forfeit our right to non-interference. Indeed, that is John Locke's solution to the problem of the source of the authority of the state. The argument from the forfeiture of rights does not seem to work as well in this context, however, as it does in the case of justifying liberal education. The crucial difference between the two cases is that we are not as entitled to expect people to consent to forfeit their right to non-interference, thereby giving the state something of a blank check, as
we are entitled to expect people to consent to a much more limited kind of interference—compulsory education. In any case, as I have mentioned in the introduction, the question of the source of the authority of the state is an unanswered question in political philosophy which we shall have to leave aside.

It could be thought by someone that compulsory studies of various sorts are needed to promote the public good—e.g., economic growth and political stability, or it could be thought that compulsory studies are needed to prevent harm to others. But anyone holding such beliefs would have to produce convincing arguments to show that we are justified in imposing liberal studies on students on these grounds. Without such arguments, however, the compulsory imposition of liberal studies seems to rest comfortably on the notion of consent. If other arguments were produced, the compulsory imposition of liberal studies could be justified from more than one perspective.

D. Justifying Paternalism

Paternalism is often viewed as undesirable. Saying that someone has paternalistic intentions or that he acts paternalistically towards others is sometimes to make a derogatory statement about him. We often resent someone who presumes to know what is good for us and who takes it upon himself to deprive us of the liberty to make our own decisions. People who treat us that way are treating us, we think, like children—like people incapable of deciding what is in their own best interests. The negative connotations surrounding the notion of paternalism are there because people often act
paternalistically towards each other when they are not justified in doing so. The negative connotations are not, however, part of the meaning of 'paternalism' any more than the negative connotations surrounding 'communism' or 'capitalism' are part of the meanings of those terms. We would do well to guard against an unsympathetic attitude towards trying to find a justification for paternalistic interference—an attitude which could arise simply from the negative associations of the word.

The first task of this section is to define what is to count as paternalistic interference. It can be argued that not all acts of paternalism interfere with liberty of action or even with prima facie rights. Donald Davidson says:

> paternalistic acts are not only those in which one is forced to do something he doesn't want to do, but also those in which there is an alternative act which affects the donor equally and which the beneficiary prefers; for example, giving people food vouchers instead of money when the latter would be preferred. (From an unpublished paper entitled "Fathers and Sons". As quoted in Carter, 1977, p. 133.)

The following example is offered by Gert and Culver to show that not only need paternalism not involve any attempt to interfere with someone's liberty of action, but it need involve no attempt to control the beneficiary's behaviour either:

> Mr. N, a member of a religious sect that does not believe in blood transfusions, is involved in a serious automobile accident and loses a large amount of blood. On arriving at the hospital, he is still conscious and informs the doctor of his views on blood transfusion. Immediately thereafter he faints from loss of blood. The doctor believes that if Mr. N is not given a transfusion he will die. Thereupon, while Mr. N is still unconscious, the doctor arranges for and carries out the blood transfusion. (Gert and Culver, 1976, p. 46)
There are other cases in which it would be difficult to construe the paternalistic act as an act of interference of any kind. Imagine a case in which a very old woman is lying on her deathbed thinking about her only son whom she has not seen for years. She asks about him and someone assures her that her son is happy and successful though it is well known to all but the mother that he has just been sentenced to a lifetime in prison for multiple rape and murder. We would count the lying as an act of paternalism, I think, but it is not clearly an act of interference. I shall not be concerned in this thesis, however, with the question of whether all acts of paternalism interfere with someone's freedom or someone's prima facie rights because there is no question that the kind of paternalism I am concerned with—compulsory education—constitutes an interference with children's liberty. So it is less important to do an analysis of the concept of paternalism than it is to adopt some reasonable definition of paternalistic interference that will enable us to capture the central cases.

The definition of paternalistic interference that I shall adopt is the general definition used by Rosemary Carter in her article "Justifying Paternalism" (1977). She says that the central cases of paternalism are ones in which the protection or promotion of a subject's welfare is the primary reason for attempted or successful coercive interference with an action or state of that person. This definition is very close to the one offered by Gerald Dworkin in his well known article "Paternalism" (in Wasserstrom, 1970). In it Dworkin states, "By paternalism I shall understand roughly the
interference with a person's liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests, or values of the person being coerced" (Ibid., p. 108). I think either definition would suffice for our purposes although both could be criticized on general grounds as unduly restrictive for the reason already given that it is not clear that paternalism always involves either a restriction of liberty or some other kind of interference. Still, the Carter definition seems preferable to Dworkin's because it allows interference with people's states of mind to count as paternalistic, whereas Dworkin allows only interference with liberty of action. This is important because in educational contexts interference with students' states of mind (taking a person's state of mind to be the sum total of his knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, etc.) is crucial.

There are clearly large numbers of cases--usually involving children--in which most of us would argue that paternalistic interference is wholly justified. If a three-year-old child chooses to play with a sharp knife or with matches, we do not hesitate to keep him from doing so for his own good. If, on the other hand, mature people wish to smoke or drink or overeat, we do not very often think we have the right to prevent them from doing so for their own good. There are other cases in which some people think paternalistic interference is justified and some people strongly object--the compulsory treatment of heroin addicts might be a suitable example here. So we need some sort of criterion for separating the justified from the unjustified cases of paternalism.
John Stuart Mill argues in *On Liberty* that paternalism is absolutely unjustified. Of course Mill's views on paternalism are still thought by many to have validity today,* and I think it is significant that not very much has been written in opposition to Mill on the topic of paternalism. There are some notable exceptions (Dworkin, 1971; Feinberg, 1971; Hart, 1962), but on the whole Mill remains a formidable opponent of paternalists. Mill says, "... neither one person nor any number of persons is warranted in saying to another human creature of ripe years that he shall not do with his life for his own benefit what he chooses to do with it" (1956 edition, p. 93).

Mill's argument in favor of this position is the utilitarian argument that since, in general, each individual is the best authority on what is good for himself, the practice of non-interference has greater utilitarian benefits than a practice of paternalistic interference would have. This utilitarian justification does not really carry much weight as a knock-down argument against paternalism however, mainly because of the difficulties connected with calculating the harmful and beneficial consequences that might result in the long run from any given case of paternalistic intervention.

But the utilitarian consideration is not the only one Mill offers. In addition, there is a strain in Mill which suggests that paternalism is wrong in and of itself regardless of its consequences. Feinberg recognizes this strain in Mill when he says:

*See Tom Beauchamp's defense of Mill in "Paternalism and Behavioural Control," 1977.*
What [for Mill really] justifies the absolute prohibition of interference in primarily self-regarding affairs is not that such interference is self-defeating and likely (merely likely) to cause more harm than it prevents, but rather that it would be an injustice, a wrong, a violation of the private sanctuary which is every person's self; and this is so whatever the calculus of harms and benefits might show.

(Feinberg, p. 108)

But for all this we must remember that Mill is talking about people of "ripe" years in his discussion of paternalistic interference. Mill excludes children and barbarians from the category of those who should be given the benefits of the full status of personhood. In effect Mill allows paternalistic interference in the affairs of children, but he does not offer very much in the way of justification for it. Perhaps he thinks the justification is self-evident: i.e., undoubtedly there would be enormous disutilities if children were not frequently made the objects of paternalistic interference. Children, unlike adults, are not the best judges of what is good for them. Be that as it may, it should be mentioned that Mill allows one exception to his prohibition against paternalistic interference for persons of ripe years. I bring it forward because it could be regarded as an important pointer towards grounds on which paternalistic interference might be justified for children as well as for adults.

The exception is the case of selling oneself into slavery. Mill says:

By selling himself for a slave, he abdicates his liberty; he foregoes any future use of it beyond that single act. He therefore defeats, in his own case, the very purpose which is the justification of allowing him to dispose of himself. He is no longer free; but is thenceforth in a position which has no longer the presumption in its favor, that would be
afforded by his voluntarily remaining in it. The principle of freedom cannot require that he should be free not to be free. It is not freedom to be allowed to alienate his freedom.

(1946 edition, p. 92)

This exception of Mill's suggests a principle for allowing paternalistic interference: paternalistic interference is justified in so far as the interference protects the freedom of the beneficiary. This is an interesting possibility, but immediately an enormous problem arises—the problem suggested by Isaiah Berlin in his *Two Concepts of Freedom*. The problem of using protection of freedom as a criterion to justify paternalism is that often associated with a Marxist conception of freedom or with real-will theories. The danger that accompanies an endorsement of positive freedom, as it is called, is this: If a holds a view about what human beings are like in some ideal, free, self-actualized state, then a will regard b as unfree if b does not meet a's criteria of self-actualization. b may in fact have no desire to become what a regards as free or self-actualized. In such a case a would claim that b lacks the appropriate desire because b, being unfree, has no conception of what human beings were "meant" to become. a then, in all his "benevolence", might take it upon himself to force b to be "free".

The protection-of-freedom criterion is unacceptable as a justification of paternalism not only because of the dangers of positive freedom, but also because it could lead to objectionable interference connected with the notion of negative freedom. Cigarette smoking, for example, leads to shorter life spans and debilitating disease, so a good case can be made that we are protecting someone's physical
freedom (freedom from disease) if we prevent him from smoking or from taking food and drugs that might damage his health. In fact, there are all kinds of constraints that we might protect people against for their own good if we are allowed to interfere with their pursuits in order to protect their freedom. Adopting the protection of freedom criterion as a justification for paternalistic intervention could clearly result in an unacceptably excessive number of cases of paternalistic interference in people's lives.

To be fair to Mill, however, it should be pointed out that he was not using 'freedom' in the quotation on page 50 in either the positive or the negative sense outlined above. Instead, he was using 'freedom' as a rough synonym for 'liberty'. The next question to be asked, therefore, is whether the protection-of-liberty criterion fares any better than protection of freedom. But it does not. If we accept that everyone has a prima facie right to non-interference, and if someone freely chooses to give up his liberty, then we are unjustifiably overriding his right to non-interference by protecting his liberty when he has freely chosen to give it up. If we paternalistically protect someone's liberty for him against his (free) will, then we are clearly putting our own preferences ahead of his without sufficient cause.

Because of the dangers of using either protection of freedom or protection of liberty as a criterion for justifying paternalism we might consider Dworkin's suggestion that "the basic notion of consent is important and seems to be the only acceptable way of trying to
delimit an area of justified paternalism" (1970, p. 119). Consent is clearly relevant to the justification of paternalism on the grounds that it seems reasonable to expect people to consent to interference that is good for them provided they believe it is good for them. Dworkin's view that consent should play a central role in the justification of paternalism is developed in detail by Rosemary Carter. Carter offers the following conditions for the justification of paternalism:

Consent, or the disposition to consent upon request or upon the receipt of certain information, is necessary and, if none of a, b, or c hold, sufficient for the justification of paternalism:

(a) the act requiring justification by consent is causally sufficient for that consent;
(b) the consent would have been withheld or would be withdrawn if the subject's desires, preferences or beliefs had not been distorted;*
(c) the consent would have been withheld or would be withdrawn upon the receipt of relevant information.

(1977, pp. 137-138)

There are many problems involved in judging the probability of subsequent consent, but I think it would be safe to assume that those who are unable to envisage a very wide range of probable short and long term consequences for actions (this includes most children) would be more likely to offer consent to past paternalistic intervention at some future time than others, so it is probably safe to assume that there are more cases of justified paternalistic intervention (on

*Because it may be a little odd to speak of distorted desires or preferences, further discussion related to this point will proceed in terms of distorted beliefs alone. The intent of (b) is not really affected by this change, because any sense we can make out of the notion of a distorted desire or preference can be cashed out in terms of distorted beliefs.
Carter's account) in the affairs of children than in the affairs of adults.

There are two kinds of possible counterexamples that we should consider to the above claim that consent is both necessary and sufficient to the justification of paternalism. The first is an objection to the necessity of consent and the second is an objection to its sufficiency. The first becomes apparent if we imagine, for example, a case in which someone is about to leap to his death from the side of a high bridge and a passer-by physically intervenes by pulling the potential suicide victim over the railing to safety. If subsequent consent were not forthcoming either implicitly or explicitly in the subject's disposition, then we would have to conclude that the paternalistic intervention was not justified—a conclusion which many people would find unacceptable. There are two ways of dealing with this problem: either give up the view that consent is necessary for paternalistic intervention or agree that the case before us constitutes a case of unjustified paternalism. We could, I believe, adopt the latter alternative while holding the act of intervention to be morally unobjectionable all things considered. The important element in "all things considered" is the interferer's belief that consent will be forthcoming or would be forthcoming if the subject's beliefs had not been distorted. But the problem with adopting this stance is that the act of paternalism described above is an act which we would normally want to describe as justified paternalism on the grounds that there are good reasons for the interference. Therefore,
the Carter criterion should be modified to cover cases in which future a reasonable expectation but is not consent is actually forthcoming. In addition, the criterion should be amended to cover cases in which consent would be a reasonable expectation if the subject's beliefs were not distorted. We need this amendment just in case our potential suicide victim is known to be incurably insane; or just in case we know in advance that some students, because of some kind of mental disorder, would not give their later consent to the compulsory imposition of education.

The kind of case which presents a prima facie objection to the sufficiency of the consent criterion is the kind of case in which someone acts paternalistically, say, in driving an intoxicated guest home from a party in circumstances in which he is morally obligated for some reason to stay at home. Suppose his young daughter is very ill and there is no one else in the house to look after her. In such a case it might be argued that driving the friend home could not be a case of justified paternalistic interference because it is not morally justified, all things considered. Again, there are two alternatives: either consent is not sufficient for the justification of paternalism or an act of justified paternalism is not necessarily morally justified, all things considered. Again, we could accept the latter alternative on the grounds that the features of the act of driving the friend home that make it wrong, have nothing to do with interfering with the liberty of the intoxicated friend. That the act is paternalistic is, in itself, unobjectionable. But it is morally wrong on other grounds, and we are not inclined to describe an act as justifiable if it is
morally wrong. Therefore, the Carter criterion should be modified further to exclude cases like the one involving the intoxicated party-goer. We can do this by adding the further proviso that the proposed paternalistic act should not be morally wrong (or, more generally, harmful to others) on grounds other than those relating to overriding the beneficiary's right to non-interference.

By now the reader will have noticed a very interesting conclusion. The argument that we have used for the justification of the compulsory imposition of liberal education—the argument from the forfeiture of rights—is essentially the same as the modified Carter criterion above. So it really makes no difference whether we refer to the justification we are using for compulsory liberal education as the argument from the forfeiture of rights or the argument from the justification of paternalistic interference. It is essentially the same argument.

Of course there remains the problem of the unlikelihood of consensus over how much and what kind of interference people can be reasonably expected to consent to (as we discussed in connection with Rawls in chapter one), so in a sense the above justification of paternalism does not tell us everything we would like to know. But it is, I think, the best we can do. Besides, the fact of unlikely consensus over how much and what kind of interference people can be reasonably expected to consent to in general, is not really a problem for us because we are dealing with a particular case in which—if the argument of chapters three and four is successful—consensus does not
We might briefly consider how particular cases other than the compulsory imposition of a liberal arts curriculum would fare against the modified criterion for the justification of paternalism that I am suggesting we adopt. With Mill's example of selling oneself into slavery I think we could construct a set of circumstances in which we would be forced by our criterion to be more lenient than Mill and to allow someone to sell himself into slavery if he so chooses. What if that were the only way someone could secure freedom for his children, for example? Similarly, in the case of suicide. Unless one were to take the implausible stance that anyone who decides to commit suicide is suffering from distorted beliefs or perceptions, then we would have to accept that there are cases of interfering with the act of suicide that are cases of unjustified paternalism, and in the absence of a theory about the relationship between freedom and rationality the stance that anyone who decides to commit suicide is suffering from distorted beliefs or perceptions, is unacceptable. I mention these cases mainly to show that our criterion does not open the door to paternalistic interference as widely as one might at first suppose. Still, it does make room for an enormous number of possible components for a compulsory curriculum. It certainly allows initiation into any one of the traditional academic subject matters to be justified on paternalistic grounds. How many people who have learned to see the world from an historical point of view, say, would not now give their consent to their initial initiation into the study of history? How
many people who have learned to think scientifically regret their initiation into that subject? How many people who have acquired sensitivity to a variety of nuances in various art forms would want to be without this kind of enrichment in their lives?

To some extent we are supposing here that compulsion will be successful, i.e., that students will achieve the historical perspective, will learn to think scientifically, etc. But of course, such attainments cannot be compelled. No one can guarantee success. So what we are justifying is the imposition of certain studies, not successes. Since having the successes is probably necessary for subsequent consent, however, a reasonable expectation of success is necessary on our part before we are justified in imposing a compulsory liberal education on students. Obviously, we are unable to say exactly what percentage of students will learn to think historically or scientifically given the best teaching we can manage. How to think historically or scientifically is something students will learn in varying degrees anyhow. But we ought not to pre-judge the issue by assuming we cannot be successful in getting students to achieve the attainments we are after. Even a little success is better than none, and as we shall see in later chapters at least some success is necessary for the development of personal autonomy.

It is probably true that many adults regret time spent in school enduring boring lectures and tiresome written assignments, but it is possible that if students were initiated into subject matters by competent, enthusiastic teachers who are themselves immersed in their
fields, then much of the tedium that often accompanies the practice of education would disappear. Acquiring knowledge in any area is not simply a matter of learning facts—one must also come to see the relationships between the facts and to understand the underlying principles that bind them together. Only then can one's knowledge make a difference to how one sees and feels about the world, and only then can one be said to be truly initiated into a subject matter. It is the compulsory initiation of students into realms of knowledge that we shall consider, not compulsory subjection to poor teaching methods. So the empirical claim that many people do in fact regret having been compelled to study traditional academic subjects (and it is difficult to guess what percentage of the population that might include), is no objection to the claim that compulsory initiation into traditional academic realms is *prima facie* justifiable on paternalistic grounds.

But an academic curriculum is not the only kind of curriculum that might be *prima facie* justifiable on paternalistic grounds. Convincing cases could be made, I think, using our criterion, in favor of the compulsory initiation of students into thousands of activities included within such categories as arts and crafts, vocational training, physical fitness, and so forth. Because there are only five or six hours in the average school day we could not hope to fit into a compulsory curriculum all the components that might be acceptable on paternalistic grounds. So, from the wide range of curricular possibilities we have to make choices about what we should teach in schools. I argue in chapter three for the
adoption of personal autonomy as the criterion to help us make these choices.
CHAPTER III

PERSONAL AUTONOMY

The main purpose of this chapter is to argue for the promotion of personal autonomy as the criterion to help us narrow the range of curricular components that the argument from the forfeiture of rights permits us to impose on students. Before this can be argued, however, a fairly detailed analysis of what it means to be autonomous should be supplied.

1. The Meaning of 'Personal Autonomy'

Autonomy has to do with self-rule. Inspection of the origin of the word reveals that the Greek word autonomia was commonly applied to the city state. The state had autonomia if it was a self-governing independent entity, free from external rules and controls. We often speak of an autonomous nation in reference to a self-governing country, a country that has political independence. When we speak of a colony gaining its independence or autonomy from a mother country, we sometimes speak of the dependent state gaining its freedom. 'Freedom' used in this sense does not necessarily imply the absence of constraint for private citizens, however, since a strict dictatorship may also be a free country in the sense that it is a politically independent nation.
'Autonomy' may be used also in reference to institutions. We may speak of an autonomous school (e.g., a private school or a parochial school, independent of the public school system), university, or religious organization. The term is used in biology in reference to parts of the nervous system formerly thought to function independently of the central nervous system, and it is used in botany to refer to a condition which results from internal causes. The task of this section is to explicate the notion of autonomy or self-rule in reference to persons. Difficulties arise in analysing the concept of personal autonomy because ordinary usage does not provide consistent and clear-cut examples of how the term 'autonomy' is applied in reference to persons. The following explication is based partly on common usage and partly on the usefulness of the definition in the educational setting.

The concept of personal autonomy and the popularity of the term 'autonomy' are often attributed to Kant:

A man was autonomous in Kant's view if in his actions he bound himself by moral laws legislated by his own reason, as opposed to being governed by his inclinations. And no doubt Kant is the source for Piaget's employment of the term.

(Dearden, 1972, p. 448)

Our analysis of the concept of personal autonomy (henceforth to be referred to simply as autonomy) goes beyond Kant's view that one is autonomous if he binds himself by moral laws legislated by his own reason, to include those situations in which one might bind himself by considerations of aesthetics, etiquette, expediency, prudence, etc. The concept of personal autonomy is no doubt intimately
connected with the concept of moral agency, but many situations arise
in which autonomy can be exercised out of the moral realm.

Among teachers who value the promotion of autonomy as an educa-
tional objective, there is often a great deal of confusion over what
autonomy entails, and how it may be properly taught, promoted, devel-
oped, or instilled. Some teachers mistake manifestations of some-
thing resembling a state of anomie in students for the exercise of
autonomy. Others often accept as fact the assumption that the best
way to develop autonomy in students is to treat them as if they are
already autonomous. In some cases, students are given a carte
blanche to decide for themselves what they will do, as if the ability
to make autonomous decisions comes naturally to those who are given
the opportunity to exercise freedom of choice. Teachers who make
this assumption seem to be equating freedom of choice with autonomy
while ignoring the other necessary conditions. Conceivably, indi-
viduals could require sound structure and firm direction to measure
themselves against, so to speak, before they are able to reach a
highly autonomous level of development. Another possibility is that
development in achieving autonomy could be impaired as a result of
the imposition of too much freedom of choice at an early age. In
any case, the educator must be aware that since people are not auton-
omous when they are born, and since many people reach old age without
attaining very high levels of autonomy, some learning process which
is not purely maturational is involved in becoming autonomous (Peters,
1973b, p. 176). The teacher must, of course, concern himself with
those methods of teaching and learning which most effectively enhance this process. Although considerations about effective methodology are empirical matters, some light may be shed on them by the analysis of the concept of autonomy and the justification of its promotion as an educational objective. Whether the work of the philosopher can provide very much assistance to the empirical researcher or not, we may be certain that valuable educational research on how autonomy may be promoted is virtually impossible without a clear understanding of the kinds of conditions included and excluded by the concept.

Frankena describes the autonomous person as someone who is "capable of judging, acting and thinking on his own in art, history, science, morality, etc." (Frankena, 1973, p. 30). Riesman says:

The autonomous are those who on the whole are capable of conforming to the behavioural norms of their society—a capacity the anomies usually lack—but are free to choose whether to conform or not.

(Riesman, 1954, p. 40)

Our task is to unpack what it means to say that someone is capable of judging, acting, and thinking on his own, and what it means to say that someone is capable of conforming and yet free to choose otherwise.

Autonomy, or self-rule, is in direct opposition to the notion of heteronomy, rule by others. Heteronomy may take the form of passivity on the part of someone who rather thoughtlessly does what he is told to do, or believes what he is told to believe—by advertisers, officials, or anyone who is able to influence him. This other-directed person typically takes his cues from other people. It might be more accurate to describe what he does as reacting rather
than acting. Heteronomy sometimes takes the form of passivity, but it can also take the form of active neurosis or psychosis as in extreme cases of obsession or other kinds of dementia. Such an inner-directed person is ruled by internalized 'others' in such a way as to preclude the use of rational reflection. The inner-directed person is heteronomous to the extent that he is ruled by factors which, though not external to him, are external to his own rationally and justifiably held beliefs. Three conditions appear to distinguish the autonomous from the heteronomous person.

A. Freedom of Choice

Inherent in the concept of personal autonomy is the notion of freedom of choice. The problem of freedom from the hard or soft determinist position need not concern us here. The contention that all acts have causes in no way interferes with the distinction we make between unavoidable acts—those acts to which reasons make no difference—and those acts in which neither overt nor covert compulsion is significant. When we speak of freely chosen acts, we are speaking of those acts for which the agent has causally operative reasons as opposed to rationalizations.

As Benn and Peters point out, we do not attribute the exercise of autonomy to anyone whose freedom of choice is constrained either outwardly or inwardly, i.e., either objectively or subjectively (Peters, 1973b, p. 122). The objective conditions of freedom of choice include all those conditions which are external to the agent. They typically imply the absence of certain physical constraints. A
person can hardly be said to be exercising autonomy or freedom of choice if it is demanded of him at gunpoint that he hand over the contents of his wallet to a thief. In such a case the objective conditions for freedom of choice are not satisfied. The absence of such conditions is usually more readily apparent than the absence of subjective conditions.

The subjective conditions of freedom of choice include all those conditions which are internal to the agent. Peters claims the subjective conditions of freedom of choice are absent in any of the following circumstances:

1) if one is driven towards a particular goal as a drug addict or alcoholic is driven to seek relief from some present condition of acute deprivation,
2) if one is incapable of considering consequences before deciding on a particular course of action as a hysteric would be incapable of doing,
3) if one cannot change one's beliefs in the light of new and relevant evidence as a paranoid or someone suffering from other kinds of obsessions and delusions would be unable to do,
4) if changes in one's beliefs fail to produce changes in one's decisions as in the case of the psychopath, and
5) if changes in one's decisions fail to produce changes in one's actions as in the case of the kleptomaniac or some other kind of compulsive.

(Peters, op. cit., pp. 123-124)

George du Maurier's Trilby O'Farrell, for example, could hardly be said to be acting autonomously in putting on musical performances that repeatedly moved her audience to tears because while she was under the hypnotic influence of Svengali the subjective conditions of freedom of choice were minimized if not altogether absent. Trilby did what she was told to do and that is all she did. Questions about changes in her beliefs affecting changes in her decisions
as well as changes in her decisions affecting changes in her actions do not even arise. She followed Svengali as blindly as anyone could.

Peters does not state whether he intends his list to be exhaustive, but it appears to cover all those situations in which we normally withdraw imputations of moral or legal responsibility on the grounds that the agent could have acted otherwise. His list specifies five kinds of circumstances in which the causes of a person's actions not only lie within the person himself but also result in unavoidable responses. Acting under the influence of hypnosis, brainwashing, indoctrination, conditioning, insanity, and so forth, falls well within the limits of his list.

Freedom of choice in the sense that implies the absence of relevant forms of objective and subjective compulsion is a necessary condition for the exercise of autonomy, but it is not a sufficient condition. Imagine the situation of someone who thoughtlessly adopts his beliefs, values, morals, etc., from the dictates of majority opinion in the community where he lives, or from the advertising media, or even from his best friends. When he makes a decision based on one of his beliefs or values, he may well be exercising freedom of choice in the sense that it is described above, but we would hesitate to refer to him as an autonomous decision maker because his beliefs are in some sense not his own; they have been adopted simply because someone else says so rather than because the agent himself holds them to be true for good reasons of his own. Something else is necessary then, before we can call a person autonomous—namely, some degree of
rational reflection.

B. Rational Reflection

The Oxford English dictionary defines 'reflection' as the action of deep and serious consideration and 'rational' as having the faculty of reasoning as well as exercising one's reason in a proper manner, having sound judgment, being sane and sensible, etc. The term 'rational' comes from the Latin ratio meaning reason. The adjectives 'rational' and 'reasonable' are often used interchangeably in everyday usage and even in philosophical discourse. Professor Pole uses 'the rational' synonymously with 'reason' in his article "The Concept of Reason" (1972). He opposes 'rational', however, only to 'non-rational', reserving the term 'irrational' to refer to people who reason but who reason very poorly. Max Black, on the other hand, uses 'irrational' to mean something rather different from 'unreasonable' ("Reasonableness", 1972). Black points out a fine shade of difference between the two concepts when he says, "... we talk about an 'irrational impulse', but surely not—or not so freely—about an unreasonable impulse" (Op. cit., p. 201). Black implies that 'irrational' refers not to poor reasoning but to the absence of reasoning. But if 'irrational' refers not to poor reasoning but to the absence of reasoning, then the phrase 'irrational impulse' appears to be redundant because an impulse is typically characterized by the absence of reasoning. In any case, in saying that rational reflection is a necessary condition of autonomy we are saying two things:

1) that one must have reasons for one's behaviour, and
2) that one's reasons must be good ones.

Let us deal with (1) and (2) in turn.

Imagine that we meet someone who has just run up seventeen flights of stairs to the upper storey of a large office block, and we ask him, "Why didn't you take the elevator?" Our normal expectation is that we will be given an answer indicative of some consciously held, causally operative reason for the action such as, "The elevator was too crowded," or "I needed the exercise," or "There is no elevator in this building." If, however, the response we receive is "I don't know. I have no idea why I did that," then we would regard the action as impulsive or perhaps as compelled, but not as autonomous. The action may have been motivated by some unconscious drive, but unconscious drives are causes of actions, not reasons for acting. Reasons are considerations which the actor takes into account in holding certain beliefs, proving certain points, etc.

That rational reflection requires one to have reasons for one's choices does not mean that one's reasons must be silently reviewed by an agent each time he performs an action. Many of our actions are performed in a somewhat habitual manner. Having reasons and constantly reminding oneself of those reasons are two different matters. One might not be consciously mindful of the reasons why one gets out of bed as the alarm clock rings at seven o'clock each morning, but very likely one could supply the reasons if asked to do so. Rational reflection requires that one must have reasons for acting but not that one be constantly mindful of them.
That a rationally reflective person must have reasons for his actions is easily granted, but it is more difficult to show that one's reasons must be good ones. What counts as a good reason for acting in a certain way or for holding a certain belief and what does not? To look for someone's telephone number in the directory when you know, for example, that he has no telephone is one of Black's paradigm cases of unreasonable action verging on the irrational. Another instance of unreasonable action might be to complain that someone is ungrateful for an injury you have done him (Black, 1972, p. 201). In either case the individual concerned might have reasons for what he does, but he does not reflect upon them, presumably, or he would realize that his reasons are inadequate. We do not regard the completely unreflective person as self-directed. The first requirement of a good reason, then, is that it be deliberated upon by the agent. Obviously, some courses of conduct are of sufficient import (such as choosing a religion, a career, or a marriage partner) to require much more deliberation than others. In time of crisis or emergency, though, there is often no time to deliberate upon one's reasons for acting—no time to weigh up the pros and cons or to consider all the possible consequences of one's action in detail. Someone who is good at rational reflection would be able to distinguish those cases in which a considerable amount of deliberation is called for from those in which it is not.

It is possible, of course, that one could reflect upon one's reasons for acting without being autonomous; so a person's reasoning
must conform to certain minimum standards or else we are likely to regard him as indoctrinated, mentally retarded, demented, psychotic, conditioned, or what have you. The standards to which one must conform are those of objectivity, relevance, logical consistency, impartiality, etc. To be rationally reflective is to assess beliefs and behaviors at least to some extent, non-arbitrarily.

One's ability to reflect rationally on one's principles, aims, motives, goals, and so on, presupposes the presence of some settled and undisputed criteria by means of which one is able to examine the validity of the point of view or course of action being reflected upon. Of course one can ask such questions as "Why bother taking all the relevant data into consideration when making a decision?" or "Why bother trying to be logically consistent?" but, as Feinberg points out, "If we take autonomy to require that all principles are to be examined afresh in the light of reason on each occasion for decision, then nothing resembling rational reflection can ever get started" (Feinberg, 1973, p. 166).

The existentialist considers reason to be a threat to autonomy on the grounds that if an individual becomes a slave to the demands of such reasonable principles as logical consistency, the individual becomes a "mere passive onlooker of self-propelled reasonings" (Dearden, 1972, p. 450). Several responses might be made to this kind of claim. First, if an individual chooses to make use of rational reflection in deciding on a course of action at the expense
of the satisfaction of his inclinations, he is indeed exercising autonomy in making that decision. This response is not wholly satisfactory, however, since it allows autonomy to be attributed to those acts which are not rationally reflected upon as well as those that are. Second, if the existentialist wishes to equate the unreasonable, anomic character with the autonomous person, then there would be no point in holding up such a chaotic condition as either a personal ideal or an educational objective. Third, we simply cannot make intelligible the notion of a criterionless choice. If one did not make use of settled rules and principles in making decisions and examining beliefs, one's judgments would be arbitrary, based only on whim or impulse. A state of cognitive anomie can hardly be considered desirable. Making use of settled principles to guide one's reasoning is not only no threat to autonomy but a prerequisite to it.

One who engages in rational reflection then, not only has reasons for his actions, but deliberates upon them (or has at some time deliberated upon them) to see if they measure up to certain standards, i.e., certain rules and principles. His conduct is typified by exercising an ability to consider the consequences of his actions before he acts, to alter his beliefs in the light of new evidence, and to change his attitudes as circumstances change. The rationally reflective person tries to be objective and does not make unnecessary judgments on the basis of irrelevant and inadequate evidence. He is able to arrive at non-arbitrary conclusions resulting from reflective deliberations as opposed to the arbitrary whims of
the undeliberative agent. This is not to say that whoever reflects rationally will always make the most reasonable decision, but he will at least be aware of what the most reasonable decision appears to be to him. One may decide to follow a whim or an impulse in any number of situations, but an individual acts autonomously in such cases to the extent that he has engaged in rational reflection before making a decision to act unreasonably or irrationally in any given circumstance. If an individual did not go through the process of rational reflection before deciding to abandon the enterprise and follow a whim instead, we would be inclined to call him an impulsive or an anomic character, although it would be difficult to decide in any particular circumstances whether one is anomically following a whim or autonomously doing so.

The question arises as to what degree of objectivity or logical consistency is necessary in one's reasonings before one can be attributed with acting or thinking autonomously. Although it may be impossible to draw a mathematically precise line to distinguish cases where rational reflection is present but of very poor quality from those in which we would say it is absent altogether, it does not follow that the distinctions we normally make in this regard ought to be disregarded. We do not require that one's beliefs be true or one's reasonings wholly accurate before we attribute the possession or exercise of autonomy to him. For example, a person could spend thirty years studying the pyramids of Egypt and eventually arrive at an elaborate theory about how they were constructed. The theory
might be false, but we would not deny that the agent had presented us with a good example of autonomous thinking simply because his theory is false. Neither false beliefs nor errors in judgment necessarily constitute a threat to autonomy in the way that an inability to distinguish what might count as a reason for acting from what would not count as a reason for acting constitutes such a threat.

Besides freedom of choice and rational reflection there is at least one other condition necessary to the possession of personal autonomy. Where there is no strength of will to carry through with the choices one has made there can be no autonomy. We need not get into the debate here about whether there ever really are any gaps between judgment and action. We frequently experience such gaps in our everyday lives. No doubt the case could be made that there is an inverse correlation between the frequency of such gaps in one's life and the exercise of self-rule.

C. Strength of Will

The presence of strength of will in any given situation seems to depend to some extent upon the presence and strength of counter-inclinations. If counter-inclinations offer relatively little interference with one's purposes, goals, aims, or decisions, then one is usually attributed with having determination and strength of will. If one is easily swayed by counter-inclinations one is said to be weak-willed. The weak-willed person is closer to a state of anomie than a stronger-willed counterpart because his beliefs, values, principles, inclinations, etc., are constantly in conflict. The values
of the strong-willed person have been systematically ordered into a hierarchical structure of well defined priorities. The stronger-willed person is the one we often refer to as the self-disciplined person. This is not to suggest that the strong-willed, self-disciplined person will never experience conflict. Often it seems that the more one engages in rational reflection the more one is likely to experience conflict. The difference between the strong-willed and the weak-willed person, however, is that the strong-willed person usually resolves his conflicts and dilemmas or at least comes to terms with them, so that a new state of equilibrium results, enabling the individual to make autonomous decisions without living in a perpetual state of inner turbulence. Weakness of will is probably caused, at least in part, by an inability to put beliefs, values, goals, purposes, inclinations, etc., into hierarchical patterns out of which priorities arise. Therefore, the weak-willed person is easily swayed by whims and impulses which run contrary to his reasoned principles. "The strong-willed man," says Peters, "like the independently minded man, sticks to his principles in the face of ridicule, ostracism, punishment and bribes" (Peters, 1973b, p. 125).

2. The Value of Personal Autonomy

In this section I argue that we ought to adopt personal autonomy as the most important aim of compulsory education. I argue that personal autonomy has both extrinsic value and intrinsic value. I
suggest not only that autonomy is very widely more highly valued for its own sake than other possible candidates for the aim of compulsory schooling, but also that it ought to be more highly valued for its own sake than other possible candidates (e.g., happiness or knowledge for the sake of knowledge) because of its intimate connections with our notions of human dignity and self-respect. Of course we would not want to argue that there is no more to the business of education than the development of personal autonomy, because clearly autonomous people can continue to educate themselves or to be educated by others long after they have become autonomous. Rather, the argument is that the development of personal autonomy is the best criterion for us to use in picking out components for a compulsory curriculum justified on paternalistic grounds. In effect, I am arguing that the extrinsic and intrinsic worth of personal autonomy exceeds the extrinsic and intrinsic worth of other values that might be adopted as aims of compulsory education.

Something has intrinsic value, says Paul Taylor, if it is a felt or perceived quality of experience that is valued for its own sake (1961, pp. 19-32). I shall follow Taylor in this use of 'intrinsic value.' The experience of being an autonomous person, of being in charge of one's life, is clearly an experience that can have intrinsic value in this sense. Something that has extrinsic value, on the other hand, has value only in a derivative sense. Taylor (op. cit.) distinguishes among three kinds of extrinsic value: inherent value, instrumental value, and contributive value.
Personal autonomy has inherent value in so far as it has the capacity to produce in us a quality of experience which has intrinsic value for us. It has instrumental value in so far as it is a means to a desirable end, and it has contributive value if it is part of a whole that has intrinsic, inherent, or instrumental value.*

First, we will consider the extrinsic rewards of autonomy. It could be argued, for example, that the promotion of autonomy will have economic and material benefits for the child in a society where the production of goods depends in large measure on individual initiative and resourcefulness. Because they choose freely, reflect rationally, and exercise strength of will, autonomous persons may have the capacity for more initiative and resourcefulness than non-autonomous persons—at least in so far as non-autonomous persons are lacking in knowledge. It could also be argued that autonomous people are needed to form the cortex of the entire body politic if the human race is to progress in a worthwhile direction. People are generally aware of the problems of increasing pollution, over population, alienation, inflation, the proliferation of nuclear weaponry and the like, but so far very little has been done to remedy these situations. We can assume that autonomous people are better equipped to seek solutions to problems than non-autonomous people because rational reflection is usually required to find solutions to problems. Freedom of choice and strength of will are further required to implement

---

*The interested reader might pursue these distinctions further by consulting not only Taylor (op. cit.), but also Baylis (in Taylor, 1967), Lewis (1946), and Von Wright (1963).
Another argument about the merits of the promotion of autonomy might be referred to as the satisfaction argument. On this account autonomy can be viewed as extrinsically worthwhile in so far as it contributes to an intrinsically worthwhile (e.g., satisfied) state of mind, or it can be regarded as intrinsically worthwhile in so far as the experience of being an autonomous person is valued for its own sake. Either way, the claim before us is that the promotion of autonomy is important because it is important to human happiness or human satisfaction—something we value very highly.

We have already considered the satisfaction argument to some extent in relation to our presumption in favor of non-interference (see pages 30-31). There the point was made that it is an empirical question whether the practice of non-interference (in this case—the promotion of autonomy) leads to very much human satisfaction, and as an empirical claim it could be defeated by counter evidence. Still, the claim that autonomy contributes to human satisfaction need not be true in every possible case for it to lend support to the view that the promotion of autonomy is a desirable thing. For the support we want, the reader need only reflect on whether he finds it more satisfying to be an autonomous person or a passive recipient of forces outside himself. That it is more satisfying to be an autonomous person than a non-autonomous one is not a new idea. In fact, it is probably as old as philosophy itself. In relatively modern times, it has played a central role not only in the ethics of
utilitarians such as John Stuart Mill, but also, surprisingly enough, in the thought of philosophers such as Spinoza. Parts III, IV, and V of Spinoza's great work, The Ethics, are full of statements about the correlations between joy and autonomy (or Spinozist freedom as it might be called) on the one hand, and sadness and passivity on the other. Rawls makes use of the satisfaction argument (roughly) in relation to autonomy by referring to it as the Aristotelian Principle (Rawls, 1971, pp. 424-433). The Aristotelian principle, the truth of which Rawls accepts as given, says that human beings enjoy the exercise of their innate or trained abilities, and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity. Rawls says:

> Presumably complex activities--activities that require more rational reflection and hence more autonomy--are more enjoyable because they satisfy the desire for variety and novelty of experience, and leave room for feats of ingenuity and invention. They also invoke the pleasures of anticipation and surprise, and often the overall form of the activity, its structural development, is fascinating and beautiful. Moreover, simpler activities exclude the possibility of individual style and personal expression which complex activities permit or even require . . . .

(1971, p. 427)

The Aristotelian principle does not say that complex activities are more enjoyable than simple ones because they require more autonomy, but a causal connection is not really required for the point Rawls makes to be useful to us. If complex activities require more autonomy (because they require more rational reflection) than simple ones, then by helping people to become more autonomous we are at least giving them access to satisfactions that would not otherwise be
open to them. Autonomy does not guarantee satisfaction, but it at least makes greater satisfaction possible. Even if the Aristotelian principle is thought to be false, I think we would agree that the possession of autonomy opens up a wider range of activities for enjoyment than would otherwise be available to us.

Autonomy is important not only because it leads to economic and material benefits, solutions to social and environmental problems, personal satisfaction, and other things we value very highly, but also because it is fundamental to the possession of human dignity or worth. Our approval of people's actions increases in direct proportion to the degree to which autonomy is present. We might, for example, applaud a student for enrolling in a difficult course in chemistry if several easier alternatives were open to him, but we would consider the choice to have lesser worth if the student's freedom were limited to the extent that he is required to take either chemistry or physics, and enrolling in the course would not necessarily carry any merit at all if it were compulsory. We regard obedience to authority when it is done for a reason, as more meritorious than a conditioned response to a badge or a uniform. If the reason for obedience has been thoughtfully reflected upon, such that its groundings in moral or political philosophy are clear, we would usually regard the act of obedience as possessing more worth than an act of obedience which is fulfilled simply to avoid punishment. We approve more of the reflective than the thoughtless individual. Also, we regard the same act of obedience as more praiseworthy when
it is done from the exercise of strength of will rather than from personal preference or inclination.

To possess human dignity is to be a person in the full sense of the word. Not all human beings could be fully described as persons. "'Person' in our usage is a more precise term than 'human being' implying the possession of capacities (to be self-determining and rule-following). . . ." (Downie and Telfer, 1969, p. 35). To be both self-determining and rule-following is what it means, very loosely, to be autonomous. If 'to be a person' can be loosely equated with 'to be autonomous', then the moral principle of respect for persons becomes loosely synonymous with respect for a being with capacity for personal autonomy. To show respect for others is to take their behavior seriously and to assume that it is rational, i.e., that reasons rather than rationalizations can be supplied by the agent for it, and part of what it means to have respect for oneself is to engage in purposive behavior without undue dependence on others.

B. F. Skinner and other psychological behaviorists hold that the distinction we make between human beings and persons, between acts which are manifestations of greater and lesser degrees of human worth and dignity, is a distinction we should not make, since all behavior is genetically and environmentally determined. From this point of view, the elements of human volition are environmentally determined, too. One cannot escape the control of factors which determine one's behavior whether those factors are deliberately
designed by others or randomly determined by forces which are less apparent. Some kinds of controls result in beneficial consequences and some do not. Instead of branding all control as wrong, which is nonsense anyway, says Skinner, we should simply eliminate those forms of control which have undesirable consequences and encourage those forms of control that are beneficial (Skinner, 1971, p. 43).

But Skinner's argument can be defeated in at least two ways. First, even if everything including the elements of human volition is environmentally determined, we find it very useful to make distinctions among different kinds of behaviors depending on the nature of the determining factors involved. We find it useful to distinguish between those acts which are rationally reflected upon, for instance, and those which are not, even if we believe that an agent could not have acted otherwise without the circumstances of his action being different. We use such distinctions as bases for praising and blaming, and for encouraging and discouraging certain kinds of behaviors that we consider to be more beneficial or detrimental than others. The point here is that we do not require 'X could have acted otherwise' to mean 'even if all the circumstances of the situation had been exactly the same X could have acted otherwise' in order to continue making the useful distinctions we have made in the past.

Second, if all behavior is a matter of responding to stimuli or sets of stimuli which are simply responses to other sets of stimuli, then there is a strong sense in which we are all the pawns
of forces beyond ourselves, so by Skinner's own argument the introduction of any new stimulus into the system (that is not already a response within the system from some other stimulus within the system, ad infinitum) is logically impossible. What will be will be. Not only does this point of view defeat Skinner's suggestion about our controlling the environment, but taking it to heart has the unhappy consequence of destroying human motivation and individual initiative.

Skinner also suggests in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, that we should concentrate on making better environments instead of better people (Op. cit., p. 20). Surely Skinner regards people as part of the total environment—as potentially effective stimuli. If this is so we are improving the environment for everyone by improving individuals, i.e., by making individuals more autonomous.

One of the most important justifications of the promotion of autonomy from the educator's point of view lies in the fact that there is a close conceptual connection between what it means to be educated and what it means to be autonomous. It could be argued that the notion of autonomy is logically connected to the concept of education. "Educating people suggests developing in [them] states of mind which are valuable and which involve some degree of knowledge and understanding" (Hirst and Peters, 1970, p. 13).

What does it mean to suggest that knowledge is a necessary condition of education? Obviously, if a person possesses a skill or a knack in a particular area, no matter how valuable a knack it
is, some additional condition is required before we would have sufficient grounds for calling that person educated. The educated person must also possess a certain amount of information. A rose gardener, for example, would have to have detailed information about different kinds of roses, optimum conditions for growth, and the effects on growth patterns produced by varying climatic changes, soil conditions, etc. The mere possession of information, though, is also insufficient for someone to be correctly described as an educated person. An understanding of the interrelationships among the facts which comprise one's repertoire of information on roses would also be required, i.e., what is needed is an understanding of the "reason-why" of things. People who have gained an understanding of the "reason-why" of things with regard to growing roses are described as knowledgeable in botany, or in that branch of botany in which the rose grower specializes.

Having knowledge is often regarded as having true belief and an understanding of the evidence which warrants it. "Having knowledge, then, involves having rational belief, supported by reasons" (Coombs, 1975, p. 7). The important point in establishing the connection between autonomy and education is that having belief supported by reasons, which is an inherent part of the knowledge condition of education, is central to the second condition of autonomy, rational reflection.

Just in case it is suggested that the argument for the promotion of autonomy ought to be disregarded on the grounds that the promotion
of moral agency is overriding important, it should be pointed out that autonomy is central to moral agency. Clearly one cannot be morally responsible for his behavior unless his choices are freely made, but some capacity for rational reflection is also required. If, for example, one were to refrain from taking someone else's property because one has been conditioned not to take another's property, then one is not refraining from stealing, but only from taking someone else's property. 'Stealing', like other moral terms, involves the notion of intentionality which in turn involves freedom of choice and some degree of rational reflection. Whether the element of moral language under consideration is 'stealing', 'kindness', 'meanness', or 'murder', the notion of moral agency does not apply to people in whom rational reflection is lacking (unless it can be reasonably expected to be present).

Before we set aside the discussion of the value of autonomy, it should be pointed out that talking about the intrinsic worth of autonomy does not necessarily commit us to believing in the worth of autonomy in any strict, objectivist sense. We are at liberty to use the language of intrinsic worth and take either an objectivist or a subjectivist position. There are interesting arguments for both of these positions, though consideration of them is unfortunately far beyond the scope of this thesis. We shall see, however, that the topic arises again in relation to J. P. White's compulsory curriculum discussed in chapter four. Some further points about the language of intrinsic worth will then be made.
3. **Rival Candidates**

As we have mentioned, some people might think that while autonomy is a plausible candidate as the final aim of compulsory schooling, there are rival candidates with equally valid claims for occupying the same position. There are several aims, I think, that might be considered as justifiable (arguing from the forfeiture of rights) and as worthwhile as the pursuit of autonomy. Happiness, for example, could be considered such an aim. So could knowledge for the sake of knowledge, or experience for the sake of experience. But there is a good reason why personal autonomy is a better aim for compulsory schooling than such rival candidates. The argument has three parts:

1) There are no conclusive arguments to show that any particular value simply is more worthwhile than any other. We can offer good reasons for adopting some value as more worthwhile than another (as I have done in the previous section with personal autonomy), but in so doing we are only trying to convince others that they should adopt the value in question as worthwhile. We have no hope of proving to others that any particular value simply is more worthwhile than any other. There is no reason in principle, for example, why some fully rational person could not find combing his hair all day a worthwhile thing to do. We might think it regrettable that he finds such a value so worthwhile, and we might disagree with him that it is worthwhile, but we could not strictly accuse him of making a mistake. This point will be argued in more detail in chapter four in connection
with J. P. White's curriculum for the development of personal autonomy.

2) In the absence of conclusive arguments to show that any particular value simply is more worthwhile than any other, people ought to be allowed (from the purely self-regarding point of view) to be their own final judges of what is worth valuing and what is not. This follows from the presumption in favor of the right to non-interference.

3) In helping people to become autonomous we are helping them to be better judges of what is worth valuing and what is not, whereas in simply helping them to be happy (even if we knew how to do this), or to gain as many experiences as possible, or to acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge, we are not necessarily helping them to be better judges of what is worth valuing and what is not.

Allowing people to be their own final judges of what is worth valuing does not, of course, entail that we must compel them to study things that will make them better judges. The reader will recall that the question about whether we are obliged to compel students to study things that will make them better judges is a question that has been set aside. The argument from the forfeiture of rights, it should be remembered, suggests only that we are permitted to compel children to study things that will make them better judges. I am arguing, however, not only that we are permitted to impose certain studies on students, but also that it is desirable to do so for the
student's benefit. The argument for valuing autonomy over and above rival candidates for the final aim of compulsory education is that autonomy helps one not only to be a better judge of what is worthwhile, but also to secure what one believes to be worthwhile (because strength of will is the ability to close the gap between judgment and action)—advantages which rival candidates do not afford.

Of course not all the good of autonomy is to be secured by the compulsory imposition of liberal studies. I argue in the next chapter that liberal studies contribute to the rational reflection condition of autonomy, and I largely ignore the other two conditions. If and when we learn what kinds of pursuits contribute to the development of freedom of choice and strength of will, then, all things being equal, we shall have a ready-made justification for the compulsory imposition of those pursuits as well.

This chapter has been concerned with what 'personal autonomy' means, why autonomy is important, and why we ought to adopt it as the final aim of compulsory schooling over other possible aims. In the next chapter we will examine one recent attempt in the literature to show how a liberal education contributes to the acquisition of personal autonomy, and a new argument outlining some of the connections between liberal education and personal autonomy will be offered.
This chapter consists of two parts: an examination of J. P. White's compulsory curriculum, and an analysis of the connection between liberal education and personal autonomy. White's proposals are worthy of our attention because he is the only contemporary philosopher of education to propose a compulsory curriculum for the explicit purpose of making students autonomous persons. White not only uses the language of personal autonomy but also adopts autonomy as the only justifiable aim of compulsory education from the purely self-regarding (paternalistic) point of view. We will see that White's notion of personal autonomy is somewhat different from the notion presented in the previous chapter; hence, his reasons for proposing compulsory liberal education are somewhat different from ours as well. After a brief exposition of White's proposals, a less daring but more justifiable thesis will be presented.

1. **White's Proposals**

   White bases his upholding of personal autonomy as the only justifiable (paternalistic) aim of compulsory education on considerations about what we are entitled to regard as worthwhile.

   We will see that White equates what is wanted on reflection for
its own sake with what is intrinsically worthwhile. By so doing, White is offering a descriptive account of a prescriptive term. Because White's argument rests on the naturalistic fallacy we shall have to reject it as it stands in the end, but in the meantime it will be useful for us to see how he proceeds.

White offers the example of our depriving a drunken man of a knife with which he has been playing on the grounds that he might harm himself, to show that in such a case we think we have a pretty good idea of what would harm the man--physical pain or damage (White, 1973, p. 17). Suppose though, suggests White, that we find out that the man had decided that he would commit suicide by stabbing himself while drunk. If we knew his decision to commit suicide had been a rational one then we would lose confidence that physical damage is not worthwhile for that person. "Our normal confident belief," says White, "that physical damage harms a person rests on the assumption that such damage hinders him in satisfying his wants: if what he wants--as an end, not a means--is to die, then being stabbed is not harmful because it is worthwhile to him" (Op. cit., p. 17). This seems to imply, says White, that what is intrinsically worthwhile for someone is what he wants for its own sake. As White points out, however, there are some problems with this implication. A drunkard playing with a knife (and not wanting to commit suicide) might want to play with it for its own sake, but if on sobering up he is grateful to us for having taken the knife away from him, then it would be odd to consider his playing with the knife as intrinsically worthi-
while. So he tries to lead us to the conclusion that X is intrinsically worthwhile not just if it is wanted for its own sake, but if on reflection it is wanted for its own sake. One problem with this analysis is that what is wanted on reflection at time $t_1$ for its own sake may be different from what is wanted on further reflection at time $t_2$. This is not to suggest that there is a problem in X being intrinsically worthwhile at one point in time, but not intrinsically worthwhile at another--there is no reason why an activity that is valued on reflection for its own sake at time $t_1$ may not be valued on reflection for its own sake at time $t_2$--the problem is rather that X may be thought to be wanted for its own sake given a certain amount of reflection on the matter, while given more reflection it may not be wanted for its own sake. How much reflection is enough? White handles the problem as follows:

... the want in question must be judged in terms of an ideal. In the ideal case what is wanted for its own sake on reflection is what a man would want for its own sake, given at least (a) that he knows of all the other things that he might have preferred at that time and (b) that he has carefully considered priorities among these different choices, bearing in mind not only his present situation but also whether he is likely to alter his priorities in the future. ((b) effectively rules out any preference adopted in a state of depression, euphoria, etc.: a depressed person is shut off by his depression from considering certain options which would otherwise be open to him.)

(Op. cit. p. 20)

I think White would agree that we should not be too strict about requiring that condition (a) be met before allowing that someone knows what is intrinsically worthwhile for him because condition (a) might in fact never obtain. How could we ever be sure of knowing
all the other things which we might have preferred at the time in question? There must be an infinite variety of things that one might have chosen, so it would be impossible for us to be aware of them all. But if condition (a) cannot be met then neither can condition (b) because (b) requires consideration of priorities among these different choices—that is, among all the things one might have preferred at the time in question. We could, therefore, amend (b) to read: "that he has carefully considered priorities among all the other things which he might have preferred from among the available options, bearing in mind not only his present situation but also whether he is likely to alter his priorities in the future." The upshot of this is that if one fails to reflect on all the available options because one does not know what the options are, then even though the rest of condition (b) obtains one may be wrong in believing that something is intrinsically worthwhile for oneself. Thus intrinsic worth is supposed to be intimately connected with wants and desires but not with spur-of-the-moment whims and impulses.

But what are the objections to White's equation (i.e., the amended version of White's equation) of what is intrinsically worthwhile for someone with what he wants on reflection for its own sake? Robin Barrow (1976) objects to this account on the grounds that it leads to some counter-intuitive conclusions, such that if people on reflection want to comb their hair all day until they die of starvation, then combing their hair all day is intrinsically worthwhile for them. The reason we might be inclined to accept such a case
as a counter-example, however, is simply that most of us do not value combing our hair all day in any positive way, and our natural assumption is that no sane person could have values so radically different from our own. But it would be wrong of us to take this position. There is no reason in principle why a rational person might not find combing his hair all day a worthwhile thing to do.

Barrow's more serious objection is that wanting something on reflection for its own sake is a necessary condition for an ascription of intrinsic value but not a sufficient condition. The argument he offers in support of this position is the following: It is possible that on reflection I want to eat sweets. Because I am aware of all the negative consequences of eating sweets I can only assume that I want to eat sweets for their own sake, but I certainly do not regard eating sweets as intrinsically worthwhile. Therefore, wanting something for its own sake is not the whole story about intrinsic worth. But here again Barrow's counter example seems not to hold up. In the case of eating sweets it is not the eating of the sweets we value for its own sake, but the taste of the sweets that we value or the sensory experience of eating the sweets. If eating seaweed gave us the same sensory experience as eating sweets then we would eat seaweed, not sweets. So this example proves only the trivial truth that what is extrinsically worthwhile is not to be equated with what is intrinsically worthwhile.

Still, Barrow has an important, general point to make in opposition to White. He charges White with not establishing that it
is meaningless or false to claim that any pursuit is intrinsically valuable other than by the criterion that a particular individual would on reflection want to engage in it. White has produced no argument at all, says Barrow, to show that some pursuits such as science, for example, may not be intrinsically worthwhile whatever particular individuals may feel about them. Barrow is right, of course, but still we might ask where the onus of proof really lies. If someone wants to claim that some things such as science are intrinsically worthwhile whatever particular individuals may feel about them, then he ought to produce arguments to show why we should accept this position. Unfortunately, Barrow does not purport to have any such arguments, but we might look at the arguments of Peters, Mill, and Moore on this point. We have already met Peters' well-known transcendental argument in trying to establish the principle of non-interference. Peters says that by simply asking the question "Why do this rather than that?" (e.g., Why include one thing in the curriculum and not the other?) we are committed to the worthwhileness of the pursuit of certain theoretical activities such as science and philosophy. This is what Peters says:

the person who asks such a question must already have a serious concern for truth built into his consciousness. For how can a serious practical question be asked unless a man also wants to acquaint himself as well as he can of the situation out of which the question arises and of the facts of various kinds which provide the framework of possible answers? The various theoretical enquiries are explorations of these different facets of his experience. To ask the question 'Why do this rather than that?' seriously is therefore, however embryonically, to be committed to those enquiries which are defined by their serious concern with these aspects of reality which give context to the question which he is asking.

(Peters, 1966, p. 164)
Peters is right that people concerned with what there are good reasons for doing are committed to rationality, but it does not follow that a commitment to rationality entails a commitment to the serious study of the disciplines of science and philosophy.

To whatever extent it might be true, if it is true at all, that subjects like science and philosophy are intrinsically valuable to us provided we seriously ask the question 'What ought we to include in the curriculum?' the possibility that one might value other kinds of activities (e.g., football and soccer) equally with the more theoretical ones is not precluded by a commitment to rationality. Of course Peters would agree that they are not precluded. His point is only that they are not required as are the more theoretical studies. But in any case, it is still open to us to disagree with Peters that the theoretical pursuits are intrinsically worthwhile. His transcendental argument does not give us a valid argument of the sort we are looking for. At most it shows that theoretical pursuits are, to some degree, extrinsically worthwhile: they are instrumental in helping us answer the question "Why do this rather than that?"

Mill argues that although pleasure is the highest good, some pleasures are of greater worth than others. Poetry, he suggests, is of greater intrinsic worth than pushpin. In making this claim he is not offering the commonly held view that poetry leads to more enjoyment than pushpin; i.e., that the pursuit of poetry has more beneficial consequences than the pursuit of pushpin (although he holds this to be true)—he is instead making the claim that poetry in itself
is more worthwhile than pushpin. The argument he offers in favor of accepting poetry as intrinsically worthwhile and not accepting pushpin as such is this: given someone who knows both kinds of pursuits he will always choose poetry over pushpin if given a choice. But this argument of Mill's is unacceptable for at least two related reasons:

1) The empirical claim that people who know both poetry and pushpin (if given a choice) always choose poetry might be false, and

2) even if it were true of everyone in the world who knows both poetry and pushpin that the former is always chosen over the latter, it does not follow that no counter-instance will arise tomorrow.

Besides, we are simply not entitled to make the jump from a claim about what people find to be intrinsically worthwhile to what is in fact worthwhile. So Mill's views about intrinsic worth will not stand up either.

Nor will any position resembling Moore's intuitionism help us very much. As White points out, Moore has claimed that

... we know by intuition that the pursuit of beauty and (in his case) of personal affection are the highest goods. But what if others come out with different intuitions? Suppose it is intuitively obvious to me that mystical contemplation is the sumnum bonum and that personal affection is way down the scale: how could one support Moore's intuitions against mine or vice versa?

(White, 1973, p. 10)

So White has some good grounds for his claim that it does not seem to make much sense to talk about the intrinsic worth of something without considering how people feel about it—and besides how people
feel about it he believes there does not seem to be much else to consider. This is what White says:

Suppose there is a man who wants only one thing, X, for its own sake. He has reflected thereon, satisfying the demands of the ideal situation. Every choice but X he finds abhorrent. Would it make sense to ask, 'True, he wants X on reflection for its own sake, but is X really intrinsically worthwhile?' The question implies that, granted something is of intrinsic value, this must be other than X. But everything else besides X he finds loathsome: perhaps, we might add, it makes him physically or mentally ill to engage in it. How could it be, we might ask, that anything of the kind could be intrinsically worthwhile for him? What would be meant by claiming this? Once again we reach the point, by a more dramatic route, that the onus is on the skeptic to say what he means. (Op. cit. p. 20)

We must grant to White that it is at least counter-intuitive to claim that something could be intrinsically worthwhile even if no one ever valued it, though it may not be logically inconsistent. Be that as it may, Barrow cannot consistently allow that such things as science could be intrinsically worthwhile whatever particular individuals might feel about them because he argues (1976, p. 81) that White's criterion is necessary but not sufficient for an ascription of intrinsic worth—so the feelings of individuals do count for something.

In claiming that White's criterion is necessary but not sufficient for an ascription of intrinsic worth, Barrow offers no suggestions for expanding the criterion to make it adequate. If Barrow thinks it makes sense to suggest that what we might want on reflection for its own sake might be intrinsically worthwhile, then he ought to indicate at least in general terms what the difference is between wanting something on reflection for its own sake and its being
intrinsically worthwhile. If Hare is correct, saying 'X is intrinsically worthwhile' is prescriptive, whereas saying X is desired on reflection is not, so the meaning of 'X is intrinsically worthwhile' cannot be equated with the meaning of 'X is desired on reflection'. Even though 'X is intrinsically worthwhile' and 'X is desired on reflection' are not intensionally equivalent, they could, however, be extensionally equivalent—that is, those items to which the phrase 'intrinsically worthwhile' applies might be those and only those items to which the phrase 'desired on reflection' applies. But how could we know whether or not this is true?

White's equation of 'X is intrinsically worthwhile' with 'X is wanted on reflection for its own sake' is important in his account because he argues that the business of education is to put people into a position in which they can know and acquire the things they want on reflection for their own sake—a position which he counts as one of autonomy. If people are autonomous, on White's account, they are better able to pick out what is worthwhile for them. For White then, autonomy is extrinsically worthwhile—a means to obtaining what is intrinsically worthwhile—which, he suggests, varies from person to person.

White holds that if one does not know what he wants for its own sake after considering the options, no one else can tell him what he wants. It is probably true, as White says, that at times someone else might be the better judge of what a person really wants for its own sake—in a case when one's desires are unconscious or repressed, for example, a psychiatrist might know better than the person concerned
what that person really wants—but "the psychiatrist could not be the final judge on what I really wanted. It is only when I avow that he is right that his claim becomes justified..." (Op. cit., p. 21).

At this point it might be helpful to clarify the different senses of intrinsic worth as they have arisen so far. In chapter three I argued for the intrinsic worth of autonomy. There, the notion of intrinsic worth was taken to apply to a felt or perceived quality of experience that is valued for its own sake. It was argued that the experience of being an autonomous person is clearly an experience that is worthwhile in this sense, and it was argued further that autonomy is fundamental to our notions of human worth and dignity. The experience of having worth and dignity is also clearly an experience that is highly valued for its own sake.

In the present chapter we have seen that White takes the term 'intrinsically worthwhile' as a synonym for 'what is wanted on reflection for its own sake'. Barrow correctly objects to White's descriptive account of a prescriptive term. Since we can sensibly ask 'Even though X is wanted on reflection for its own sake, is it really worthwhile?', the term 'intrinsically worthwhile' cannot be equated in meaning with 'what is wanted on reflection for its own sake'. (This is Moore's famous open question argument.) But neither Barrow nor anyone else has produced a convincing argument to show that any particular pursuit is intrinsically worthwhile even if it is not wanted on reflection for its own sake. So the educator who is concerned with picking out intrinsically worthwhile activities is caught
in a bind: if he picks out what is wanted on reflection for its own sake, he runs the risk of not picking out what is intrinsically worthwhile, but what else can he do? He has no way of isolating which activities (if any) are intrinsically worthwhile whether or not they are wanted on reflection for their own sake. But there is a very simple solution to this problem that a sane and sensible educator who is concerned with picking out curricular components can take. He can stop talking about the notion of intrinsic worth (unless he stipulates how he is going to use the term); and he can concentrate instead on what is wanted on reflection (of the best sort that we can muster) for its own sake, or on qualities of experience that are valued for their own sake, and so forth. We simply cannot argue convincingly for the intrinsic worth of anything unless we specify in what sense the notion of intrinsic worth is to be taken (as we did in chapter three).

Although White's compulsory curriculum is a curriculum for the development of autonomy, he offers very little by way of analysis of the notion of autonomy. He is content, it seems, to equate autonomy with knowing how to obtain what one wants on reflection for its own sake. Still, his notion of autonomy is similar enough to the one presented in chapter three that it would be worth our while to see what kind of compulsory curriculum he proposes.

A. Specific Components

White considers the question of what kind of curriculum children should follow in schools and what its end-points should be under two headings: knowledge of particular types of activity and
knowledge of ways of life.

In discussing knowledge of particular types of activity (omitting such activities as lying in the sun, which might be intrinsically worthwhile for some people, but not educationally worthwhile because they require very little learning) White says they can be divided exhaustively into two classes:

1) those in which no understanding of what it is to want X is logically possible without engaging in X, and

2) those in which some understanding of what it is to want X is logically possible without engaging in X.

White's criterion for determining whether a person has 'some understanding of X' is the ability to give either a correct indentification of cases of X, or a correct verbal account of what it is to engage in X. On this basis it can be clearly seen that understanding what it is to communicate through language, for example, is clearly a different matter from understanding what it is to climb mountains. In the former case a person incapable of communicating through language does not possess the concepts either to explain what communication is or to be able to pick out examples of people communicating through language. One can, however, possess the concepts necessary to explain what it is to go mountain climbing or pick out instances of mountain climbing, without having actually engaged in this activity.

Besides communication in general, White includes the following in his list of Category I activities (the list is not intended to be
exhaustive):

1) Engaging in pure mathematics. Because mathematical concepts are defined in terms of other mathematical concepts one cannot understand such concepts without being inside the discipline. That is, one cannot understand pure mathematics without actually engaging in mathematical activity.

2) Engaging in the exact physical sciences. Because the concepts of physical science—e.g., mass, force—are analysable only in terms of other scientific concepts, these concepts are unintelligible to someone outside the discipline.

3) Appreciating works of art. Here it is the aesthetic response that is important—not knowledge of a lot of tightly interdefined aesthetic concepts. The concept of such a response is itself sui generis. One cannot come to understand what it is to view an object or an event from the aesthetic point of view without already having been initiated into this way of thinking and feeling. How does one come to be initiated in the first place? Through being exposed to works of art by sensitive guides, says White, until one comes to perceive aesthetic objects for oneself. But there is also another reason why White includes art in his list of Category I activities. What counts as art is a disputed question. "Art" is an essentially contested concept. Art may be thought to be that which embodies significant form or expresses emotion or reveals metaphysical truths. "To study the arts," says White, "is inter alia to become aware of the multiple and conflicting criteria of
value which are essential features of these fields. It is not clear how someone who had never studied them could conceivably have this awareness.

4) Philosophizing. Although philosophizing has its own technical concepts, these are not central to the activity since one can philosophize without them. To do philosophy is to come to look at the concepts one already possesses (time, thought, pleasure, etc.) from a different stance—a higher-order point of view. To do this is to begin to do philosophy. Philosophical activity is quite unintelligible to the non-philosopher.

The following are White's Category II activities (the list is not intended to be exhaustive):

1) Speaking a foreign language. As long as one has a native language one can gain some understanding of what it is for people to speak some other language even though one cannot actually do so.

2) Cricket and other organized games. The concepts of cricket and other organized games can be learned without actually playing them.

3) Cookery, sewing, carpentry, etc. The concepts of these activities can easily be made intelligible to the onlooker who does not actually engage in them.

4) Painting pictures, writing poetry, composing or performing music, etc. One can understand what it is to do these things without actually doing them, as long as one knows what pictures, poetry, music, etc., are.

5) Vocational activities like being an accountant or working on an
assembly track.

6) Non-vocational activities like bridge, bingo, fishing, mountain climbing, etc.

It should be pointed out that some Category II activities (e.g., #4 above) depend upon initiation into Category I activities. In fact all presuppose initiation into linguistic communication but some presuppose more than this as well. One could not understand what it is to be a poet or a musician without some understanding of the arts. Nor could one understand what it is to teach physics without some understanding of physics. Many other dependency relationships between the categories could be traced.

The curricular consequences of White's distinction are probably clear. Category I activities, says White, are those which students must be compelled to engage in to some extent as part of their basic education. Students must come to have some understanding of Category II activities as well, but this understanding can be gained without actually engaging in Category II activities. One can gain sufficient understanding of Category II activities to know (perhaps not for certain, but to have a pretty good idea at least) whether one wants to pursue the activity or not. Pictures, films, verbal accounts, and observations of these activities is enough to give one the required understanding.

White sees not only engaging in Category I activities and coming to engage in Category II activities, but also coming to know about different ways of life, as essential aspects of a compulsory
curriculum for autonomy. It is in this respect he thinks the study of history, among other things, has an important role to play.

Different ways of life suggested by White include (nor is this list intended to be exhaustive):

1. A way of life devoted to the pursuit of truth, in science, history, etc.
2. A way of life devoted to artistic creativity.
3. A way of life devoted to others' good: the altruistic way of life.
4. A way of life devoted to physical prowess or adventure.
5. A way of life devoted to physical pleasures more broadly understood.
6. A religious way of life, premised on the belief that this life is only a preparation for an after-life.
7. A life devoted to the acquisition of goods.
8. A life devoted to the acquisition of power over others.
9. A way of life devoted to reflection on how one should live.
10. A way of life devoted to domesticity.
11. A way of life devoted to public affairs.
12. The ascetic way of life.
13. A way of life based on a Thoreauesque return to nature.
14. A way of life based on one's surrendering to someone else the decision about what sort of life one should lead.

(White, op. cit., p. 44)

We also have to ensure, says White, that learning about the different activities and ways of life makes a difference to how students view their world and how they feel about various aspects of their lives. White does not say exactly how this kind of integration is to be achieved—presumably that is an empirical question—but he points out that this aim is perfectly compatible with either a topic-centred curriculum or a curriculum based on subject matters taught largely in independence of each other.

White would also include in a compulsory curriculum some way of bringing students to consider other people's interests impartially with their own. This kind of moral integration is surely desirable,
and if we knew how to achieve it by morally unobjectionable means I am sure we would want to do so. It is, however, outside the realm of a purely self-regarding compulsory curriculum and as such it is not central to this thesis.

As a final aspect of his compulsory curriculum, White would also include what he calls a "practical component." What he means by this is the practical knowledge one must have in order to achieve one's ends. Without this component the student may be equipped for life in a world in which there are no obstacles to achieving one's ends but he would not be equipped for the real world. Says White:

... it is not enough to have got one's ends into some kind of order: to be more than a dreamer, one has to have some idea of how these ends may be attained, of the obstacles in their way, of how these obstacles may be overcome, and of which ends are impracticable since the obstacles in their way are unsurmountable.

(White, op. cit., p. 55)

By practical subjects White does not mean such activities as arts and crafts, carpentry, or cooking. Practical pursuits would not necessarily require any physical skill. They would include studies about legal, financial, political, and psychological matters—studies which would help one to understand the means of obtaining one's ends.

B. Objections to White's Components

White's distinction between Category I and Category II activities can be objected to on at least two grounds. First, it could be argued that the distinction falls apart because all activities belong in Category I. A basketball devotee could argue that one
cannot really come to understand basketball until one has actually played that game. Unless one has had the experience of playing basketball (perhaps several experiences of playing basketball) one can only grasp the externals of the game—not the essence of it. Clearly one cannot have first hand knowledge of what it is to play basketball if one has never played, but first hand knowledge is not what is required. All that White is after is some understanding of an activity—enough to make an intelligent choice about whether one would want to choose the activity as a worthwhile pursuit for oneself. This, I think, is possible. So this objection does not really destroy White's position.

Second, it could be argued that the distinction falls apart because all activities belong in Category II. Science, for example, could be seen as a mere extension of such activities as collecting plants and butterflies and asking 'Why?' questions about them. But as White points out, Category I activities may have their roots in Category II activities but it does not follow from this that one can have enough understanding of Category I activities to discriminate between instances of them and other forms of activity. So this objection does not really destroy White's distinction either.

But there are other more subtle objections to White on this point. John McPeck argues that the way in which White states the distinction it is circular, and that even when the circularity is overlooked the distinction is impracticable. He argues further that the only consistent interpretation of all that White says about this
distinction would force him to defend some version of the indefensible doctrine of "verstehen" (1977, pp. 138-145). There is no need for us to dwell on the intricacies of these arguments, however, because besides the objections to the distinctions between Category I and Category II activities there are many other more apparent objections to White's proposals that could be made—most of them resulting from the fact that we are unsure of the consequences of pursuing many activities. Hence, many important questions remain unanswered. Which studies from among the wide range of options are the ones we should pick out as contributing to the acquisition of practical knowledge—i.e., the know-how one needs in order to achieve one's ends? How is integration (or cognitive perspective) to be achieved? How many Category II activities are there? If there is an infinite number of possible candidates (or what seems to us an infinite number) then how are we to pick out which ones we ought to make students aware of? How many Category I activities are there? Are algebra and geometry, for example, entitled to be included in the list in their own right or is the general category of mathematics all that is needed? We could go on but there is probably little point in doing that. Pointing out the shortcomings of any educational theory is an important task, but trying to put forward a defensible theory provides the more important challenge. The challenge cannot be fully met in this thesis, but some specific suggestions can be made about what we ought to teach in schools from the self-regarding point of view.
2. **Liberal Components and Personal Autonomy**

The task of this section is to show how liberal education contributes to the development of personal autonomy in a way that physical and vocational training, for example, do not. Compared to the task of specifying all the curricular components one might include in a curriculum for autonomy as White has tried to do, the task of this section is a much more modest one. The aim here is only to establish the importance of liberal education in the development of personal autonomy. The task of specifying all the curricular components one might include in a curriculum for autonomy is, I think, beyond our reach because there are so many empirical questions involved which have not yet been answered. We noted earlier, for example, that the psychotic is not autonomous no matter how much knowledge he may have because he lacks freedom of choice, but we do not know exactly what kinds of learnings and what kinds of experiences result in the acquisition of freedom in the relevant sense. Nor do we know how to ensure that the knowledge children acquire will make a difference to how they see and feel about the world. Nor do we know how to ensure that judgment gets transformed into action. Still, there are some very general kinds of recommendations we can make about what students ought to learn in schools in the interests of developing personal autonomy.

Because the development of freedom of choice and strength of will are psychological matters, there is little we can say about how they can be developed, but there are some useful philosophical points
that we might make about the development of rational reflection. Even this is partly an empirical matter if we agree that the rationally reflective person has achieved some kind of integrated state of mind, but it is clear that one cannot be rationally reflective unless one has knowledge or beliefs to be reflective with and to be reflective about. How much and what kind of knowledge is sufficient to make a person rationally reflective enough to be autonomous? Surely there is no definitive answer to this question. There is a sliding scale involved here. People can be more or less rationally reflective and therefore more or less autonomous.

It would be naive, I think, to assume that some complete and uncontroversial specification of a compulsory curriculum for autonomy could be put forward. We would do better to avoid hairsplitting arguments (which are bound to be inconclusive anyhow) about which elements of a curriculum such as White's ought to be retained, which ought to be omitted and which non-elements ought to be added to the list, and instead to consider in general one important part of the curriculum White suggests—which is roughly, very roughly, a compulsory liberal arts education for everyone. The tack I shall take is to defend a liberal arts curriculum on the grounds that without it, or something like it, the rational reflection condition of autonomy cannot be met. It should be emphasized that there may be discrepancies between any liberal arts curriculum and the cognitive components of the best possible curriculum for autonomy (whatever that might be), but we shall simply have to ignore such possible
discrepancies because we cannot tell exactly to what extent the study of history, for example, contributes towards the development of autonomy or whether one might achieve the same level of autonomy through some other study instead. But I hope to make at least one thing clear: being able to reflect rationally at a reasonable level requires a considerable dose of liberal education no matter how the precise boundaries of that notion are defined.

The aim of the remainder of this section is to show why it is important for the development of autonomy that students learn science, history, mathematics, literature, philosophy, and so forth. The elements of a liberal arts curriculum will be considered in a lump sum, so to speak, and some general claims will be made about them. No doubt some very useful claims about particular elements of a liberal arts curriculum—history, for example,—could be made, but the concerns of this thesis are confined to liberal education in general. With sociologists of knowledge opposing the compulsory imposition of traditional forms of knowledge on students on the grounds that the compulsory imposition of traditional forms of knowledge is instrumental in helping higher soci-economic groups suppress lower ones, and with popular theorists suggesting both that students ought to be allowed to choose their own curricula and that academic subjects have no relevance in students' lives, it seems there are good reasons for trying to defend the compulsory imposition of a liberal arts curriculum in general on students, as opposed to defending the inclusion or exclusion of some particular element in
the curriculum.

We should keep in mind that the points made here about liberal education have nothing to do with teaching methods. It would be wrong to assume that a liberal education must be equated with a traditionally authoritarian system characterized by passivity on the part of students, although the psychological association between the two is perhaps understandable for the reason that liberal education has traditionally been conducted in an authoritarian manner. The authoritarian style of teaching is probably a throw-back to the time of St. Augustine who advocated authoritarian teaching methods on the grounds that only true belief (not understanding) is required for salvation. In any case, a good liberal education is perfectly compatible with the gentlest of teaching methods and the keenest activity of mind on the part of pupils.

We sometimes hear it said of the intellectual disciplines such things as they help to lift a person's spirit above the world, or they equip one's mind to enter the world and perform its tasks. What we need to know, however, is exactly what it is about philosophical, historical, and scientific knowledge that enables a person to be more rationally reflective than, say, knowledge of football, carpentry, automobile engines, or pot throwing, enables him to be. The answer lies, I think, in the fact that knowledge of football, carpentry, automobile engines, or pot throwing, logically cannot involve a very deep understanding of the relationships and inter-relationships between the bits of knowledge about football, carpentry,
engines, or pots without being knowledge in the traditional disciplines.

For example, someone might be a highly skilled thrower of clay pots, and this skill might involve not only knowing-how but also a certain amount of knowing-that. If such knowledge is going to contribute substantially to one's ability to reflect rationally, however, then it would include not only knowledge of the differences between kinds of clays, which in turn would involve knowledge of weather and soil conditions that produce the different kinds, but also some degree of aesthetic sensitivity which in turn would involve knowledge of human feelings and emotions. The more reflective one is going to be, the more one has to have a store of knowledge from the established disciplines, and the more that knowledge has to make a difference to how one sees and feels about the world.

Not only do skills in themselves involve little depth of knowledge (understanding of relationships and interrelationships), but few skills have a very wide range of cognitive content. As Peters points out:

There is very little to know about riding bicycles, swimming or golf. It is largely a matter of 'knowing how' rather than of 'knowing that', of knack rather than of understanding. Furthermore what there is to know throws very little light on much else. In history, science, or literature, on the other hand, there is an immense amount to know, and, if it is properly assimilated, it constantly throws light on, widens, and deepens one's view of countless other things.

(Peters, 1973, p. 95)

The phrase "if it is properly assimilated" in the above quotation is important because it is possible, of course, for someone to be a student of the very best liberal education we can provide and
still not become a very rationally reflective person. A liberal education can provide no guarantees, and it would be too much to expect that it could. It is enough to show that without a liberal education of some sort one cannot become a very reflective person. I say very reflective because as Dearden points out nearly every human being is an exerciser of autonomy to some extent, no matter how small. "Even in acting under the strictest orders, some minimal active intelligence is called for" (Dearden, 1972, p. 460). Even if one's entire life were lived by following some externally imposed set of rules, one is often required to decide whether a particular situation is an instance where a given rule applies or not. The use of language in anything other than a parrot-like fashion requires at least some minimal ability to reflect rationally. So the extent to which one is a rationally reflective person (and an autonomous person) is certainly a matter of degree.

In considering how much rational reflection and how much in the way of liberal studies is enough for the exercise of autonomy to any significant degree, we can be helped by looking at Michael Oakeshott's distinction between information and judgment (1967). Oakeshott suggests that the various abilities which constitute what we may be said to know are made up of information and judgment. Information is a matter of impersonal facts, specifiable in propositions. Judgment, however, is unspecifiable in propositional form. Judgment is that part of knowledge which enables us to interpret information, to decide upon its relevance, to recognize what rule to
apply, and to discover what action permitted by the rule should, in
the circumstances, be performed (op. cit., p. 168). Paul Hirst
makes essentially the same point as Oakeshott when he says:

All knowledge involves the use of symbols and the making of
judgments in ways that cannot be expressed in words and can only
be learnt in a tradition. The art of scientific investigation
and the development of appropriate experimental tests, the
forming of an historical explanation and the assessment of its
truth, the appreciation of a poem: all of these activities are
high arts that are not in themselves communicable simply by
words.

(Hirst, 1974, p. 45)

Oakeshott argues that this element of knowledge that is not
communicable simply by words—judgment—cannot be acquired in a
vacuum; that is, it cannot be acquired in isolation from information
because information provides the raw material for interpretations,
decisions, recognitions, and so forth. Until one can speak the
language of history, philosophy, science, etc., in a manner not
expressly provided for by the literature of those disciplines, one is
lacking in the ability to make judgments in those areas.

Having judgment, as Oakeshott is using the term, is having the
ability to think with an appreciation of the considerations which
belong to the different modes of thought, and it is something learned
in the presence of those who have it. But learning to think is not,
he says, simply a matter of learning how to judge, to interpret and
to use information. It is also a matter of learning to recognize
and enjoy the intellectual virtues of disinterested curiosity,
patience, intellectual honesty, exactness, industry, concentration,
doubt, and elegance. In addition, it is a matter of acquiring the
disposition to submit to refutation, as well as learning the love of truth and justice. And above all, it is the ability to detect the individual intelligence (which he calls style) at work in every utterance. Individual intelligence is seen in the choice made, not according to the rules, but within the area of freedom left by the negative operation of rules. "We may listen to what a man has to say," says Oakeshott, "but unless we overhear in it a mind at work and can detect the idiom of thought, we have understood nothing" (op. cit., p. 175).

We can readily see the connection between what Oakeshott calls judgment and the rational reflection condition of autonomy. If initiation into the literature of the disciplines is required before one can in some sense rise above that literature to make judgments of one's own, then initiation into the literature of the disciplines is required before one can achieve any significant degree of rational reflection. This is not to suggest that the acquisition of mere information ought to be pursued for many months or years before rational reflection can be acquired. It is to suggest, however, that rational reflection requires much more than mere initiation into the literature of each discipline.

The connection between liberal studies and rational reflection is further emphasized by Hirst and Taylor. Hirst (1974) has argued that a liberal education is concerned directly with the development of the mind in rational knowledge; that is, the very acquisition of knowledge in the traditional disciplines is the acquisition of a
rational mind. It is interesting to note, however, that Hirst's justification for the pursuit of rational knowledge is very different from the justification offered in this thesis. Hirst believes that the justification for the pursuit of rational knowledge is somehow built right into the enterprise of pursuing it. He says:

To question the pursuit of any kind of rational knowledge is in the end self-defeating, for the questioning itself depends on accepting the very principles whose use is finally being called in question.

(Op. cit., p. 42)

This justification is insufficient for our purposes, of course, because even if asking the question 'Why pursue liberal studies?' presupposes some commitment to the pursuit of liberal studies, it need only presuppose commitment of a very embryonic sort. It is possible to be committed to rationality by wanting a sane and sensible answer to the question 'Why pursue liberal studies?' without commitment to the serious pursuit of knowledge in each of the rational disciplines.

Taylor (1961) contends that it is impossible to make rational choices among ways of life unless one is free, enlightened, and impartial. His enlightenment condition requires that one have intellectual knowledge (science and philosophy), imaginative knowledge (achieved through a wide variety of personal experience, the reading of history, biography, anthropology, and sociology, the study of religion, and the appreciation of the fine arts), and practical knowledge (first hand experience of a way of life). We may be unable to give children first hand experiences of ways of life, but
through a liberal arts curriculum, Taylor would argue, we can clearly help them to achieve some degree of enlightenment.

Interestingly, one of Taylor's conditions for the impartiality condition of rational choice is the absence of bias in the choice. He says a choice is unbiased to the extent that (i) the chooser's upbringing was nonauthoritarian; (ii) the chooser's education was liberal, and (iii) the person's experience of life up to the time of choice was of considerable variety, richness, and depth (op. cit., p. 172). The important point for this thesis is Taylor's claim that a liberal education contributes to the absence of bias. That claim is somewhat controversial, so it should be examined in some detail. Clearly the absence of bias is required to achieve any significant degree of rational reflection.

Earlier in the thesis some of the views of the "sociologist of knowledge" position were discussed in considering the notion of alternative forms of knowledge. Now is the time to elaborate the case against proponents of that position. Their basic claim, as we have seen, is that liberal education is oppressive because it introduces or re-enforces class bias. This claim directly opposes Taylor and the view of this thesis that a liberal education is a liberating influence, not an oppressive one. Popper (1962, p. 216) suggests that sociologists of knowledge invite the application of their own methods to themselves with an almost irresistible hospitality: if all utterances are expressions of class bias, then so are the utterances of sociologists of knowledge.
I am arguing that liberal education is needed for rational reflection, but the "sociologist of knowledge" position is that there are such things as alternative rationalities. One of Apple's basic claims is that educators ought to seek out forms of rationality which are less restrictive and more humane than the forms of rationality we are accustomed to using (1975, p. 121). I single out Apple only because the claims he makes are fairly typical of the school of thought I am arguing against. It is not immediately clear what Apple means when he speaks of different forms of rationality. Are different forms of rationality possible? If we examine the contexts in which Apple uses the term 'rationality' we see that the word appears to be more versatile than we might have expected. He talks about:

1) a conception of rationality that is less than efficacious today (1975 b, p. 121)
2) ethical rationality (op. cit., p. 126)
3) bureaucratic rationality (op. cit., p. 134)
4) new rationalities and techniques that make further control and domination of individuals and groups by an instrumental and technical ideology possible (op. cit., p. 143)
5) the rationality of educational scholars (op. cit., p. 143)
6) the institutions and the rationality that prevail in advanced industrial societies like our own (op. cit., p. 147)
7) technical rationality (1975 c, p. 105)
8) scientific rationality (op. cit., p. 115)

From these examples it appears that Apple is not using the term 'rationality' as it should be used. If Apple were merely using the term 'rationality' as a synonym for 'point of view' there would be little harm done, but Apple's terminology is indicative of the extreme relativism at the heart of the "sociology of knowledge"
position. It is, of course, the relativist position I wish to argue against, not the misuse of synonyms.

When we speak of the criteria of rationality or the standards of rationality, we are usually referring to some commitment to the basic laws of logic such as the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, and so forth. There are no alternative laws of logic. By these standards a person is irrational to believe both \( P \) and not \( P \), for example, if he makes no attempt to alter his beliefs when the inconsistency is brought to his attention. If we blatantly disregard the laws of logic, we cannot expect our views to be taken seriously. Against the notion of alternative rationalities, Popper (op. cit.) argues that the methods of science are public possessions, not private enterprises. If a scientist obtained results by methods other than those that are publicly verifiable (though perhaps only by specialists) there would be no reason for us to take his findings seriously. Popper speaks disparagingly of the mysticism of the irrationalist tradition: "Who shows greater reverence for mystery," he asks, "the scientist who devotes himself to discovering it step by step, always ready to submit to the facts, and always aware that even his boldest achievement will never be more than a stepping stone for those who come after him, or the mystic who is free to maintain anything because he need not fear any test?" (op. cit., p. 245).

Stephen Toulmin argues at length against the relativist position that tries to allow for alternative rationalities in his book,
Human Understanding (1972). He holds the notion of alternative rationalities to be incoherent on the ground that:

rationality is an attribute, not of logical or conceptual systems as such, but of the human activities or enterprises of which particular sets of concepts are the temporary cross-sections: specifically, of the procedures by which the concepts, judgements, and formal systems currently accepted in those enterprises are criticized and changed.

(Op. cit., p. 133)

Toulmin is saying that there simply are no alternative rationalities to consider. This view can best be explained in his own words:

Questions of 'rationality' are concerned, precisely, not with the particular intellectual doctrines that a man—or professional group—adopts at any given time, but rather with the conditions on which, and the manner in which, he is prepared to criticize and change those doctrines as time goes on. The rationality of a science (for instance) is embodied, not in the theoretical systems current in it at particular times, but in its procedures for discovery and conceptual change through time.

(Op. cit., p. 84)

The upshot of this is that there is a core of rationality (including the basic laws of logic and rules of language) which is a communal inheritance. The core remains stable, and there are no candidates that we could sensibly bring forward as possible alternatives to it.

The same point is made by J. R. Coombs in discussing the nature of philosophy of education. He says:

To do philosophy of education is to use some elaborated conception of what it is to be rational in making assessments about what counts as rational, sensible, etc. thinking about education. What I am calling an elaborated conception of rationality includes sets of distinctions, techniques of analysis, kinds of arguments and the like which are regarded as worthwhile. One's elaborated conception of rationality must be justified in reference to the core meaning of rationality. This core can be explicated, at least in part, in terms of such things as adhering to the basic canons of logic and rules of language. Given any particular elaborated concept of
rationality, it is unlikely we could distinguish clearly where the core ends and the elaboration begins. It is not clear to me, for example, whether such things as Leibniz's law and Occam's razor are parts of the core or parts of various elaborated conceptions of rationality. Our inability to draw clear boundaries in this matter should not be taken as grounds for concluding that there is no core of descriptive meaning to the concept of rationality, though this is what some proponents of "sociology of knowledge" would have us believe.

If that is right, alternative rationalities do not exist, and it is impossible for anyone to create such an alternative at will. This is not to suggest, however, that there is no possible world in which the core of rationality is different from that of the actual world. Quine has shown in his "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" that even the rational core is not necessarily inviolate. The point is simply that the rational core is a communal inheritance which it is not possible for individuals to change. If, for example, I were to ignore our accepted rules of inference in developing the central argument of the thesis, on the grounds that I am operating according to some alternative rationality, then no sane and sensible person could follow the argument. Sane and sensible people argue (or try to argue) according to accepted rules of inference.

What all this boils down to is that initiation into liberal studies is not only compatible with rational reflection, but also a prerequisite to it.

It could be suggested that giving students a variety-of-experience curriculum might give them as much or more to reflect about than the bookish orientation that a liberal arts curriculum would provide, but at least three responses could be made to this
suggestion:

1) There seems to be less reason to believe that subjecting students to as many different experiences as possible will improve their reflective abilities or even give them a better chance of having greater reflective abilities than a liberal arts curriculum would enable them to have. One can have a wide variety of experiences without gaining very much breadth and depth of knowledge. Besides;

2) Dewey's suggestion that we look at knowledge itself as the sum-total of human experience would lead us to think that by subjecting students to a compulsory liberal education we are in fact giving them access to more experience (albeit vicarious) than any individual could possibly hope to acquire first hand in a lifetime. There are simply not enough hours in a day or days in a lifetime for each person to invent the wheel all over again. No doubt some first hand experience (as opposed to the second hand experience of theoretical studies) of various sorts is as important to the development of rational reflection as theoretical understanding, but we could not make this claim about first hand experience in general. Subjection to a variety of experiences provides no guarantee that one will come to see relationships and interrelationships among events in the world. Subjection to a liberal arts curriculum provides no such guarantee either, but at least the very subject matter of liberal studies is relationships and interrelationships of many different kinds.

3) Even if certain varieties of experience—e.g., getting an informal education through travelling around the world and meeting people whose
ways of life are different from our own—were just as effective in getting people to be as rationally reflective as is a liberal arts curriculum, we have to be realistic about what kind of schooling is feasible for children. A good liberal education can easily be had within the confines of a classroom at not too exorbitant a cost, whereas arranging for large numbers of students to travel the world would be very costly and very inconvenient. Besides, we have better reason to believe that a good liberal education contributes more to the development of autonomy because of the intimate connections between autonomy and breadth and depth of knowledge.

We often hear popular theorists speak disparagingly about keeping students within the confines of four classroom walls, as if by so doing we were depriving students of important experiences in the world. But if what we are concerned with is autonomy, and if Immanuel Kant (and others like him) could become the autonomous thinker that he did without ever travelling more than ten miles out of Königsberg, then we ought to remain hopeful about the possibility of accomplishing a very great deal within the confines of classroom walls.

I have argued earlier that without a liberal arts curriculum, or something like it, the rational reflection condition of autonomy cannot be met. In the second to last paragraph I have said only that liberal arts studies contribute more to the development of autonomy than likely competitors. The apparent inconsistency of these two claims should be explained. If we conceive of a liberal
education in terms of attainments (theoretical understanding), then indeed a liberal education is necessary for the possession of autonomy. If, however, we conceive of a liberal education as subjection to certain studies, then the most we can say is that a liberal education is more likely to contribute to the development of autonomy than other pursuits.

Questions might arise at this point about whether we can be satisfied with merely helping students to become autonomous thinkers. As we have seen, the exercise of autonomous thinking is not sufficient for the possession of personal autonomy—freedom of choice and strength of will are also required. But the task of picking out curricular components that contribute towards the development of freedom of choice and strength of will is a task that depends in large measure on empirical findings not yet available to us. Because it can be plausibly argued that the distinctions between free and unfree choices and between strength of will and weakness of will break down on close inspection, what should be counted as freedom of choice and strength of will is an unsettled question. It will be recalled that on page 66 above, Peters' list of cases in which the subjective conditions of freedom of choice are absent, was presented. Even if we accept the list as it stands, we simply do not know what kinds of learnings and experiences will ensure that students grow up without developing the kinds of compulsions Peters outlines. Nor do we know how to ensure that students will grow up with the ability to put judgments into action without being hampered by too many
counter-inclinations. By the same token, it could be argued that we don't really know how to ensure that students will become rationally reflective individuals either, but at least we can see that without some breadth and depth of knowledge rational reflection is impossible. A good liberal arts program cannot guarantee the acquisition of knowledge that makes a difference to how one sees and feels about the world—that, no doubt, is why we sometimes say no one can teach anybody anything—but we would be naive to hope for guarantees. The most we can hope for is at least some measure of success with nearly everyone and large measures of success with a few.

It has been suggested to me by Murray Elliott that because someone might be able to achieve considerable cognitive perspective (in Peters' sense) though he has been initiated into only one subject matter—chemistry, for example—there is a problem about whether we ought to initiate students into all the liberal arts or whether we ought to opt for depth in some area at the expense of breadth. The problem of depth versus breadth is something of a perennial dilemma, but given that we are defending compulsory education for the development of personal autonomy, a good case can be made, it seems, for choosing as much depth as possible in each of the liberal arts over greater depth in a single area. The reason is this: no matter how much of a scientific (for example) genius we might produce in opting for depth over breadth, it is doubtful whether we could attribute someone who is unable to see events in the world from a variety of points of view with the capacity for the kind of rational reflection
we are after. Events in the world are not just scientific events; they are also historical events, political events, religious events, etc. Events are important not just scientifically, but also psychologically, aesthetically, economically, morally, and in many other ways as well. To have knowledge and understanding in only one area is to be deprived of a variety of ways of interpreting one's experience. If we are deprived of ways of interpreting our experience then we are not free to make choices and decisions based on those interpretations. Hence, we are not as autonomous as we might otherwise be. This is not to suggest, of course, that the development of expertise in one area is undesirable because it is necessarily achieved at the expense of the development of breadth in a variety of areas; it is merely to suggest that in so far as we are concerned with the compulsory imposition of studies for the development of autonomy, we ought not to teach just math and science, say, or just music and poetry, but all of these. Because the development of expertise in a single area requires enormous personal commitment on the part of the learner, the development of expertise in a single area might best be left as something the learner is free to attempt after his compulsory education is over.

Before proceeding with a brief discussion of some practical implications of this study, it might be helpful at this stage to re-state the main points of the argument as it appeared in the introduction:
1. An individual's *prima facie* right to non-interference can be overridden when the following conditions hold:
(a) The individual consents to forfeit his right and his consent is not caused by the interference nor is it the result of his being irrational, i.e., having distorted beliefs, irrational compulsions, and the like. or
There is a reasonable expectation that the individual would consent in the future if he were rational and in possession of the information relevant to justifying the interference.
(b) The interference promotes the good of the individual in some way, this good is more significant than the harm resulting from the interference, and the interference is either necessary to or is the best way of promoting the good.
(c) The interference is not morally objectionable on grounds other than its infringing the right to non-interference.

2. Because the imposition of a wide variety of studies and activities (including liberal studies) could meet the conditions specified in #1 above, and since any curriculum can accommodate only a limited number of studies and activities, some criterion is needed for identifying the most significant goods to be promoted for students.

3. The development of personal autonomy is the good to be promoted by compelling students to study the liberal arts. It is assumed that such development is sufficiently valuable to outweigh any harm that is likely to result from compelling students to take liberal arts studies. (Freedom of will, rational reflection, and strength of will are taken as necessary conditions for personal autonomy.)

4. The development of personal autonomy is a more desirable or significant educational objective than any other that might be secured by imposing other sorts of studies. It is assumed that there is little reason to believe that the activities excluded by the imposition of liberal studies are logically or empirically necessary to the development of autonomy.

5. A liberal arts curriculum, when taken as a set of attainments, is necessary to the development of personal autonomy because it is necessary to the development of rational reflection, i.e., it is not possible to secure any significant degree of rational reflection without such attainments.

6. A liberal arts curriculum, when taken not as a set of attainments but as a set of courses of study (taught by whatever methods are deemed effective and desirable), is the best way of achieving rational reflection.

Therefore, we are justified in imposing a liberal arts curriculum on
students for their own good.

Since the purpose of the thesis has been to justify the imposition of a liberal arts curriculum on students for their own good, the obvious practical implication of the work is that we should impose such a curriculum on students in schools if we are not already doing so. Still, it may be useful to elaborate on this general implication a little bit. That is the task of chapter five.
CHAPTER V

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter we look at some of the implications for teachers and teacher training institutions of imposing on students a compulsory liberal arts curriculum. I am assuming not only that it is desirable that students obtain broad and deep knowledge of academic subjects but also that this is possible.

Some implications of this view should be clarified. As we have mentioned, it should be remembered that a presumption in favor of a traditional liberal arts curriculum is not necessarily a presumption in favor of traditional teaching methods. It is a presumption in favor of what should be taught, not how it should be taught. The best method of initiating students into a body of knowledge is to be determined via empirical and moral considerations.

In addition, although we have been emphasizing compulsion, this does not involve advocating coercive techniques for getting students to learn. No one supposes that children should be beaten into submission if they prefer hopscotch to history. All that is meant by compulsory subject matter is subject matter that students cannot choose to make or to miss in the way that high school students choose one elective rather than another.

There is a popular objection that is often brought
forward to counter proposals like the one I am making. The B.C.T.F., for example, ran a full page advertisement in the Vancouver Sun to present this objection and others to the public in 1976 when the provincial government of B.C. proposed a compulsory core curriculum. The objection is this: students are individuals and if we give them all the same kind of curriculum we are denying students their individuality. Surely it is not desirable, so the argument goes, to make everyone a robotic carbon copy of everyone else. White calls this objection a familiar Daily Telegraph kind of argument that is more propaganda than argument. A very brief response should suffice to expose its inadequacies. As White suggests, one cannot rationally pronounce oneself for or against uniformity until one knows in what respect people are said to be uniform. If everyone were always the same in matters of personal style, then life would lose much of its richness and colour. That would surely be a very undesirable state of affairs; but on the other hand, uniformity is indeed desirable when it comes to standards of, say, truthfulness or honesty. In any case the whole raison d'etre of compulsory liberal arts education is, by the account I am offering, to get students to the stage when they can in fact think for themselves as individuals. When people are cut off from the more sophisticated forms of thought and activity their options are severely restricted. It seems reasonable to believe that carbon-copy thinking would be more likely to result among non-autonomous persons than autonomous ones.

It will be recalled that in chapter three the enhancement of
freedom was rejected as a basis for the justification of paternalistic interference on the grounds that forcing people to be free can lead to unacceptable consequences on both the positive and negative accounts of freedom, and it might seem that the imposition of compulsory curriculum to make people autonomous is similarly a case of forcing people to be free. But there is an important fundamental difference between the two kinds of cases. In imposing the development of autonomy on students we are not imposing any particular set of beliefs or values on them. We are not regarding them as unfree if they hold one set of political beliefs and values, say, rather than another, or if they have aspirations in one particular direction rather than another. If our view of freedom were freedom in a more Marxist sense, however, then forcing people to be free would involve regarding them as unfree if they did not hold certain specifiable values and beliefs. Compelling people to be autonomous is not like that. It is a matter of imposing certain pursuits on students until they are able to decide rationally both what they want to do and which constraints they want to impose on themselves. The question about whether we include X in a compulsory curriculum becomes a question about whether X in fact contributes to the acquisition of autonomy. It is not at all an issue about what people would value if they were rational or if they were not constrained. So imposing a compulsory curriculum on students to make them autonomous is not open to the same objections as the Marxist position on forcing people to be free.

A fourth possible objection is that a compulsory liberal arts
education for everyone is an unrealistic aim because there are large numbers of students in our schools who have neither the capacity nor the inclination to study mathematics, literature, science, history, etc. With regard to capacity, however, it is not clear that we are justified in making the empirical claim that large numbers of students do not have the capacity to handle an academic curriculum if what is meant by capacity is innate ability. It might be true that given the right kind of environment and the right kind of teaching methods from the beginning the innate ability of most students is sufficient to get them on the inside of many theoretical pursuits. As far as inclination is concerned, if it is true that large numbers of students do not have the inclination to study academic subjects, then it could also be true that if the right teaching methods were found and students were steeped in the liberal arts from an early age, their inclinations would be different. Perhaps we cannot successfully change the inclinations of most students who are presently enrolled in our schools, but that is not to say that children who are immersed in a compulsory liberal arts program from the beginning will come to have the same inclinations. Besides, the whole question of the inclinations of students is to a large extent beside the point. Of course it would be preferable if students were naturally inclined towards the kind of curriculum we would impose on them, but it is not necessary that they be so inclined.

One alternative to a pre-arranged compulsory curriculum that is often adopted is the alternative White refers to as the 'cafeteria'
counsellor-guided system which he believes is typical of north American schools. The main objection to this approach is that if children choose their own curricula they are not likely to choose what they would choose on reflection if they understood the available options. If students are guided by school counsellors in choosing certain options over others, then they are in large measure at the mercy of people who may not be educationally enlightened. Guidance counsellors may direct students to choose one set of options over another either on the basis of what they themselves would choose if they were in the students' position or on the basis of which kinds of pursuits open the door to "good jobs." If the latter, then the counsellor may function more like an agent of social control than a genuine promoter of students' best interests.

The kinds of curricular recommendations I am arguing against in this thesis are not only those that advocate the 'cafetaria' approach but also those that advocate greater vocational training and leisure activity training at the expense of an academic emphasis. The Newsom Report, though dated, might serve as a well-known example of this second kind of recommendation. It is concerned with the so-called 'less able' child and it recommends that such children be taught nothing of the fundamental structure of such basic subjects as mathematics and physics. It lays heavy emphasis on arts and crafts, games, cookery, woodwork, etc.—activities that involve some form of physical skill rather than theoretical understanding. To argue, as the Newsom Report does, that children of low ability need to learn
such things as woodwork, housecraft, business letters, etc., because these are the skills they will be using in their adult lives, is to prejudge what sort of adult lives these children will lead. A program of this sort would in effect equip students for a way of life that prevents them from choosing for themselves what kind of lives they will lead. It effectively cuts off large numbers of people from the chance to become autonomous persons.

We need not belabour the implications for teachers, curriculum planners, or teacher training institutions of the foregoing arguments, but a few specific suggestions might be made. In elementary schools children are normally taught to read from controlled vocabulary basal readers—the stories in which could seldom be regarded as models of good English literature. If we were to take a compulsory liberal arts curriculum seriously much of this material would probably have to be replaced at all levels by works of literary merit and significance. It would not be enough for children to master the mere mechanics of learning to read: what they read would be regarded as equally important. Individualized reading programs could be retained, but they could not replace deliberate initiation of the student by the teacher into the best of the literary tradition.

Often in the schools written composition is treated as if it were some therapeutic act of self-expression—a spontaneous pouring out of inner thoughts and feelings rather than the creation of a piece of work the merits of which are to be judged by the
response of literate people towards it. If we were to take a compulsory liberal arts curriculum seriously, surely we would deliberately expose children to a variety of writing styles and good models of English prose in teaching them to write.

In so far as ministries of education are the bodies with the authority to prescribe a compulsory curriculum for schools, one obvious implication of this thesis is that they ought to prescribe a curriculum of compulsory liberal arts. The question of whether ministries of education ought to have the power to prescribe compulsory curriculum for whole provinces or countries is another matter. For purposes of this thesis we need only claim that whoever has the power (or ought to have the power) ought to prescribe (if they prescribe anything at all) a compulsory liberal arts curriculum for everyone. We are concerned here, albeit in very general terms, with the content of what children learn in school—not with the administrative difficulties of curriculum implementation.

As far as teacher training institutions are concerned, it seems undesirable that faculties of education recommend to ministries of education that students be certified as teachers when the prospective teachers have not themselves received a liberal education. Unfortunately, it is often possible to graduate not only from high schools but also from universities without ever having read a Shakespearean play or a philosophical essay, and without knowing much in the way of mathematics or empirical science. It is perhaps not wholly inaccurate to suggest that many classroom
teachers have been well trained for their jobs but not many have been well educated. Be that as it may, if Oakeshott is correct that judgment is acquired by interacting with those who already have it, then unless teachers are on the inside of the subject matters they teach, we cannot hope that students will acquire anything beyond a very superficial understanding of the different disciplines. If we are concerned with the development of personal autonomy, and I have tried to show in this thesis that we ought to be very concerned with it, then we ought to be equally concerned with the compulsory imposition of a liberal arts curriculum on both students and future teachers.

I have tried in this thesis to justify the compulsory imposition of a liberal arts curriculum (in the Hirstian sense) on the paternalistic grounds that depth and breadth of knowledge are necessary to satisfy the rational-reflection condition of personal autonomy. Many controversial points have been raised that will continue to be controversial in the future. In so far as the argument of the thesis is successful, however, a case has been made against the positions of some sociologists of knowledge and popular theorists discussed in chapter one. Teachers need no longer feel vaguely guilty (as many have felt in recent years) for imposing "foreign trips" on students by imposing a compulsory liberal arts curriculum on them.

The thesis raises a host of important, unanswered questions
for further research: Could a case be made for the merits of the study of science over literature (or vice versa) for the greater development of personal autonomy? What kinds of studies and experiences contribute to those aspects of personal autonomy we have not yet considered—freedom of choice and strength of will? Do we have a moral obligation to help develop personal autonomy in students? What methods of teaching maximize the probability that students will achieve the attainments we are after? Several related questions could also be asked. Many of them have arisen in the past, and hopefully all will be addressed in future studies.


