

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE SCHOOL'S ROLE
IN MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

By

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ABSTRACT

Schools always seem to be under pressure to make moral development a part of their routine responsibilities. Despite much reflection and many proposals, there still seems to be unease with how much our schools actually promote or can or should promote moral development. In this thesis I argue that when moral development is approached from a socio-cultural perspective, and the work of philosophers who consider moral development from this perspective is taken into account, it becomes clear how moral development is inescapably an integral part of schools' work. Students develop morally through their ongoing interactions with the standards supported by the school, and with the other communities of which they are part.

In a socio-cultural approach, moral development is seen as a daily, lived experience that is shared by all members of the community, and created in the richness of the ongoing dialogues that we have with significant others in our lives. These others will include the standards of excellence that our communities support, the community itself, and the inheritance of our cultures that we explore through our curriculum. We develop morally when we interact with significant others in our lives who help us experience and achieve what is good.

I argue that all members of the school community need to be familiar with modern theories of socio-cultural moral development, support the standards that the school incorporates, and integrate these standards into all the lessons and other activities in the school. In a manner that parallels Charles Taylor's "ethic of authenticity", I argue that, in the process, schools will develop their own authentic identity, and necessarily become a place of moral apprenticeship. Such schools strives to create an ethos of belonging and participation that recognizes the close connection between the development of the self and relationships with significant others in students' lives. The school thus becomes what Taylor calls a "horizon of significance" that the students strive to reach.

KEY WORDS: school, moral development, socio-cultural, identity, ethics, horizons of significance

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We do not believe in ourselves until somebody reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit
e.e. cummings

I started my Ph.D. studies for two reasons. First, I wanted to challenge myself to do more than what I was doing. At that time I was not sure what “more” was, but I knew that I needed to challenge myself. Second, if I was going to challenge myself, I wanted to try to understand what I truly believed about education. Over the years, in the process of applying for a number of positions, I had written and rewritten my “philosophy of education” a number of times, but I had never been comfortable that those one-page positions had truly reflected what I believed. The challenge that I took on in my Ph.D. studies, and that became the basis of this thesis, was to develop “what I truly believe”.

I would like to thank my two supervisors on this project. First, Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones helped me through both my Master’s degree and every step of this thesis. He is a mentor, a sage, and a wonderfully creative person to sound ideas off of. Every meeting and encounter moved my thinking forward. Our ongoing dialogues have enriched my understandings in ways that I do not believe I would have reached on my own. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Kieran Egan. My first class in my Ph.D. studies was with Dr. Egan. I have since had the opportunity to work closely with him, but the lessons that he taught in that first class still ring true. He has set high standards that were clear. He has been willing to help me work through ideas to reach those standards. As importantly, in

all of our interactions, he has told me, in his own pellucid way, that I could reach these standards. He was also the first person in a long time to tell me that what I had done was not good enough. This was a powerful lesson that I felt totally supported in. One of Dr. Egan's strengths as a teacher was that he allowed me to understand that he felt I could reach the standard, and then work with me to help reach the standard. This project is finished today because of the support and encouragement of these two mentors.

Over the past nine years I have had the good fortune to work in a community that lives the ideal of learning. The Collingwood community has supported me with time, encouragement, and unqualified support. At times it has seemed that the community wanted me to finish this thesis as much as I did. Thank you to Headmaster Rodger Wright who walks the talk every day, for his energy, enthusiasm, and support for this project. I would also like to thank Ian Kennedy who has become my dialogical, philosophical sounding board on so many ideas, and Lisa Evans and Andrew Shirkoff who have provided much needed "commas" in their editing, and who have approached my work with the idea of making it more understandable and readable. Most of all, thank you to these people for your friendship.

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INTRODUCTION

HOW DID I GET HERE

My educational background has played a key role in developing the thesis that I put forward in this document. My education, up to my eighth year of teaching, was in the public system. I attended public schools, I went to public universities, and taught in the public school system for the first eight years of my career. At that time I only saw myself working within the public system.

At the end of my eighth year of teaching I was offered a position at a private, Catholic high school. The lure of this position was a higher level of coaching than I could experience elsewhere. What happened however was that I was exposed to ideas that I had not experienced in my public school background. In this school, and for the first time in my career, everything was done within the context of a clearly articulated larger goal. The pervading question was always “how do we help our students become good people in God’s image”.

During the thirteen years I taught at this school, I came to realize that it was not necessarily the pursuit of the image of God that was important, but rather it was the transcending ideal that incorporated the values, morals, and philosophies that we were following, that guided and shaped our behaviour. I began to look for an answer to a question that seemed beyond any single school situation. The question was simply this: “Could the moral development of our students be accomplished without a reference to religion?” and “Was what we were doing effective because of the religious connection or

was the horizon provided by the religious context an example of something else at work?”

Near the end of my time at the Catholic school, I embarked on my Ph.D. studies. I found myself interested in work that explored and defined the nature of people in contemporary societies, particularly how individuals become moral beings. This question has dominated how I have looked at both my work and my studies over the past ten years.

I left the Catholic school to work with student teachers for a year. Ultimately, this proved to be a very frustrating experience for me, as there did not seem to be any reference to an overarching purpose in our work that guided us in preparing our student teachers. Furthermore, our work as educators training educators did not seem to have a clear moral dimension to it. It took me a while to realize that what was lacking was a sense of focus or direction to guide our deliberations as we developed and mentored our student teachers. Further, the student teachers did not have any binding entity/philosophy when they were in the field in their practicum. In my role as a Faculty Advisor, I had the opportunity to be in a large number of high school classrooms over the course of the year. When I saw teachers doing wonderful work, it always seemed to me that their work somehow included helping their students connect to something that helped them understand themselves.

My recent move in education has been to a secular, co-educational independent school. The school operates on a four-stranded theme that integrates everything that the school does. Individual student success is measured not only by results in academic courses, but also by their efforts in the arts, in their service to others, and in their

performance athletics. All aspects a student's education references the four-stranded approach in some manner. In essence, the approach acts as a horizon of significance for the students.

The long, slow realization that I have come to is something that I knew from experience but was unable to articulate: schools can and should play a significant role in the moral development of their students. Further, this purpose has to be integrated into, and referenced as part of, everything that the school does. It is not something that is accomplished within a three-week unit in October, or a series of "pull out" days over the course of the year; it needs to be an integral part of every deliberation that the school community makes. In essence, the moral development of our students has to be a meta-learning outcome for all that we do by everyone who does it. I have come to believe that this is an outcome that we can achieve if we extend our understanding of education to include the work of the types of thinkers who study how we develop our sense of identity.

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CHAPTER 1

DEFINING THE QUESTION, SETTING THE PATH

Introduction

How should schools contribute to the moral development of students? In almost thirty years of educational work, the concept of moral development has always seemed to me to be an important aspect of our students' educational experience; however, in my experience, this concept seems to be mostly been relegated to "programs" that are "add-ons" to the curriculum. It's almost as if we can teach moral development with a three-week unit every October. My experience, though, suggests schools have a much more significant role to play in this process than is commonly accepted.

In this thesis I will both justify students' moral development as a proper aim of schools and also show in practice how schools can contribute to achieving this aim. Most people seem to accept that schools are inevitably involved in some way in students' moral development, but there is a combination of reluctance to address this matter explicitly and, where one does see it discussed, much vagueness and disagreement about it. Because this important issue is addressed rarely and unclearly, the role of the school with regard to students' moral development is generally left unarticulated and so is inadequately recognized and inadequate practical provisions are provided to support students' moral development. I will show that schools play a much more significant role in our students' moral development than is commonly recognized, and I will argue that it is critical for educators to understand clearly what that role is and what it ought to be, so that it can be explicitly incorporated into teachers' work.

What is distinctive about this thesis?

After twenty-nine years of working in a wide variety of public and private educational systems, secular and religious, I have concluded that there is no clear vision at present of what the school's role in the moral development of its students should be. Some school systems have this vision, but it is not a vision that is seemingly part of our educational deliberations. We have inherited a discussion from social and cultural history that seems to be at odds with our modern world. What we are doing currently does not seem to be clear to many. We have endless disputes about how we address moral development and what it should look like, but none of the paths we implement lead to any lasting and meaningful direction or plan.

In this thesis, I want to look at student moral development through a socio-cultural lens rather than the traditional pathway that has seen the discussion dominated by the following: Values Clarification, Cognitive Development or Character Education. I am going to look at how a dialogical or mediated approach to school-based moral/character education can be conceptualized and then planned.

In order to make this shift I am going to follow the path taken by Tappan (2006) who looks at moral development through the lens of Vygotsky. Tappan (2006, p. 3) suggests that a socio-cultural perspective, "seeks to explore the *relationship* between the individual and the social, cultural, historical, and institutional contexts in which the individual lives." This perspective then looks at how our various interactions with our cultures "mediate our moral development."

Where I differ from Tappan is that I will not be using Vygotsky as a lens, but rather the work of Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre and Paul Ricoeur to look at moral development, and then the work of educational philosophers Michael Oakeshott and Kieran Egan to connect the idea of moral development as a social-cultural process to the educational process.

The works of Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Paul Ricoeur do not usually appear in the educational literature on moral development in schools or on school effectiveness. Even so, I am going to argue that they give us a number of tools that allow us to look both at what moral development means in our modern and post modern world and how these tools can inform our work with students. I will then use the work of Oakeshott and Egan to show how we can integrate the concept of a socio-cultural perspective of moral development into the educational endeavor in meaningful and lasting ways that I believe are achievable and that will affect positive change.

A key in accomplishing this integration will be a focus on the idea of “whole school” integration. The concept of moral development I aim to elaborate in this thesis will imply that each and every activity of the school community, from curriculum, to programs offered, through to the traditions that the community supports properly entails moral development.

The school and the curriculum are historical and cultural creations that have the potential to, and should, mediate the moral development of our students by being a “significant other” in their lives (Taylor, 1989, 1991). Taylor suggests that we learn moral discernment through our dialogue with significant others in our lives. Through

these ongoing dialogues with significant others, we learn what is important to us and where we stand on issues of importance. The others in our lives can be people, but they can also be the values and standards that are inherent in the various cultures, communities, and practices of which we are part. The entirety of the school, then, will be a significant other in our students' moral development and their growth in this area will depend upon the richness and complexity of the dialogue with significant others in their lives. This focus on whole school integration will be what prevents moral development from being reduced an "add on".

Moral Development and Identity

Taylor (1989, 1991) and Michael Oakeshott (1971) believe that moral development is a search for identity. To develop an identity is to develop an understanding of what one believes, to develop an understanding of one's position on matters of importance, and to develop an understanding of what is different in oneself than in others. In this sense, moral development is the same as creating our identity, and talking about moral development is talking about the development of our identity.

For Oakeshott (1971), all learning is about self-understanding. Through our learning, we seek to understand ourselves, and where we stand on matters of importance. Our self-understanding, and the stands that we take, are developed as we learn about the world of which we are a part. In the process of exploring our world, we learn to think, and through what we think about, we come to our understandings of the things that we believe. For Oakeshott, all learning is about learning to understand who we are and we

do this as we learn to participate in the communities, cultures, and practices in which we live.

Taylor (1991) sees the modern moral injunction as the development of an authentic self. He suggests (1991, p. 29) that

There is a certain way of being human that is *my way*. I am called upon to live my life this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for *me*....Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself.

Our identity is the background by which we know where we stand on matters of importance, and against which our tastes, desires, opinions, and aspirations make sense. To talk about developing a moral self is to talk about creating our identity, our sense of who we are, and where we stand on matters of importance.

The Philosophers from beyond Education

My look at the socio-cultural perspective of moral development in schools will start with a consideration of the work of three philosophers who look at how the modern self is formed in today's society. Each of these philosophers gives an insight to educators. Chapter 2 will look at the work of Charles Taylor, with a focus on his ideas on horizons of significance. Chapter 3 will look at the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and his conceptual development of virtues, the qualities that allow us to achieve excellence. Chapter 4 will look at the work of Paul Ricoeur, with a focus on his concept of moral development as a mediated process.

Charles Taylor (1989) claims that we come to know and understand ourselves through the ongoing dialogues we have with significant others in our lives. In these dialogues we are looking for what is significant in our differences from others, what is significant to human beings in general, what can be seen to be significant, or what can be linked to things that are held to be significant. This is more than how we feel, but rather a connection to something larger than ourselves that has significance and that matters to us. In this sense, we are always searching beyond ourselves, into the world in which we live, to make connections with issues, and ideas that are significant to us. It is through our interactions with significant others in our lives, that we learn what we hold to be important. We define ourselves with and sometimes against the identities that significant others see in us. Taylor suggests that, "...one is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it" (1989, p. 35). Who we are, and what we stand for, develops from our interactions with the social, historical, and cultural equation in which we find ourselves.

Taylor (1989, 1991a) suggests that we live within a series of horizons of significance or backgrounds of intelligibility. He uses the metaphor of horizons to suggest that we experience these standards and ideals as out in the distance, almost beyond our reach. We are constantly striving to reach for and achieve the ideals inherent in these horizons. The horizons are historically and culturally formed and exist independently of us in the social practices of which we are part. The horizons provide us with standards by which we explore what is good, what is base, and what it means to live a good life. They define both what matters to us, and the way that things matter.

The horizons of significance define strong values, or goods, that we strive to achieve in our lives. These goods provide us with standards by which we assess the quality of our lives and provide us with the motivations to live in ways that meet these standards. We look to lead a life that is in concert with these goods and they orient us towards an understanding of what it means to “live well”. It is this orientation that allows us to grasp the meaning of who we are and where we stand on matters of importance (Smith, 2002, Taylor, 1989). We define ourselves both against and in concert with the goods that are supported by these horizons of significance. The horizons create the limits of understanding that we explore, and they allow us to understand the governing principles of our lives. They give us a view of what a person should be like in the communities that we are part of, both local and global.

It is Taylor’s (1989) position that there is a hierarchy of these horizons, and that the ultimate horizon of significance is the Good. A life that is full and meaningful should be directed towards this Good.

For Taylor (1994), the issue with our move to a secular society was not the removal of religion from society, but rather the simultaneous removal of all horizons of significance from our deliberations. We have come to see ourselves as moving beyond any horizon that would guide our deliberations or development. Taylor shows that without these horizons, our values are derived simply by personal choice, and how we feel, rather than from anything of greater significance.

Taylor (1989, 1991a) suggests that the domain of moral development should include questions around how we treat others, or what it is good to do, and also questions

about what it is good to be, and how we achieve a sense of dignity and self-respect.

These three areas for questions comprise what Taylor sees as three axes of moral thinking, and the goods we seek in our lives may lie on any of these axes. Taylor (1991a) sees the common mistake of that moral debate made today is to focus almost completely on goods that lie on the axis of what it is good to do. He suggests that this narrow focus leads to a life that is flat and narrow.

To develop a full moral perspective we need to explore and achieve goods that lie on all three of the axes of moral development (Taylor, 1989, 1991a). The axis of what it is good to do addresses questions about our relationships with others. The axis of what it is good to be addresses the larger question of what type of life, higher or better, defined by a standard, that we ought to desire rather than one that we just happen to desire (Taylor, 1991a, p. 16). The axis of dignity is concerned with our sense of being capable of fulfilling the roles that we have taken on in life, and in being seen to be capable by significant others in our lives. It is through the recognition of and by the significant others in our lives that we develop such goods as self-esteem and self-respect. We cannot lead a full life, oriented to the Good, unless we achieve goods on all three axes of moral thinking.

Today we have a wide array of goods that vie for our allegiance. The removal of the grand horizon of religion has opened new sources of the goods that we experience. These goods may be in conflict with each other, and they cannot always be easily or if at all, combined or rank ordered. Further, they cannot be reduced to some single conception of the good. At the same time, Taylor (1989) argues that we can create a hierarchy of the goods that we experience.

Taylor (1989, pp. 62-63) defines hypergoods as the one or two goods that become the most important to us. These hypergoods allow us to order the other less strongly valued goods in our lives. We hold a hypergood as a “supreme good”. Living within the ideals of our hypergoods is central to our understanding of ourselves as it allows us to at least partially create a hierarchy or order for the other goods in our lives.

We also develop two other kinds of individual goods. The first kinds of goods are life goods, or the ordinary goods in our lives. These may include such ideas as autonomy, freedom, piety, or courage. The second kind of personal goods we develop are constitutive goods, which are the goods that Taylor (1989) sees as making our life goods worthy of desire. These goods provide the strong values that are at the heart of our life goods, and for Taylor, provide us with an empowering source for the life good we hold. Taylor suggests that for an atheist, the constitutive good might be the vision of oneself as the lone individual, while a theist would see the constitutive good as coming to understand God.

We also develop two types of goods that are connected to our relationships with others (Taylor, 1989, Abbey, 2000, Smith, 2002). Shared goods are goods that can only be found or developed by being in common with others. Friendship and love are examples of shared goods. The key to shared goods is that they can only be understood and realized in concert with others, the sharing is part of the good. Convergent goods on the other hand are goods that are held in common, but are not necessarily shared. These goods exist in common, but their existence is not dependent upon two or more people “sharing them”. An example of a convergent good would be the members of an

apartment building having a common interest in preventing a fire (Alexander, 2008, p. 15).

The modern moral injunction of authenticity requires that we belong to the groups that we do in ways that go beyond the self (Taylor, 2004a, p. 16). Taylor suggests that modern individualism requires that we imagine ourselves as belonging in meaningful ways to the groups of which we are part. Our identity, and our understanding of where we stand on matters of importance, comes from the community to the individual. More importantly, though, being part of a group allows us access to parts of ourselves that can only be attained through the relationships that we have. To be part of a group is to have a common understanding of what the group is about and requires a commitment to the group.

Finally, Taylor (1989, pp. 71-74) suggests that we are always seeking to create a “best account” of ourselves. Our understanding of who we are is based upon our sense that our positions can withstand critiques. As we find a situation that does not fit, we make small, error-correcting steps that help clarify our understanding. In doing so, we create a sense of moving forward, or gaining understanding and clarification. Taylor suggests that this process is always connected to an explanation of how we lead our lives. At any given time, we have a “best account” of who we are and where we stand on matters of importance. This best account is mediated by the socio-cultural lives that we lead, through the dialogical connections that we have.

The second philosopher that I consider is Alasdair MacIntyre. MacIntyre’s (1984) focus is on a conceptualization of virtue. He defines virtues as the types of

qualities that we need in order to achieve the goods that we strive for in our lives.

MacIntyre shows that in order to understand what a virtue is, we need to understand the context that it exists within. It is this context that gives the virtue meaning. The context itself comes from the cultures and parts of the cultures that the virtues exist within. For MacIntyre, we have become disconnected with the larger contexts in our lives, and thus we have lost the connections that give the virtue we seek meaning.

The virtues are first found within the various practices of our lives. These practices, which MacIntyre suggests are the complex forms of socially established behaviours, support standards of excellence that we strive to achieve. They are the types of qualities that we use and develop as we explore our relationship to the practices of which we are part. The virtues work to sustain the practice and support us as we strive for the goods that are inherent in the practice and that can only be achieved by participating fully in this practice. In order to realize a virtue fully, we must connect it to something beyond the practice itself. For this, MacIntyre suggests that we need to understand the virtues in regards to the whole of our lives. We place the virtues within the narrative of our life. By seeing our life as a narrative, we are able to place the virtue within the roles that we play, within the context of our lives. Finally, MacIntyre suggests that virtues need to be situated beyond the self, in the larger concept of a tradition. For this to happen, we have to see ourselves as having a social and historical role – of making a difference. The story of our lives is embedded in the story of the community from which we draw our identity. For MacIntyre (1984), reasoning takes place within the context of a traditional mode of thought.

For MacIntyre, the virtues are what support and sustain us in our quest for the Good. In order to understand them, and how they are developed, we need to both understand the communities that we are part of, but also be active participants in those communities.

The third philosopher that I look to, Paul Ricoeur, suggests that in defining ourselves we are always trying to answer four questions: Who is it that is speaking? Who is it that is acting? Who is it that is telling the story of our lives? Who is the ethical and moral being? As we search for the answers to these questions, we develop three concepts of identity: our personal identity, our narrative identity, and our ethical and moral identity. Further, it is through our interactions with our communities and cultures that we develop self-esteem, which Ricoeur sees as understanding our own capacity to act, and to affect change. We develop a sense of self-respect through our dialogical interactions with others in our lives, as we come to see ourselves as deserving our own respect, in the same way that we respect others. These two key ideas in moral development are not self-generated, but rather are mediated through our dialogues with significant others in our lives.

Ricoeur (1991) proposes that we find ourselves via an indirect route through the various cultures of which we are part. We do not discover the self by looking at the self, but rather in our interactions with these cultures. Our identity, then, is mediated by the explorations we undertake in our lives. For Ricoeur, we are always both striving to stay the same, to understand who we are, while striving to change and grow. We can then at best attest to our understanding of ourselves as we struggle to stay the same yet change.

Our understanding of ourselves, therefore is a study in contrasts: we try to stay the same while aiming to make changes.

Our identity is composed of the part of us that stays the same over time, which Ricoeur calls our idem-identity, and the part of us that is constantly changing, or our ipse-identity. For Ricoeur, this sameness change dynamic is constantly being worked out and updated. For sameness, our character represents what is enduring and re-identifiable regardless of change. It is character that allows us to keep an understanding of who we are despite the idea that we are changing. We keep our sense of self as we change by developing a sense of self-constancy. For Ricoeur, the self-constancy is reflected in the promise, as the promise is the way that we master change over time. In keeping our word, we are expressing a form of self-constancy in the face of change. The two aspects of our personal identity are in conflict, as we look to change and grow, while trying to maintain a sense of sameness. The main way that we deal with this dilemma of sameness and change, is through the development of a narrative identity. We see ourselves as a character within our life's story. The plot allows us to hold ourselves together over time, and gives our lives an overall context. Finally, Ricoeur sees us developing a moral and ethical identity. He sees ethics as the aim of an accomplished or good life, and morality as the articulation of this aim. Ricoeur suggests that ethics encompasses morality as morality is aimed at achieving the ethical. In looking to create or define ourselves, we are actually creating three identities that address different aspects of our understanding of our moral development.

Ricoeur (1991, p. 172) suggests that our ethical intention is the wish to, "lead a good life, with and for others, in just institutions". It is the life of the person as a whole

that we put out for appraisal by others. Part of Ricoeur's claim is that in order to judge another, we need to see the life of the other as a narrative. Narrative allows us to incorporate our relationships with others, and change over time to make sense of the life as a whole.

My journey through the three philosophers will be both abstract and focused. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 I am looking to put forward the ideas in their work that will help us create schools that support our students in their moral development. I am going to review all three of the philosophers without making many direct connections to our work in schools. In Chapter 5, I am going to summarize what I believe are the key themes in the work of Taylor, MacIntyre, and Ricoeur that can help us in our creation of a school that actively supports moral development.

What becomes clear as we explore the work of these three philosophers, who Smith (2002) refers to as "philosophic anthropologists", is that our moral development starts in the community and flows through to the individual. We learn our moral discernments from the ongoing dialogues that we have with the communities that we are part of. These dialogues are always with the self, with the significant others in our lives, and as Ricoeur (1992) shows, the institutions, such as schools, that are part of our lives.

Connecting to Education

In Chapter 6 of this thesis I look to tie the work of Taylor, Ricoeur, and MacIntyre to that of the educational process through the work of Michael Oakeshott, and Kieran Egan. In Chapter 7, I will look at how this work affects our deliberations about the entire

school. Chapter 7 is essentially a focus on the key ideas to developing a school that I believe will play a significant role in the moral development of our students.

In this thesis, I am suggesting that the work of the three philosophers that I am bringing into the discussion on moral development suggests that there is a significant role to be played by the school. The school role will be more than just the provider of programs; rather, its influence will play out at a deeper and more intimate level of interaction.

Michael Oakeshott suggests that we are what we learn to become. Our identity or moral development is found through our exploration of the world of human understandings, sentiments, and beliefs. To achieve this development we have to participate in a culture and learn the types of knowledge and understandings that our cultures support.

Our true human inheritance is the knowledge and modes of thought that we explore as we learn. Through this knowledge, we enter into the forms of thinking that our cultures support. Oakeshott considers this knowledge to be ultimately about ways of understanding the self. Each mode of thought or knowledge is a way of understanding the world and the self. Through our explorations we learn to understand ourselves through the same lens as a scientist, philosopher, historian, or poet. Oakeshott (1971) sees all learning as learning about the self. Curriculum should connect the knowledge and understanding that we develop to our personal understandings of who we are.

The second educational philosopher I draw on is Kieran Egan, who proposes a concept of education in which we develop five kinds of understanding, or ways of seeing

and interacting with the world. The kinds of understanding center around our senses (somatic understanding), the attainment and use of oral language (mythic understanding), the attainment and use of written language (romantic understanding), the ability to use and develop complex theoretical systems (philosophical understanding), and the ability to reflect upon, and revise the theoretical systems (ironic understanding) that we create or that others create. In Chapter 6, I will go into more detail on these types of understanding and how I see them connecting to moral development.

All five kinds of understanding will prove to be important, but for my purposes, the key ones will be those of “philosophic” and “ironic” understanding. In philosophic understanding, we are striving to develop themes or systems that allow us to understand the world in our own way. Ironic understanding allows us to review our own theories and to be constantly updating them as we gain new understandings. I am proposing that one of the key theoretical systems of understanding that we create for ourselves is our sense of who we are. Our sense of self, of where we stand on matters of importance, starts to form early in our lives, but it is a process that is constantly under renovation and clarification. As we develop ironic understanding, we are able to see where our theories of where we stand are not adequate, or have gaps in them.

Earlier in this chapter I noted that Taylor (1989) sees us as working to create a “best account” of our understanding of who we are. The development of the types of cognitive skills that Egan (1997) proposes as associated with both philosophical and ironic understanding allow us to more richly explore our understanding of who we are and where we stand on matters of importance. As we go through our school lives we encounter new ideas and new ways of thinking, all of which have the potential to change

the way we see ourselves. One role of curriculum, then, will be to allow students to explore how the knowledge and ways of thinking that they encounter affects their understanding of who they are and where they stand on matters of importance. A key role for the school will be to ensure that the standards that our students use for this task are, in fact, significant and not simply based upon how they feel.

Egan claims that it is only within certain types of institutions that philosophical and ironic thinking can flourish. In order to fully develop our abilities and understandings, we need to participate in the types of institutions that support this type of thinking. Thus, for moral development as a system of knowledge and understanding to reach its potential, we need to participate in a school that supports such an inquiry and exploration.

What does this mean for schools?

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter 7, I will address how the ideas of the philosophers I have looked at can give educators direction in their work with students on moral development. If we accept that schools are significant others in the lives of our students, and play a significant role in the moral development of students, then a number of responsibilities must fall to the school. Most of these will affect all aspects of the school community, and, as a result, the school leaders will play a role in ensuring that they happen. I will argue that the school should not be passive about this process. It is a significant other in the lives of our students, and as such, the school will have an impact on the students' vision of themselves.

Everyone involved in the educational community needs to know and understand moral development in contemporary society and be able to integrate the ideas that surround it into their work. Second, members of the educational community need to integrate these ideas into all aspects of education. In particular, the exploration of curriculum should support the students in their moral explorations, or explorations of where they stand on matters of importance and that help to define their understanding of who they are. Students should be encouraged to explore the different ways of being and understanding that are at play in our inheritance. Third, the school needs to understand and identify the types of goods upon which it places importance. Both MacIntyre (1994) and Taylor (1994) suggest we experience more goods in our lives now than we ever have before, and that these goods are often in conflict. The school community, therefore, will have to decide which goods it supports and encourages, and which it does not. As part of this, the school will need to put in place traditions that support the goods that it wants to promote. These traditions act as horizons of significance to the students. The fourth consideration is to identify and articulate the horizons of significance that are important to the school community. Part of this will be to bring to light horizons that may be obscure, but that are still important to the community.

The school becomes a community that supports both a cognitive and a moral apprenticeship. Oakeshott's (1989) position is that the judgment we learn to use in skilled behaviour, such as moral behaviour, can only be imparted within a community in which there is an ongoing dialogue with our inherited cultures. The significant others in our lives, in our case, the teachers and the school itself, are the "master practitioners" in

this apprenticeship. We have to strive to create the type of ethos and working environment in which the dialogues can flourish.

In setting out the horizons of significance that the school will live by, we are taking a step towards the school creating its own authentic identity. This identity includes both what matters to us, but also how what we are doing is different from what others are doing. The school, then, is on the path to creating its own authentic identity.

I see this idea of the school creating an authentic identity for itself that serves as a horizon of significance to our students, as the lost promise of mission statements. We have reached a time when the mission statements all look the same, and do not truly set out what we, as educators, believe to be important. Instead, they are worded to try to incorporate every possible interpretation. In trying to support everything, they support nothing. The authentic school, on the other hand, will be clear in what it supports and gives value to, and will celebrate that which makes it different. It accepts that it cannot be all things to everyone.

Finally, the developing authentic identity of the school will have implications for school leaders. First, the school leaders should oversee the clear articulation of the horizons of significance that guide school community deliberations. In essence, they lead the discussion of, and sometimes set, what we as a community stand for, and for what reasons. Secondly, they work to ensure that everyone in the community knows and strives to achieve excellence within the horizons that the school supports and defines. Actions and behaviours that work against the horizons have to be reviewed carefully and either incorporated, or rejected. Third, the school leadership must ensure that the actions

of everyone in the community are consistent with these horizons. Teachers who act outside of the horizons or parents who challenge the horizons work against the educational philosophy that has been articulated. Dialogue should be healthy and open, but work towards shared understandings. This will require that school leaders strive to develop a sense of belonging that is often at odds with the way that the modern individual views participation. Fourth, the school leadership has to work to create an environment of full participation and belonging. This will require an understanding of the tenuous joining that the modern and post modern individual tends to make with a group, and how to move past this shaky connection to the type of deep, meaningful connection that is needed. Finally, school leaders should strive to understand how the horizons shape the school's authentic identity. If the school is to be authentic, it must be in constant dialogue with the various communities within which it operates. The school must strive to become a good "citizen".

Conclusion

My thesis is that schools play a critical role in the moral development of our students. The school does this by being a "significant other" in students' lives and by incorporating their search for self into the daily work that we undertake. Moral development, as seen through a socio-cultural and mediated perspective rather than a cognitive perspective, should be at the core of our educational perspectives and considerations. I am proposing that the school is an active player in this development, and as such, needs to both understand its role, and construct its community in ways that actively support our students' moral development.

My review of philosophers will start with the work of Charles Taylor. As mentioned earlier, this review will focus on the ideas that I think will inform our work in schools. The intent is to introduce Taylor's work, and follow in a similar way with the work of Alasdair MacIntyre in Chapter 3, and Paul Ricoeur in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I will summarize the main themes that I see becoming clear that can help to inform our work in schools. In Chapter 6, I will connect these themes to curriculum, and in Chapter 7, to the school as a whole.

CHAPTER 2

CHARLES TAYLOR: HORIZONS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

Charles Taylor (1989, 1991a) suggests that moral development is a socio-cultural phenomenon. We create and internalize our individual moral systems by interacting with the moral values of the communities that we are part of. In his work, Taylor looks at the various aspects of this process; and he seeks to clarify not only moral development in our modern society, but also the type of relationships that contemporary members of society must have with the community, and vice versa, as our relationships affect in ways far deeper than we seem prepared to give them credit for.

Taylor (1991a, p. 34) suggests that the ideas of moral development and identity are, in many ways, the same idea. When we talk about creating or having an identity, we are looking to understand what our personal or individual positions are on issues that truly matter, not only to us, but also to the communities we are part of. Our identity is the background against which our tastes, desires, aspirations, and opinions make sense. We are defined by the stands that we take on matters of importance (Taylor, 1991b, pp. 305-306). In that sense, developing our identity is the same as moral development as our morals determine how we view the world and govern our interactions with our respective communities.

In our moral world, we are always orienting ourselves towards the strong values that we experience and interact with, and are looking to internalize as we interact with the various communities that we are part of. As individuals, we can tell the difference

between a worthwhile or wasted, base or noble, life based upon how close we move towards the values that we consider ultimately important. We lead our lives in a moral space in the sense that we aspire to live well, in relation to these values and are always reflecting on where we stand in relation to these values.

The introspective analysis helps determine our moral path. Taylor (1989, p. 32) sees the introspection as an orientation to the good and suggests that it is an indispensable feature of our moral development; it helps us create some meaning in terms of the question of our identity, even if we are not able to settle on a definitive answer. If we feel that we are without any sense of the good, we would feel as though we are suffering a painful and frightening emptiness, which we would experience as an identity crisis. Taylor concludes that an orientation to the good, or possession of identity defined in relation to the good, is indispensable to a healthy moral life.

Taylor suggests our communities create and support a series of strong values that we aspire to acquire. He refers to these as “goods” or taken together, “the good”. Taylor defines a good as “...desirable things, which are worthy of desire” (Smith 2002, p. 91). These goods, the things that we experience and hold important in our lives, are what we look to internalize as part of our moral development.

Taylor’s (1989) claims that our conception of the goods we experience is not simply a matter of choice, but rather a matter of upbringing and ‘being-in-the-world’. We experience goods as being worthy of admiration and respect for reasons that do not depend upon our choice of them, but rather for reasons that are independent of us. They

are determined by the moral society that we are part of and are not based solely upon our own interpretations.

Taylor sees the goods we strive for as “sources of the self”. These sources are not just grounds for the things we strongly value, but they also energize us into realizing the goods we strongly value. The relation that we have to goods, or taken together “the good”, defines our identity. Smith, (2002, p. 91), suggests that Taylor’s thesis is that we owe our understandings of ourselves to the role played by the good in our lives.

The goods we experience are historically and culturally formed. They are the result of our upbringing and participation in social practices; they may have instinctual roots but they are still shaped by the culture in which we live and are formed within the moral space that we live in.

Our experience and understanding of the goods we deem important are the result of the strong evaluations that we make. Taylor (1989, p. 4) believes that human beings are “strong evaluators”. An evaluation is “strong” when it is the basis for us creating an attitude of admiration or contempt. In this sense, “strong” is more of a statement of quality rather than of the force or power of our evaluations; we make a strong evaluation when we are swayed by “a sense of what is higher or lower, noble or base, better or worse” (Taylor, 1989, p. 4). He further states that strong evaluations:

... involve discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desires, inclinations or choices, but rather stand independent of these and other standards by which they can be judged. (1989, p. 4)

Taylor (1989) differentiates between strong evaluations and weak evaluations. In a weak evaluation, we make decisions based upon what will give us the most satisfaction. The decisive issue is how we feel about the issue at hand. In strong evaluations, we evaluate the desires in terms of their worth; what counts to us is the way that we locate or interpret the feelings we are experiencing so that we can characterize these desires as base or petty, higher or more admirable, more or less refined.

With weak evaluations, we have a predetermined sense of which outcome we would prefer. We would clearly rather have one desire satisfied than another, and we can reflect on the success of satisfying our desires by reviewing the path of action that we are likely to take to achieve the goal. However, as the evaluation is a weak one, requiring little effort or moral fortitude, we will only have a vague sense of what makes one desire superior to the other; at best, there is a certain feeling that appeals to us. With strong evaluations, the sense of what makes one desire more worthwhile can be articulated qualitatively. We can identify, for example, a mean or generous spirit, or a consummate or fatuous love (Taylor, 1989).

Strong evaluations help us define the quality of life we have by providing us with access to deeper reflections. Through our strong evaluations, the nuance and depth with which we reflect upon our desires and purposes is heightened and refined. Our desires and purposes help shape our belief structure and value system, therefore a person who is a strong evaluator will have a different sense of “quality of life” than a weak evaluator. Strong evaluation then is not “just a condition of articulacy about preferences, but also about the quality of life, the kind of being we are or want to be” (Taylor 1985, p. 26). Through strong evaluation, we give reflective expression to our individual sense of the

contrasting worth of things. The strong evaluations do not create this sense on their own, but rather they make the sense of worth that we feel exists explicit.

Not every decision we make will be subject to strong evaluations. However, derivatives of strong evaluation underpin much of what we do when we make decisions. For example, the daily choice about food for supper may not be a strong evaluation for many people. On the other hand, vegetarians have made a strong evaluation about their consumption of food. The result of strong evaluation is a moral or lifestyle choice.

We are not always cognizant that we are making strong evaluations. Strongly valued goods can exist as part of the tacit background of our various understandings. There are times when we make decisions, based on strong convictions, without being conscious of our thought processes.

Being able to articulate a strong evaluation is not enough to make it a strong evaluation. Verbalizing what we have done or felt does not ascribe worth to an action or desire. Similarly, we may be conscious of making a strong evaluation but not be able to put into words what we are doing. Articulation can help us understand what draws us to the strong evaluation, but it is not a necessary component of strong evaluations (Taylor 1989).

Strong evaluations are part of our moral identity. Our moral identity is closely bound to what we value and affirm. We can change the strongly valued goods that we hold, but to Taylor (1989), this requires a change in who we are as individuals. The strong evaluations that we make help to create our identity at its very core.

Our strong evaluations provide us with standards by which we assess the quality of human life. Similarly, these evaluations provide us with the motivation to live in ways that meet those standards (Smith, 2002). We rank some of our desires qualitatively in terms of worth. As a result, we see contrasts and create hierarchies around our desires because we do not see all desires as having the same relative worth.

The social nature of human beings helps individuals to create their individual moral character. The interaction and resulting strong evaluations of an individual and a community's strong values or goods is possible because of the dialogical character that Taylor (1991a, p. 33) sees as a fundamental part of each of us. We become who we are through our dialogues with others; we do not create or define who we are in isolation from those around us. We may develop our own opinions, outlooks, or positions through solitary reflection but Taylor suggests that we define important issues, such as acquiring the goods in our lives, and developing our identity, through our ongoing dialogue with significant others in our lives.

We enter into these formative dialogues through a rich language of expression. Taylor (1991a, p. 33) uses the term "language" in the broad sense of the words that we speak as well as other modes of expression that we use. He claims (Taylor, 1989, p. 35) that we are inducted into what it means to be a person by being initiated into language. Through conversation and interaction, we learn the language of moral and spiritual discernment. The various uses of language create the common spaces to learn; awareness of concepts such as anger, love, or anxiety, is attained through our shared experiences. We also interpret ourselves through the language and culture of our communities. It is through the self-interpretation that we come to understand who we are. The full definition

of our identity then will involve some reference to our defining community. Taylor (1989, p. 35) states that “One is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it”. We exist in “webs of interlocution” (Taylor, 1991a, pp. 33-35). Interacting through dialogues and webs of interlocution is an inescapable aspect of being a sentient being.

We are continuously formed, and re-formed, through conversation and interaction. Our identity is dynamic and constantly negotiated through dialogue with others (Taylor, 1991a, pp. 33-36). Our dialogue may be with anyone; alive, imaginary, dead, tangible, religious deity, natural or supernatural, or even conceptual. These dialogues are ongoing and dynamic. The dialogue can extend across cultures if we come to fusion of horizons or points of contact for common understanding. In these interactions, we explore aspects of others that we would like to incorporate into our own identity; we come to understandings with others through a fusion of horizons and our “selves” take on parts of everyone we dialogue with. Part of defining ourselves is to discover how we differ significantly from others. The path to creating an identity is to find the part of the other that we want for ourselves.

We are constantly working to articulate the demands and directions that these dialogues have on our moral frameworks. In articulating how these demands and directions affect us, we deepen our understanding of our values, heighten our awareness of the complexity and diversity of our moral lives, discover the depth of our moral sources, strengthen our connection to these sources, and create a basis of understanding to maintain what is good about our views. The dialogues that affect us most are the ones that we have with significant others, or those that matter to us, in our lives. Many of the

good things we experience in our lives are only available to us through shared experiences with others, as part of a group or through individual relationships.

The result of our dialogical nature is that we are not psychologically individuated. Who we are rests in our relationships with significant others (Taylor, 1991a, p. 36). We cannot become who we are in isolation from those around us, but only in concert with them, through the ongoing dialogues we are part of.

Horizons of Significance

To Taylor (1989, p. 22), we exist in a space of questions about strongly valued ideas that is defined by the communities we are part of. He uses the metaphor “horizons of significance” to describe these moral spaces, to indicate that we are striving to achieve something important that is off in the distance. Taylor suggests that these horizons play a key role in developing our moral positions.

Taylor (1989, 1991a) sees these horizons as a series of goods, or strongly held values, which are created and supported by our cultures. The horizons give shape and direction to our values and moral outlooks. Our ongoing dialogue and interaction with these horizons help us to define what we hold as important and significant. In working to develop or debate a position, we find ourselves moving either closer to, or away from, the values we hold strongly. In searching for the values supported by the horizon, we are searching for meaning in our lives; we are looking to find a sense of what is good and then articulate it. Our ongoing dialogue with these horizons allows us to develop a sense of meaning.

These horizons of significance incorporate a crucial set of qualitative distinctions that help to define the goods that they support (Taylor, 1989, p. 19). To think, feel, or judge within a horizon is to understand that a given action or mode of life or feeling is incomparably higher than other modes. We have a strong sense that there are things or values which are worthy or desirable, and that command our awe, respect, or admiration.

Taylor suggests that these horizons of significance are in our lives whether we choose to realize it, or admit it, or not. The horizons are created and supported by our culture and therefore are “inescapable” (Taylor, 1991a, p. 31). Some people may appear to operate without any horizons, but Taylor demonstrates that they are actually using a horizon of self-mastery. The quality in these people that commands our respect is the ability to direct the will.

The horizons we choose to strive for provide explicit or implicit background to our moral responses. They are grounded in changeable human interpretations. The fact that they are changeable does not mean that we can do away with them (Taylor, 1989, p. 27) because it is our allegiance to the values supported by the horizons that provides a context for our identity. For example, a person may claim to be an environmentalist yet drives a large, gas-guzzling car to work instead of taking the bus or may refuse to recycle; their life would seem to be a contradiction. There are certain things in our lives that we value and others things that we are unwilling to give up. Stepping outside of the limits of the horizons would be the same as stepping outside those things that we regard as integral to our lives.

The idea of inescapable horizons shows through best when we look at the concept of identity (Taylor, 1989). To know who we are is to know where we stand on important issues. Our unique identity is defined by the commitment to ideas and abstractions, and identification with ideas that provide the frame within which we try to determine what is good or valuable, what ought to be done and a course of action, or what we oppose; the concept of identity is the frame within which we make a stand or take a position. If our identity is defined by a certain commitment, then we feel that there is a solid foundation upon which we can base our opinions. To know “who I am” means that I am able to take a stand and have a position. The horizon plays the role of orienting us by providing the framework within which meaning is created for us by virtue of the qualitative distinctions it incorporates.

The Goods in our Lives

I have laid out Taylor’s position that our moral development is found through our interaction with the goods, or strong values, that we experience in our lives. These goods are created, supported by the horizons of significance that our communities hold. We acquire these goods through our ongoing dialogues with these horizons. I want to turn now to a discussion of the nature of these goods, and the types of goods that we aspire to achieve.

Taylor (1989, p. 61) suggests that today we experience a wider array of different goods than we have historically had access to. Some goods are universal, some are national, and some are specific to the groups or cultures that we are part of. There is always a multiplicity of goods to be recognized, acted upon and pursued. Furthermore,

these goods are quantified not only in a numerical sense but also in an ontological sense. There are qualitatively different types of goods and they cannot always be harmoniously combined, rank ordered, or reduced to a fundamental good. It is also true that some things worthy of affirmation are irreconcilable with others. Thus, our moral choices today can be hard and can involve sacrifice. There will always be a place of conflict between the moral demands that can be, to Taylor, irrecusable yet uncombinable.

Individual Goods – Hypergoods, Life Goods, Constitutive Goods

The most important of the individual goods in our lives are hypergoods. These goods are supreme among our strongly valued goods. A hypergood is a good that eventually has overriding importance, and sits figuratively above all other goods that we experience. These supreme goods provide us with landmarks in our lives, and the orientation towards these goods helps in major ways to define who we are. A hypergood strikes at the very root of who we are as a person and to turn away from it, or never approach it, would be devastating to us as we would lose our connection to how we understand and orient ourselves. Alternatively, being aligned with this good, or approaching it, gives us a sense of completeness and fullness of being a person in a way that Taylor suggests nothing else can.

Through our perception of relative value, hypergoods are the key in allowing us to order our less strongly valued goods (Taylor, 1989, pp. 62-65). Our hypergoods allow us to argue and debate the relative worth of the various goods we experience because they provide a reference to compare other goods. All other goods in our lives are ordered based on our understanding of the hypergoods we have.

Each of us develops our own hypergoods for unique reasons. These goods may include such ideas as integrity, loyalty, universal benevolence, or equal recognition. Modern examples of these goods include values such as protection of the natural resources of the planet, or being a vegetarian.

Taylor (1989) suggests that hypergoods themselves are inherently conflicted in three ways. First, these goods both challenge and reject other goods. For example, Taylor suggests that the principle of equal respect challenges the goods and virtues connected with traditional family life. If we accept gay marriage, then we are in conflict with the view of a marriage being between man and woman having the goal of reproduction. The second conflict arises because hypergoods develop by superseding earlier views, which alters our view of their value. The most important hypergoods in our culture have risen from earlier, less adequate views, and we see them as a step to a higher moral consciousness. Those who espouse them see them as a better account of the way things are. Taylor suggests that many of us accept the idea of equal recognition for all as a hypergood. This conception of the good, where everyone is treated equally and with respect, regardless of race, class, sex, culture, or innate features grew from less inclusive views. This good continues to find new applications in our society, as witnessed by the move to accept alternative forms of marriage. This logical extension creates a source of conflict. The third conflict arises as one hypergood can supersede another, and yet the hypergood that superseded may remain and resist being lost. We are pulled to our allegiance to the old hypergood while feeling that we are moving forward in our understanding of who we are through our allegiance to the new hypergood.

Hypergoods then are the supreme goods that we hold. They help us to orient and order the goods that move us. As we strive to achieve these goods, we experience our lives as having more meaning, of achieving good. Our identities are closely connected to the hypergoods we have, and to move away from our hypergoods, or change them, will result in a change in our understanding of who we are as individuals.

The second type of individual goods that we experience are the ordinary goods in our lives, which Taylor (1989) calls life goods. These goods are part of a good and moral or admirable life, and include such ideas as authenticity, autonomy, justice, freedom, reason, and piety. They make our lives worth living. To Taylor, the most important life goods we hold develop into the hypergoods that we embrace.

The third type of individual goods we search for are constitutive goods. These goods are what make the life goods worthy of desire. Constitutive goods provide the constituting ground of the life good's goodness or worth. Smith (2002) suggests that Taylor sees constitutive goods as providing us with moral sources; constitutive goods are how we make sense of the phenomena of moral goodness in general. For Plato, the constitutive good was the idea of the Good. For Christians, the constitutive good is God the creator. For many in our modern times, the constitutive good is nature. Constitutive goods, while deeper and less obvious than life goods, give our life goods a foundation. These goods are powerful and empowering, they command the love of their adherents, and they move us. We want to act in accordance with them and we sense these goods have value independent of our confirmation of them.

Constitutive goods are a powerful and empowering source of strong evaluations. By attempting to define which human property, or set of properties or actions, demand a moral response, we are articulating the picture or vision that we have of ourselves. The pictures forms a background to our intuitions and in some way justifies or offers reasons for them (Taylor, 1989).

Different traditions and different people provide different accounts of hypergoods, life goods, and constitutive goods. These goods all have varying meanings to us depending upon our life experiences. The same good or moral source may lead to the development of quite different ethical views and standards by different people.

Public Goods – Shared Goods, Convergent Goods

Taylor (1989) suggests that there is a set of goods that cannot be disaggregated, or decomposed, into individual goods. These goods take two forms: shared goods, goods that can be achieved only through sharing, and convergent goods, goods that are found in common but do not depend upon being shared for us to achieve them. Both shared and convergent goods are important to our moral development and we cannot achieve a full life with realizing them.

With shared goods, the important aspect of the goods is the sharing. These goods cannot be generated unless those individuals sharing have something in common. For example, friendship can only be appreciated when understood as shared and can only be realized in concert with others. Shared goods are strengthened by shared understandings of the good. Friendships are stronger when both parties admit it and mutually value it.

Our understanding of the good things in life can be transformed by our enjoyment of them with the people that we have close, affective ties with.

Shared goods play an important role in politics, or in the formation of a unified group. The individual feels an attachment to the laws and practices of their group partly because they, or their ancestors, played a role in shaping and maintaining the group. The laws and practices can only be generated, reproduced, or commemorated by citizens acting in common. These laws and practices are joint property of all citizens in the community, past or present. The sense of attachment, of being part of something bigger than ourselves, is the motivation for our ongoing participation.

Identifying the existence of shared goods allows people to acknowledge the distinctive set of goods they can benefit from when they have experiences that derive their full meaning from being held in common. Shared goods become more vibrant in public life when they are explicitly acknowledged and recognized. Groups need to constantly identify and celebrate shared interests and concerns or the goods may atrophy and may not be recognized or acted upon. In this sense, the act of identifying the shared goods that schools hold will result in these goods being strengthened through an ongoing debate about them.

Convergent goods are different than shared goods in that they may be held in common, but attaining them does not necessarily depend upon them being shared or held in common. Convergent goods are goods that we come to a union or meeting of ideas. These goods can exist for all parties on their own without depending upon others. As

suggested in Chapter 1, a convergent good would be the members of an apartment block agreeing to work to ensure fire safety.

The Full Life – Goods on three axes

Taylor suggests that the goods within our moral frameworks lie on three different axes or dimensions because they answer three different questions. He suggests that these three axes can be found in all cultures in one form or another (Taylor 1989, p. 16) and help define the demands by which we judge our lives. All of the goods we aspire to achieve can be found on all of the three axes.

The first axis supports goods that are concerned with how we connect with others. This class of goods includes the duties, obligations, and responsibilities that all human beings owe each other. The second axis supports goods that consider what it means to live a fulfilled, meaningful life, or to be a good person. Simply put, we are searching for how to be good. On this axis, we are looking at goods that concern both, what it means to live a life that is good and how to accomplish this. The third axis supports goods that are concerned with our sense of dignity. By dignity, Taylor (1989, p. 15) means the “characteristics by which we think of ourselves as commanding or failing to command the respect of those around us.” In this sense, he uses respect to mean “thinking well of” or being thought well of. We are searching for goods that elicit the respect of others. Our dignity is our sense of commanding attitudinal respect and it is woven into the way that we conduct ourselves. Respect is born from recognition. The dignity of another, be it an individual, group, or culture is what we acknowledge when we find ourselves looking up to the other. To not measure up to the goods in this class, especially in the

eyes of dominant or significant others, correlates with a collapse of self-esteem on the part of the individual or the group. Dignity is grounded in some of the moral views that we hold.

Taylor (1991a) suggests that modern moral thinking has tended to focus solely on this interconnectedness with others at the expense of the other two dimensions and that this focus has led to lives that can be narrow and base. To truly understand ourselves and explore our identity, we need to aspire in some way to goods on all three axes.

Moral Sources Today

Taylor (1989) suggests that we have developed three broad horizons for the exploration and interpretation of our moral sources in modern culture. These horizons can be seen as hypergoods held by many.

The first horizon centers on the view of the autonomous human being, able to control their world on their own. The individual within this horizon has aspirations to disengagement and to rational ordering and instrumental control of who we are. It includes disengaged freedom and covers the expressive powers of the self. Our quest is to live authentically. Strong values and life goods are constituted by the human ideals of freedom and responsibility. In this view, family life is good by virtue of it being freely chosen, and arising from the autonomy of the individuals involved in the relationship.

The second horizon posits that nature is a wider whole that we are part of. Nature is seen as the constituting force behind the good. In order to make contact with nature, we turn both inward and outward. Turning inwards allows us to connect to ourselves;

turning outward allows us to connect to the whole. As part of the inward look, art and other creative expressions are seen as vehicles to articulate a personal vision as they give expression to something that is of the highest moral or spiritual significance to the artist. Family life here is seen as a good as it is the fulfillment of natural desires.

The third moral horizon we use is the traditional theistic one. This horizon is still a moral source for a significant portion of the society. In this view, goodness or worth has a divine source. By living a life in the pursuit of God's image the things we strongly value, are made good. Family life is seen as a good as it derives from the sacrament of marriage, as being made good through God's blessing.

Best Account Principle

Taylor (1989, p. 74) claims that when dealing with issues such as our moral outlook, we are looking for a best account of our self-understandings rather than an approach that looks for a final or definite truth. Our understanding of our moral self is a snapshot look as there is always the possibility that the current account may be superseded by a better account. In articulating this view, Taylor (1995) explicitly draws on Alisdair MacIntyre's claim that we are never in a position to claim that we are fully rational or know the full truth; we can only give the best account of ourselves that anyone has given so far. This "best account" approach is open-ended, as it does not aspire to some ultimate or definitive status; it yields provisional, comparative, and relatively stronger conclusions and understandings about our situation.

Taylor (1989, p. 69) believes that a "best account" approach provides the most believable account of things that have meaning to us. If we cannot effectively describe or

understand human action without such terms as courage or generosity, then these types of concepts must be real features of our world. Our tendency has been to suggest that such features would not fit into an absolute account of the universe.

There are three ways in which we work to generate our best account of our moral understandings. The first way is to try to make better articulations about our moral intuitions in an effort to clarify what we see as right. The second way is to try to articulate the constitutive goods that we hold in order to support our account of life goods. Lastly, we use moral arguments to see errors in our moral intuitions (Laitinen, 1998).

We are always striving for what Taylor calls (1989, p. 68) a “best account so far” of our moral positions. These accounts, arguments, and moral theories will only have relevance in the context of our own intuitions. We will always be in a circle of interpretations and the arguments are simply new input to the cycle. It is a holistic account that we are pursuing. Our understanding of who we are, and where we stand on matters of importance, is constantly being updated through our dialogues with the significant others, including the horizons of significance, in our lives. In creating a better account, we have the sense that we are moving forward or growing in our understandings.

Articulating Our Moral Outlook is part of Self-Understanding

Taylor believes that many of the strongly held values and moral frameworks that people hold remain in the background of their consciousness. For the most part, the goods, beliefs, and insights we have about the assumptions and presuppositions that underlie our moral practices and values go unarticulated. To Taylor, it is important that

we bring to light these unarticulated assumptions; he sees his own work as bringing to light both the most important goods of modern life and the multiplicity of sources of these goods. To share these goods, he talks about what is morally moving, what moves people to take a particular moral stance, and what goods they are moved by (Abbey, 2000, p. 41).

Taylor identifies six separate but related functions for articulating a moral outlook. The first function is to deepen our understanding of moral values and responses by showing what underpins them. Taylor places a strong connection between a moral outlook and selfhood; when we articulate the background of our beliefs and commitments, we are also achieving a deeper level of self-knowledge. The second function of articulating a moral outlook is to heighten our awareness of the complexity of our moral lives as well as the diverse range of goods that modern individuals adhere to. He hopes that by understanding the depth and plurality of these sources, we can fend off simplistic or reductionist moral theories that try to harmonize goods or deny conflicting goods. The third function is to increase the chances of having a rational debate about moral sources and values. When we understand what underpins our moral outlooks, it is easier to have rational debates about our moral responses. At the philosophical level, this understanding allows us to stand against moral theories that are relativistic in nature. Taylor wants to draw attention to the plurality and conflict that exists with many of the goods in question yet are denied by much of modern moral philosophy. The fourth function of articulation is to provide a corrective to moral philosophies that are “dumb” to the idea of qualitative discriminations that Taylor suggests are essential to moral life. The goal is to articulate the usually unspoken background of moral values that underlie

the moral motivations of rival theories. By articulating these backgrounds, we are able to increase the level of moral debate and showcase those moral theories that provide the most robust and comprehensive account of moral life. The fifth function of articulation is to demonstrate what is moving about a moral source or framework to strengthen our commitment to it. By bringing our moral sources to light, we strengthen our adherence to them. Conversely, we run the risk of either suffering attrition in our commitment, or losing our understanding of what the framework originally meant for us if we do not articulate it. We lose the original meaning as the moral outlook shifts and changes with time and pressure. Finally, by examining a moral outlook to see how it has changed, distorted or become limited in practice, we are able to maintain the good or possibly reject the new form (Abbey, 2000, pp. 41-47).

In Taylor's view then, the articulation of our moral outlooks is an ongoing process that is never complete. The process is critical to understanding of the goods that move us. Through the articulation, we understand ourselves better in new and different ways.

Authenticity: The Modern Moral Injunction

Taylor (1989, 1991a) suggests that the modern moral injunction, what we are searching for through our dialogues with others, is a sense of being true to our own individuality. Individuals are seen as having their own unique way of existing, and we are encouraged to realize this mode rather than conform to a preexisting model or pattern of being imposed from the outside. This moral injunction empowers us to discover our original and unique way of being that we take responsibility for. Taylor calls this the ethic of authenticity:

There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for me...Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. (Taylor 1991a, p. 29)

The ethic of authenticity gives crucial moral importance to the sort of contract that we make with our inner natures and ourselves. Being true to who "we are" means being true to our originality, and only we can articulate and discover this. We define ourselves in a way that is uniquely our own, and that we are responsible for (Taylor, 1989, 1991a).

The pursuit of this ethic is not without pitfalls. Taylor (1991a) suggests that many today live by an ethic of soft relativism. In authenticity, we are called to be true to ourselves and to seek self-fulfillment; we define what is meant by both concepts. However, soft relativism involves a centering on the self in ways that shut out issues that may transcend the self. The result is that we rely on what we happen to desire rather than appealing to the higher standard of what we ought to desire. Taylor suggests that soft relativism has led to the idea that a vigorous defense of any moral position is off limits; it might lead to the notion that some stances or forms of life are higher than others. This line of thought ultimately leads to the idea that society must be neutral on what constitutes "a good life". Further, it posits that moral positions need not be grounded in reason or the nature of things, and that we can adopt a position simply because we feel that way. We wind up making important decisions based solely on insignificant ideas and how we feel, with no reference to external or internal standards. The standard is simply how we feel.

For Taylor, the problem with the move to the position advocated by our secular society is not the rejection of the horizon of significance of religious belief as a basis for our society, but rather, the rejection of all the broader frameworks of meaning at the same time (Calhoun, 2004, Taylor 2004a, b). With this broad rejection, we see ourselves as moving beyond any inescapable horizons that would guide our development.

The real issue is not the removal of the grand horizon of religion but rather our failure to replace it with anything else (Taylor, 1989, 1991a). We see ourselves as not needing any horizons. Taylor demonstrates that it is these horizons that help us define ourselves in our authentic way. We constitute ourselves as authentic beings only within the horizons of strong values and evaluations. These evaluations are simultaneously intellectual and moral positions, in essence commitments that define who we are; they are the basis of our knowledge and judgments of who we are. We discover who we are within our dialogues with the horizons created through strong evaluations that are both socially produced and reproduced. Without a reference to these horizons we wind up focusing on the self, to the exclusion of the demands and support of others.

Taylor (1991a) suggests that when we focus on the development of the original, creative, and non-conformist aspects of the self while ignoring or minimizing any relation to our participation as citizens in our worlds, we are focusing on self-fulfillment and instrumentalism. We become narcissistic, focusing on personal freedom and individual rights, not on our social responsibilities. The net result is social isolation, and superficial relationships that rely on dishonesty, manipulation, and instrumental motives. There is no deep or meaningful caring; our relationships are never more than temporary allegiances in which no meaningful connection is made.

When we radically privilege the individual over the community, we are unable to establish a true authentic identity. We lack the necessary connections to anything that allows us to locate ourselves. Furthermore, we can easily lose who we truly are through pressures of conformity or by taking an instrumental stance to ourselves. The result is a life that is poor in meaning and less than what we are capable of. We lose the broader, authentic vision when we start to radically focus on ourselves (Taylor 1991a).

For Taylor (1991a), it is self-defeating to shut out the demands others, be they individual, community or cultural, in our search for self. He sees self-centered forms of definition as working against authenticity due to their shallow and trivial nature. To shut out the demands that emanate from beyond the self prevents us from achieving a full, rich sense of the good.

Taylor (1991a, p. 15) does not see authenticity as being at odds with the dialogical self. Authenticity does not preclude any features of the self that we share with others or features of the self that we work out and understand through our relationships with others. Taylor suggests that it may seem selfish to live to one's own standards or inclinations, but he sees authenticity as a powerful moral ideal that requires a connection with significant others. Many of the things that we value most in our lives, such as friendship, are only accessible to us through the relations that we have with significant others in our lives.

Authenticity, the injunction to be true to ourselves, requires that we have a connection to the others in our lives. Without this connection, Taylor (1991a) suggests that we are not able to achieve and understand who we truly are. The modern moral

injunction of authenticity, of finding our way of being, is not a call to individualism, but rather a call to connection with others.

Narrative Identity

Taylor (1989, pp. 47-52) suggests that beyond the goods we strive to achieve in our lives, the concept of the unity of a self is also an important moral dimension. To work this out, Taylor turns to Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of narrative identity. I will examine this idea out more fully in Chapter 3 where I discuss Alasdair MacIntyre, and in Chapter 4 where I discuss Paul Ricoeur.

Our sense of self is linked to the stand that we take on issues of concern. For this we need points of orientation that are provided by the horizons of qualitative contrast that we have even though we are not fixed in the moral spaces within these horizons. Our lives and concerns evolve, and we have a sense of our lives being dynamic or in flux. Even though our understanding of who we are is constantly changing, we have a sense of being able to control this change through our recourse to both a concept of the good, and to a narrative that holds our life story together.

To Taylor (1989, p. 97), we interpret our lives in narrative terms because we make sense of our lives as an unfolding story. We explain any particular moment or experience by situating it in the larger context of our lives and give meaning to events by locating them in relation to past events or future hopes and fears. Our narratives hold the past, the present and the future together, and confer meaning and substance to our lives. Taylor sees the self as located in a narrative that gives context to one's life. Narratives exist at the wider cultural level where they give meaning to histories, the present, and the

future of the group. Different groups will tell different stories within the culture. In the same way, narratives function at different levels of meaning in individual lives.

We place our self-understandings in a story, in a narrative, which articulates direction. In our narrative, the various moments in our lives, in relation to which we understand who we are, have direction. We may have a sense of our lives being in motion or in flux but we also have a sense of being able to control our lives despite the relative changes. The narrative allows us to make sense of ourselves as someone who grows and becomes (Taylor, 1989, p. 50). The story we are living projects us into the future, to a self that we have not yet become, and makes our story a quest in that it gives us a sense of purpose to our lives, and of a search for something not fully characterized, our identity.

Taylor (1989) sees the narrative as a unifying ideal. By answering the question of identity we are placing ourselves in a sequence where the relatively fixed and stable parts of our identity stand out from the variable and changing parts. Our sense of movement towards moral goods provides a way of structuring the narrative. Moral goods play a central role in the stories we create as we discover a new good, recover an old one, realize an ongoing one, make a choice between goods or even feel a loss of goods (pp. 288-289). The necessary structure of our moral lives involves an orientation towards strongly valued goods. We desire their realization and have an animating concern with our place in relation to them.

The many goods that claim one's allegiance do so within the context of an individual life. When we look at this life as a whole, it becomes easier to see that

seemingly different and even incommensurable goods can indeed be combined in practice. Narrative offers us guidance as to how to balance the diversity of goods that we experience. Within the context of our lives, we not only balance different goods, but we embrace new ones and shed old ones. The narrative identity, our story, allows us to see ourselves as the same person, regardless of the changes that we undergo. At the same time, the unity of the self is also a good to be realized (Taylor, 1989, pp. 47-49).

The Self – Community Connection – the Obligation to Belong

Taylor's conceptualization of moral development shows an intimate connection between the self and the various communities that we are part of. Taylor shows that being part of these communities provides us access to aspects of ourselves that can only be accomplished through such relationships. If we are not aware of or do not understand the importance of what we are working to gain through these relationships, then our commitment to them may not be strong enough to allow us to achieve the goods inherent in the relationships.

The Need for Recognition

A key aspect of our interactions within modern society is achieving recognition for ourselves. This ideal is tied to the axis of dignity. Taylor (1991a) suggests that at the core of who we are, and how we understand ourselves, is this need for recognition. Without fulfilling this need, we can never truly achieve who we can be. This need for recognition is wrapped up in both our dialogical nature and the need to define ourselves through our relationships with the cultures of which we are part.

Taylor, (1991a, pp. 47-48) sees the combination of the modern understanding of identity, merged with the ethic of authenticity, as intensifying the importance of recognition. Historically, our identity was fixed by social position. Our importance and source of recognition was based entirely upon our role and position on the social hierarchy. The modern individual does not have recognition inherently built into their social life; we win recognition through our dialogue with significant others and this recognition is vulnerable to the vagaries of these relationships.

This need for recognition is tied to self-esteem, an ideal that we see as an important good for the modern self. Self-esteem is developed through our relationships with significant others. Thoits (as cited in McMullin and Cairney, 2004) suggests that self-esteem is “an understanding of one’s quality as an object”. Like self-confidence, it is concerned with our attitudes and perceptions of self-worth. However, McMullin and Cairney (2004) suggest that it goes further. They suggest that our self-esteem is formed through two inter-related processes. We compare our social identity, opinions, and abilities with others and we assess ourselves through our interactions with others. We learn to understand ourselves in part as a result of how others recognize our worth. A key aspect of self-esteem is our perception of how significant others in our lives perceive us and how we stack up to what we perceive to be their expectations. If we believe that someone whose opinion we value has a low perception of us, then our self-esteem will also be low.

Through our dialogical nature we are constantly estimating how we shape up in relation to how we are being perceived. If the significant other is always changing the rules, or if the rules are incoherent to us, then it is almost impossible for us to make an

estimation, either accurately or consistently. When our perception of who we are is changing all of the time because there are no coherent yardsticks, then we will struggle to see ourselves as worthy of recognition.

Faced with poor perceptions that we feel the significant others in our lives have of us, we make the move we see so often in so many of our students: in our own minds we make the significant other insignificant, and we look to others for significance.

If self-esteem is bound up in our perceptions of other's perceptions, then what these others think of us is also very important. Our opinion may be the most important to us, but the opinion of others still plays a major part in our thinking about ourselves. To not worry about the opinions of others is potentially damaging. We need to redirect our students to an understanding that the opinions that matter are those of significant others who have taken coherent, moral stances as significant others.

Self-esteem is the way that we estimate our worth, our place, and our potential. To make the estimate, we must be working with known, identified, clear conceptions of what the significant others in our lives, both live and institutions, hold to be the good. This is best accomplished through having shared horizons of significance. To be recognized, we must be part of something larger than ourselves, some form of shared horizons.

Freedom

Smith's (2002, pp. 139-153) summary of Taylor's work is particularly useful to the points that I want to make here. Taylor uses the work of Hegel to look at a liberal

society that supports the freedom of individuals and is based on the ideals of equal rights and full participation. The dilemma is that models of freedom based exclusively on either the rights of the individual or on full participation are both self-negating and do not deliver freedom.

A “free people” is a community of equals, all of whom have the same rights. If the sole purpose of a political society is to protect individual rights or is just an instrument to enable the individual and common interest groups to realize their own ends, then it will not be an expression of their freedom. The individuals would be externally related to this society and would follow laws only when it suited them. To Hegel, freedom cannot simply be a matter of individual rights inscribed in law and protected by neutral arbitration. A society based on this type of concept would be unstable as the individuals would be alienated from their collective lives, and it would be contradictory in that the people did not give the law to themselves, so they are not truly free.

Freedom also requires self-determination or autonomy in the sense of participating in the group. However, everyone must be in agreement with the laws of the group or it will not express the will of everyone. But full participation has its own destructive costs. When we eliminate local allegiances, such as work, religion, teams, we homogenize the group. A homogenized, undifferentiated citizenry is not a viable object of identification. Something else would have to provide the motivation to participate. Whatever form it took, it would have to secure unanimous will and suppress social differentiation. Ideologies that do this, however, depreciate and even crush diversity and individuality, and thus undermine freedom.

Taylor's solution is a liberal holism, or situated freedom. In looking at how we live together we need to look at the relationship between the rights that enshrine the freedom of the individual and the collective good of sustaining a well-functioning community. The central goods prized by liberal theory, i.e. autonomy and freedom, can only flourish given a background socialization process and a stock of cultural resources. The various social and cultural forces that shape the modern individual create a significant obligation to belong to the groups that affirm the rights. For affirmation of a conception of the good to make sense, some background must be given to the individual. The individual is dependent upon something social in our capacity for self-determination. This background comes from the intertwining of the self-defining purposes of the individual and the community.

Taylor sees us as having an obligation to belong. Since we can only maintain our identity within a culture or society of a certain kind, we have to be concerned with the shape of that culture or society.

A democratic society is defined by the fairness of its procedures for arbitrating between the competing claims of individuals and groups. At least some of these claims will be informed by conceptions of the good. It is important then that the procedures themselves do not reflect or express a particular conception of the good. The procedures of society are to be neutral with respect to the good if society is to be neutral, or it cannot be fair in its arbitrations.

Common Purpose and Understanding

In order to enhance our commitment to a group, we must have some common understanding of what the group is about (Taylor, 2004a, p. 188). This common understanding provides the framework, or reference points, through which we are able to carry on our deliberations. To Taylor, the keys are that we are able to debate about the common identity, and that everyone has the chance to be heard and recognized. To accept a decision that may go against us, we need to be able to see ourselves as part of the group of people who will be making the decision. There has to be an identifiable bond, and a willingness to go along with a decision that we disagree with because we understand the advantages of being part of the group. This is significant as we are sacrificing our individualism because we understand the importance of the community aspect of our self.

The common purpose that bonds a group together involves a strong sense of commonality that we are free to make our choices and decisions. We are ruling ourselves in common, not being ruled by an agency that does not take into account who we are as an individual. We have a guaranteed voice in any debate and this guarantee helps to define our group. Thus, we belong in a way that is much stronger than by chance. We identify with the group and we feel a bond with our co-participants. When we fail to see the identification with the group, or our identification is outright rejected in some manner, then we fail to create the bond and we do not become part of the political identity. Alternatively, without a strong voice, we do not fully belong to the group in a true dialogical manner.

The political identity of the group comes from whatever ties our group together. For example, at the national level, such goods include freedom as an individual and freedom of expression. In any group, we must be able to answer the questions of who is the group for, whose freedom are we working towards, and whose expression is important? To Taylor (2004a), for the individual to identify with the group, there must be an overlap of goods associated with the identities. Stronger identification with the group occurs when there is significant overlap in the goods.

Taylor suggests that many of us embrace our traditions tentatively. We develop our own versions of them or create idiosyncratic combinations of them. This arises from our radical focus on the self to the exclusion of demands from others. Recognizing the horizons within which we live, and working to articulate them, allows us to think or function with the sense that some action or model of feeling is higher than are the others that may be available to us. These goods or ends prove to be worthy or desirable in a way that is better than most of the goods that we have.

Public Space

Taylor suggests that public space is something that is shared by those who create, maintain or use it. The public space is needed to debate and deliberate on matters of shared concern. This can be a virtual rather than a physical realm. When we lose the shared goods that are at the heart of our shared concern, we fracture the political unity.

In our move to radical individualism and with the removal of the grand horizon of religion as a primary guiding force in our society, Taylor (2004b) suggests that we have lost our understanding of goods that arise out of the public ground. In seeing ourselves as

a disengaged individuals, we necessarily see ourselves as not being open to growing from our interactions with other.

Conclusion

Taylor's work makes a strong connection between the socio-cultural and moral development. We develop morally through our ongoing dialogues with the significant others in our lives. Through these dialogues, we internalize the goods that our communities hold and, in making them our own, we move forward in our moral development. Moral development then cannot happen without these dialogues.

I want to turn now to a look at how we develop the types of behaviours, or virtues, that allow us to achieve the goods of our lives. For this I am going to turn to the work of Alasdair MacIntyre. In a similar way to this Chapter, my review of MacIntyre's work will be focused on the ideas that I think can inform a socio-cultural perspective of moral development in schools, while leaving the actual connection to the school to Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE: PRACTICE AND VIRTUE

Introduction

In this Chapter I want to give an overview of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre. In a similar way to Taylor (1989) and Ricoeur (1992), MacIntyre (1984) suggests that our connections with the world are what give us both context and meaning, and allow us to define ourselves in ways that are beyond ourselves and meaningful. We can only understand morals and virtues as part of the whole, and within the context of the whole. Further, our view of our self is connected to our ability to use moral language, to be guided by moral reasoning, or deal with others in moral terms. This ability to understand ourselves as moral beings, intimately connected to our communities, is central to our own view of our self. He proposes that this requires a particular and close relationship between the various activities and groups that we are part of that goes beyond the way that most of us understand relationships with these groups to be.

For MacIntyre (1984), we have lost the traditional boundaries that connected us to and made us part of a social identity; we have lost a view of life that is ordered towards a given end. There has to be some purpose, or good that we strive to achieve as we lead our lives if our lives are to be full and meaningful.

MacIntyre (1984) suggests that in order to understand how we develop morally, we have to have a conceptualization of how we achieve the types of abilities, or virtues, that allow us to pursue the goods that lead our moral development. A major part of his

thesis is to reclaim an understanding of how we achieve and sustain the virtues of our lives in the context of the modern world.

Virtue and The Virtues

MacIntyre (1984, p. 191) defines a virtue as:

...an acquired human quality the possession of which and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.

MacIntyre (1984) puts forth a view of virtues that involves setting a context and background for them that is based upon our daily practices, our lives as a whole (unity) and our place within the larger society (tradition). He is attempting to reclaim a common understanding not so much of what a virtue is, but rather the role that they play in helping us live a good life.

He (1984, p. 185) argues that there have historically been differing conceptions of the virtues. One conception, arising from the time of Homer, saw the virtues as a quality that enables a person to discharge their social role. A second conception saw virtues as those qualities that allowed the individual to move towards a specific human telos, whether it is the natural telos of Aristotle, the supernatural one of the New Testament and Aquinas, or some other telos that was defined outside of the individual.

MacIntyre (1984) believes that there are some questions about what these conceptions mean. Are they different accounts of the same thing or are they accounts of different things? Perhaps these are different ideas and the problem is that we use the same language for all of them. Is the problem within our language or about virtues?

Each account embodies a claim that there is a single core conception of what constitutes a virtue. Further, with each of the conceptualizations, a person could be denied access to or not be able to reach the virtues. To Homer, one could lack *agora* (the ability to come together); whereas to Aristotle, the lack of an ability to participate in the polis would keep us from achieving the virtues; while in the New Testament, we could not achieve salvation outside of the apostolic church. Historically, there was no core concept of what the virtues are, or who would have access to them.

MacIntyre (1984, p. 186) suggests that what does become clear is the idea that a virtue "...always requires for its application the acceptance for some prior account of certain features of social and moral life in terms of which it has to be explained and defined". To understand a virtue we have to understand the context within which it has meaning. Homer believed that virtue developed from an understanding of social life, while for Aristotle, the virtues were vital to the good life for man. MacIntyre suggests a key problem today with our understanding of virtue is that we have become disconnected from the larger contexts that give the virtues their rational criteria and meaning.

He also claims that there are three stages of logical development in the core conception of a virtue. Each must be understood, in the order he offers them, if we are to understand fully what a virtue is. The first stage is the definition of a practice, the second is the definition of a narrative order of a single human life, and the third is an understanding of a moral tradition.

The Concept of a Practice

MacIntyre (1984) sees a practice as providing an arena in which the virtues can be exhibited and where they receive their primary, although often incomplete, definition.

He provides a detailed and comprehensive definition of the concept of a practice.

By a 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended. (p. 187)

A practice involves standards of excellence that are understood historically and contextually, obedience to rules, and the achievement of the goods that are supported by, and are unique to the practice in question. To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of the standards of the practice. We subject our own attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to the standards that define the practice. We accept the authority of the best standards realized so far within the practice and we accept that others know how to do it better than we do. The practice sets the context by which judgments are made.

There are goods internal to the practice that can only be had by participating in the practice. The goods are internal for two reasons; we can specify them in terms of the practice, and they can only be recognized through participation in the practice in questions. Being involved in the practice is critical to both recognizing and achieving the goods and thus only those involved in the practice can be judges of the virtues. Internal

goods have an outcome of excellence. Their achievement is a good for the whole community in the practice and the achievement enriches the community.

External goods on the other hand, always become someone's property and possession. There is often a zero sum concept attached, in which one person having more necessarily means that another has less. For example, with the external good of winning a tennis match, someone must win and someone must lose. The good, in this case winning, is external to the process.

The goods internal can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship with other practitioners, whereas external goods can be achieved in ways other than through the practice. Through the practice we learn to recognize what is due to whom, and we listen carefully about what we are told about our inadequacies. Certain "self-endangering" risks are demanded of us along the way, and we have to "...accept as necessary components of any practice with internal goods and standards of excellence, the virtues of justice, courage and honesty" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 191).

Every practice requires a certain kind of relationship between the people who participate in it. MacIntyre (1984) sees the virtues as the goods through which we define these relationships. When we share the standards and purposes characteristic of practices, we define our relationship with each other, either knowingly or unknowingly. Our relationship will depend on the standards of truthfulness and trust and with reference to the standards of justice and courage. Justice requires that we treat others in respect to merit in accordance with uniform and impersonal standards. To MacIntyre (1984, p.

192), courage - the capacity to risk harm or danger to oneself - is a virtue that is required in almost all practices. If we care about the individual, the cause, or the community, then we are willing to risk danger or harm.

Practices can only flourish where the virtues of truthfulness, justice and courage are valued. Different societies will have different codes for these virtues, but every society embodies an acknowledgement of them. Truthfulness, justice, and courage are the virtues through which we characterize ourselves, regardless of what our private moral standpoint is, or what society's codes may be (MacIntyre, 1984).

For practice-type behaviour to flourish we need cooperation, recognition of authority and achievement, respect for standards and some necessary risk taking. All of this demands fairness in judging both the self and others.

A practice is more than a set of technical skills. MacIntyre (1984) suggests that the key to understanding a practice lies in how we conceive the relevant goods and ends that the technical skills serve. We need to look at how these goods and ends are enriched through an extension of human powers and by the regard for the internal goods achieved in the process. If we focus on the technical skills, we miss the true value of the practice.

Practices are never fixed for all time. Every practice has its own history, and to enter into a practice is to enter into a relationship with its contemporary practitioners and those who preceded us.

For MacIntyre (1984), there is an intimate relationship between practices and institutions. Practices need institutions to sustain them, yet practices cannot be

considered institutions. Institutions are concerned with external goods that are structured in terms of power and status. They use these external goods, such as money, as rewards. However, the ideals and creativity of the practice are vulnerable to the materialism of the institution and the cooperative care of the common goods of the practice are vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution. MacIntyre suggests that it is the virtues of justice, courage and truthfulness that allow practices to resist the corrupting powers of the institutions that sustain them.

The creation and ability to sustain human communities, especially institutions, have the characteristics of a practice, in what MacIntyre (1984, p. 194) suggests is a peculiar close relationship with the exercise of the virtues that shows up in two ways. First, the exercise of the virtues requires a highly determinate attitude to social and political issues. It is always within a community, with its own institutional forms, that we learn or fail to learn how to exercise the virtues.

MacIntyre (1984) sees this close connection to the community as problematic to the liberal individual of today, who sees the community as simply an arena in which individuals each pursue their own self-chosen conception of the good life. The political institution exists to provide the degree of order to make this pursuit possible and the government and law should be neutral on the conception of what it means to lead “the good life”. This current view exists in contrast to historical political communities that put forward a position on the good life. For example, the parents’ role was to make sure that children grew up to be good citizens, whereas today the modern state is seen as totally unfit to act as a moral educator for any community.

The ability of a practice to retain its integrity will depend upon three concerns. First, the ability will depend upon the way the virtues can and are exercised in sustaining the institutional forms that are the social bearers of the practice. The laissez-faire attitude of the common individual today will not be enough. Secondly, the virtues that are fostered by certain types of social institutions may endanger the virtues fostered by other types of institutions. Third, the virtues are necessary to achieve the goods internal yet the pursuit of the virtues may hinder our achievement of external goods. When the pursuit of external goods becomes dominant, then the virtues may suffer attrition and never achieve their total possibilities. External goods are genuine goods, and we need to pursue them, but not with a sole or dominating focus (MacIntyre, 1984).

For a virtue to lead to achieving internal goods (the reward of the virtue), it must be exercised without regard for the consequences. We practice a virtue irrespective of any set of contingent circumstances. We cannot be courageous or truthful only on occasions that suit us for some reason or another. At the same time, the cultivation of internal goods may hinder the achievement of external goods.

MacIntyre (1984) does not discount the idea of evil practices. There are practices that may be evil and there may be good practices that are evil at some times, such as when they focus on a desire to win rather than excel. It is not necessary to excuse or condone evils, or even to assume that whatever flows from a virtue is a right. Courage sometimes sustains injustice and generosity can weaken the capacity to do “good”. The fact that the virtues are defined and explained through practice does not imply an approval of all practices. Further, the morality of the virtues requires a conception of moral law beyond the concept of a practice. MacIntyre does not restrict the exercise of

the virtues to the context of the practice. They arise out of a practice, but they can be used anywhere. He locates the point and function of the virtue in terms of a practice.

To MacIntyre (1984), the concept of a practice is not sufficient to define the scope of virtue. Such a narrow delineation would lead to our lives being defective in three ways. The first is that our lives would be pervaded by too many conflicts and too much arbitrariness. Even in the virtuous, allegiances can be pulled in different ways. The claims of one practice may be incompatible with the claims of another. The commitment to sustaining the kind of community where the virtues can flourish may be incompatible with a particular practice. If our virtues are continuously being fractured by what seem to be arbitrary choices among the virtues, then it may seem that the goods internal derive their authority simply from individual choice. This especially seems clear when we are forced to choose between rival claims. The second point of defection lies in the concept that without an overriding conception of the telos of a whole human life, conceived as a unity, the conception of certain individual virtues remains partial and incomplete. MacIntyre uses the virtue of patience, the ability to wait attentively without complaint, as an example. The question that arises is “wait for what?” We can define “what” within the practice, but how long then should we wait? There has to be some overriding hierarchy of goods or else if we wait too long we hurt other goods. MacIntyre believes that there has to be some telos that transcends the limited goods of a practice by contributing to the good of a whole human life. Without this there is a certain subversive arbitrariness to moral life that prevents us from being able to fix the content of certain virtues. Finally, there is at least one virtue, integrity, which can only be defined by

reference to the wholeness of a human life. Integrity, the singleness of purpose of a whole life, has no application unless the whole life has purpose.

The Unity of a Single Life

MacIntyre (1984) sees virtues as excellences of action that allow us to achieve the goods internal to practices we are part of. To realize these virtues, we need to connect to something larger than our practice in order to specify each life as having its good, and to see that function of the virtues is to enable the individual to choose the kind of unity they wish or need. For MacIntyre, seeing our lives as a “whole” is what provides the virtues with the adequate telos he suggests the virtues need.

MacIntyre (1984) sees one social obstacle and a philosophical obstacle that could prevent us from seeing the life as a whole. The social obstacle derives from the idea that modernity tends to partition life into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behavior. Work is divided from leisure, corporate from personal, and private life from public life. Even childhood and old age are seen as distinctive realms of the whole life. We learn to think and feel in the distinctiveness of each, not in the unity of our whole life. The philosophical obstacle arises in two ways. First, we have an atomistic perspective on human action. We analyze complex actions through simple actions, and we have ideas that surround “basic” actions. The idea that actions derive their character as parts of the larger whole is the opposite of how we actually see things. We see life as made up of a sequence of individual actions and episodes. We have learned to view character of the whole as deriving from the parts, not the other way around. The second philosophical problem stems from the idea that it is hard to see unity

when there are sharp lines drawn between our understanding of ourselves and the roles that we play. We see life as a series of unconnected episodes where the self is separated from its roles. However, MacIntyre suggests that a life separated from its roles in social relationships prevents the exercise of the virtues. A virtue is something that makes for success in more than one situation; it can be used in many different situations. As such, the unity of a virtue in a life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a life that is conceived and evaluated as a whole (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 204).

We think of the self in a narrative mode where we see the narrative as a whole. Behaviour, for example, can be characterized in any number of ways. We could be digging, we could be gardening, or we could be making our spouse happy. Some of these characterizations describe the intent of what we are doing, while others describe the consequences, intended or unintended. To understand the behaviour, though, we have to have prior knowledge of the various correct answers to our questions about the actions and how they are connected to each other. The primary intention of the agent is the key. We cannot characterize behaviour independent of the intentions of the agent or the settings that make the intentions intelligible. The settings can be anything, but they will have a history in which they are situated and they can change with time. Because behaviour can belong in more than one setting, it is important that we understand the settings as well. Further, we need to know which of the intentions is primary. What is the case that the agent intended? Without this, we cannot understand the action. The person holding the shovel in the example above may be taking this action both for exercise and to please his wife. Would he continue if his actions are good exercise but do not make his wife happy? To answer this question, we need to know the husband's

beliefs and which of them are causally effective. Intentions also have a temporal aspect in that they are ordered by time. Is the person writing a sentence finishing a book, contributing to the debate on issues affecting schools, or trying to get a job at the university? The end result is that behaviour only makes sense if we know and understand how the long term and short-term intentions are connected (MacIntyre, 1984).

The intentional, social, and historical interact in helping to understand action. We identify action by invoking implicit and explicit context and we put intentions in both causal and temporal order with regard to the agent's history. We situate the intentions into settings. We determine what causal efficacy we had and how the short-term intentions succeeded or failed to be constitutive of the long-term intentions. MacIntyre (1984) sees us as creating a narrative history.

In the narrative, each element or action is intelligible only as an action in a sequence of actions. The sequence requires a context to be intelligible. Intelligible actions flow from intention, motive, passion and purpose with someone accountable for the action. If the occurrence of an action is the intention of the agent and we are unable to identify the action then we are baffled, both intellectually and practically. This happens to us in alien cultures or social structures, but also in everyday situations. The narrative or situation is what makes the action intelligible. Without the narrative we can still figure out intent if we know the type of act and its history. In conversation, we make speech acts intelligible by giving the acts context. However, being intelligible and understanding the conversations are not the same thing. We allocate conversations to genres. Every conversation is a dramatic work and the participants are both the actors

and the authors. The key for understanding intention, then, is the context of which it is part.

Conversations and human actions are “enacted narratives”. To understand and identify what someone is doing, we try to place the act or episode in the context of a set of narrative histories, both of the individuals concerned and of the settings in which they act. The actions of others are intelligible through the narrative as is our understanding of our own lives. Life, the narrative, has beginnings and endings and some actions are both.

Narratives can be, and often are, embedded in another narrative. The student is embedded into the school narrative that is embedded into the narrative of the community. The history of the Louis Riel Rebellion in Canada is embedded in the history of the country as a whole.

What we are able to say and do is deeply affected by the fact that we are never more than co-authors of our narratives. In our lives we are always under certain constraints. We are the main character in our own plays but we play subordinate parts in other plays and each drama places constraints on others. To MacIntyre (1984), what is missing in the spirit of the modern self is the idea that action and history require each other. MacIntyre (p. 214) defines an action as “a moment in a possible or real history or in a number of such histories”. The modern self suggests that presenting our human lives as narratives in some way falsifies our lives. MacIntyre sees this conception as wrong for two reasons. First, the characterization of actions prior to a narrative being imposed on them will always turn out to be the disjointed parts of some possible narrative. Secondly, history is an enacted dramatic narrative in which the characters are also the authors.

In MacIntyre's view (1984), lived narratives have a number of characteristics associated with them. First, the beginnings of the story are not blank for any character. These beginnings already exist, made by what and who has gone before. They do not begin where they please, nor can they go wherever they please. Each is constrained by actions of others and social settings. At any given point in an enactive narrative we do not know what will happen next. Secondly, there is a certain teleological character to lived narratives. We live our lives, individually and with others, within a conception of a possible shared future. Our present is always informed by our image of the future and this image always presents itself as a telos that we are moving towards. Finally, unpredictability and teleology coexist for us. We do not know what happens next, but we still have a certain form that projects itself towards our future. For our story to continue intelligibly there must be constraints on how the story can progress, and within these constraints there must be indefinitely more ways to continue.

MacIntyre (1984, p. 216) sees man as essentially a teller of stories that aspire to truth. We must be able to answer the question "of what stories do we find ourselves a part of?" before we can answer the question of "what are we to do?" We have to learn the roles that we play in order to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed. The stories we tell in society help to give us background and knowledge.

There is no way to found our identity on the psychological continuity or discontinuity of the self. We are always what we were to others in history, even if we have changed. We carry the past with us and it is part of our character. The background of our past informs who we are and it is part of our identity today.

Understanding ourselves requires two things. The first is that we are what others can justifiably take us for. We are the subject of a history that is our own and no one else's and our history has its own meaning. A "meaningless life" means that the narrative has become unintelligible to whoever finds it meaningless and that it lacks any point or movement towards a climax or telos. Our personal identity is presupposed by the unity of the character that the unity of the narrative requires. The second requirement is that the narrative selfhood is correlative. We can ask others for an account of the story. We are part of their story and we are part of our own story. With the others we create narratives. This accountability of the self is critical to make the narrative have depth, scope, and continuity. Our personal identity, then, cannot be separated from the concepts of narrative, intelligibility, and accountability.

Thus the unity of a human life consists of the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life. To ask what is good for us is to ask how we might live out the unity and bring it to a completion. To ask what is good for man in general is to ask what all of the answers from the individuals who have answered the question "what is good for me as an individual?" have in common. The unity of a moral life lies in answering the two questions: of what is good for me, and what is good for man.

MacIntyre (1984) sees our lives as narrated quests. A quest has two key features. First, there must be a conception of the final end or telos, or there cannot be a beginning. We cannot begin without an end. Some conception of the good of man is required. MacIntyre (1984, p. 219) suggests that we draw these conceptions from the same place we went to in order to transcend the limited conceptions of the virtues available in and through practices. We look to a conception of the good. By looking to a conception of

the good, we will be able to order the various goods, we will be able to extend our understanding of the purpose and content of the virtues and we will be able to understand the place of integrity in a life. We initially have to define the kind of life that is a quest for the good. The second feature of a quest is that it is a search for something that is not adequately characterized. Lewis and Clark were on a quest when they crossed the North American continent. They did not have a full understanding of what they were getting into. It is in experiencing the quest and its various episodes that the good of the quest is finally understood. A quest is about more than just finding what is sought; it is also about the self-understandings that are gained along the way.

The disposition of the virtues allows us to sustain a practice, enables us to achieve the goods internal to a practice, and sustains us in the quest for the good by enabling us to overcome harm, danger, temptations and distractions. They give us increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good. The catalogue of the virtues includes those required to sustain the kinds of households and political communities where we can seek the good together, and those required for a philosophical enquiry as to the nature of the good. The good life for man, therefore, is the life that is spent in seeking the good life for man. The virtues necessary are those that enable us to understand what more and what else this good life is.

Traditions

To complete his conception of the virtues, MacIntyre requires that they be situated beyond the individual and into the larger concept of a tradition. The good life is different for different people. The good life for a teacher is different than the good life

for a doctor or a priest. The good life for a citizen of Canada is different than the good life for a citizen of the United States or for Australia. We approach our own circumstances in life with a particular social identity. The result is that we inherit a starting point, and obligations, expectations and debts that go with our particular circumstances.

For MacIntyre (1984), in today's world, we see ourselves as detached from any social and historical roles. Effectively, we see ourselves as being without a shared or specific history. We feel that we are what we choose to be, and we decide what we carry forward. We take the position that while we may be a Canadian citizen, we are not responsible for what the country does unless we choose to be. We justify staying Canadian as we simply choose not to be responsible for this decision in our country. In effect, being Canadian is not seen as part of our identity.

To MacIntyre (1984), though, the story of our lives is always embedded in the story of the community from which we derive our identity. Our moral development is contingent upon and discovered through our membership and participation in the various communities in which we participate – family, neighborhood, city, country, school, etc. We do not have to accept the moral limitations of any of the communities, but without the moral limitations there is nowhere to begin. It is in moving forward that the search for the good exists. We cannot avoid the particularity of our circumstances, nor can we escape into some realm of entirely universal maxims. Simply put, we are formed by what we inherit. The past is always part of our present and it is the past that carries within it a tradition. The practices in which we are involved always have histories, and one role of virtues is to sustain the relationships required for the practice and the relationship that we

have with the past. One way to express our identity, then, is to rebel against it, and take the position that we are not responsible for the country's decisions or the past even though they have helped form us.

Our traditions, which exist in relation to larger social roles, transmit the particular practices, and reshapes them. MacIntyre (1984, p. 221) suggests that all reasoning takes place within the context of some traditional mode of thought. A tradition is in good order if it is partially constituted by an argument about the goods that give the tradition its point and purpose. An institution that bears a tradition of practice will have a common life that is partly, but in a central way, constituted by an ongoing argument as to what it should be. The conflict is necessary to the health of the institution.

A living tradition, therefore, is a historically extended, socially embodied argument that is in part about the goods that constitute the tradition. Within the tradition the pursuit of goods may extend across generations. We pursue the goods within the context of the various traditions of which we are part. The history of these practices is embedded in and made intelligible in terms of the larger, longer traditions through which the practice is sustained. Further, the histories of our lives are embedded in and made intelligible in terms of the larger and longer histories of the number of traditions of which we are part.

Our traditions are subject to decay, disintegration, or disappearance. The exercise, or lack of exercise, of the relevant virtues will work to weaken or destroy a tradition. A lack of justice, truthfulness, courage and the relevant intellectual virtues will

most likely corrupt traditions, institutions and practices. The living tradition continues a narrative that is in progress and gives context to our lives.

MacIntyre (1984, p. 223) suggests that a new virtue arises from his understanding of virtues. This virtue is having an adequate sense of the traditions to which we belong or which confront us. It is this sense of tradition that will allow us to see future possibilities.

MacIntyre's (1984) perspective suggests that there may be better or worse ways for us to live through our confrontations with the good. To know what the good life for man is may require knowing what the better and worse ways of living is and what the situations we find ourselves in involve. There is an unacknowledged empirical premise about the character of practical situations that we must face. The good for us must be defined within the intelligent narratives that give our lives unity and a lack of unity means that we lead an unintelligible life.

Virtues – Concluding Ideas

Virtues find their point and purpose in sustaining three things: the relationships necessary if the goods internal are to be achieved, the form of an individual's life as we seek out the good as the good of our whole life, and the traditions which provide both the practices and us with necessary historical context. MacIntyre suggests that,

The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good...and which will furnish us with increasing self knowledge and knowledge of the good. (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 204)

MacIntyre (1984, p. 227) suggests that we struggle to understand the kind of work done today by most people, as the concept of practice, with internal goods to be achieved through active participation, has been moved to the margins of social and cultural life. MacIntyre sees Modernity as starting when work, or the production of life's needs, was moved outside of the house, and put to the service of impersonal capital. Work began to be separated from everything but the service of biological survival, the reproduction of the labour force, and institutionalized acquisitiveness. The Greek idea that each person does his own, unique work, or keeps his own things, an idea that was a vice to Aristotle, is now the driving force of modern work. A means-ends relationship is embodied in modern work and is external to the good that those who work seek. Work is no longer seen as a practice within which internal goods are to be achieved.

We have seen a transformation of forms of social life, one that is continually reestablishing the dominance of the markets, factories and bureaucracies over the individual. These economic forces themselves are often seen as independent, rational entities, with prescribed moral standpoints, and what is important is sustaining them in good stead. We have taken away the narrative unity and the practice of the internal goods from the lived life, and have left a diminished view and capacity for the virtues.

Before this modern period, as MacIntyre (1984) claims, there had been a common language of morality, even in everyday speech, based on a complex moral scheme. In Modernity this has become a mix of incongruous elements where little, if anything, meaningful could be said about anything. The moral vocabulary has become detached from any precise central context of understanding and different groups use the same language for different things.

A major change in moral direction took place when the concept of an overriding teleology, or sense of what it is good to be, was removed from the moral debate. MacIntyre (1984, p. 233) suggests that when teleology is abandoned the tendency is to substitute some form of stoicism in which the virtues are not practiced for the sake of achieving a good, but rather for the practice of the virtues themselves. The virtue becomes its own end, reward and motive.

MacIntyre's quest has been to find a place for virtues within the lives that we lead today, and to recognize our situations within a social and political context. He posits our daily practices, the unity of our individual lives, and our place within larger traditions, as all contributing to our moral outlook and position.

Practical Reasoning

MacIntyre (1984, p. 224) suggests that there is a correct way of thinking about moral and ethical situations that is marginalized in our lives today. Both MacIntyre (1984) and Taylor (1989, 1991a, 1995) suggest that the predominant way of thinking about all issues today is theoretical or scientific reasoning, where we are concerned with facts, explanations, and predictions. In this perspective, we do not see any connection between the issues at hand and the person doing the thinking or their various abilities. Both MacIntyre and Taylor suggest that the correct way to think about moral and ethical situations is Aristotle's concept of practical reasoning or practical intelligence. Aristotle (as cited in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1141b, as translated in Thomson, 1953, p. 154) suggested that ethical and moral issues require reasoning that is practical in the sense that the decisions and actions we make are based upon both the context of the situation and

the abilities of the actors in question, and lead to some practical action. Practical reasoning searches for actions that are desirable, rather than true, and leads to claims about what it is good to do and good to be. The goal is to reach agreement over what to do, rather than find out what is right.

MacIntyre (1984) sees a close relationship between practical reasoning and the virtues. In ethical and moral situations, we have to make judgments about what is good for someone like us to do and be. Our capacity to act on these judgments depends upon the intellectual and moral virtues that we have. The possession of a virtue leads to a capacity for judgment, and the ability to appropriately choose between a stack of possible actions, and apply our actions in particular situations.

Practical intelligence is intelligence informed by the virtues we possess. The connection of the virtues to the traditions of our lives allows us to consider and pursue both the individual needs and community needs at the same time. Aristotle (as cited in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b, as translated in Thomson, 1953, p. 14) insists that virtues find their place not just in the life of the individual, but also in the life of the community. In order to found a community to achieve a common project, Aristotle suggested that there must be two kinds of evaluative practices. The first is the need to value and praise as excellent those qualities of mind and character that would contribute to the realization of the common good. The second is to identify those types of actions that render the achieving of the good impossible. An individual can fail as a member of the group by either simply not being good enough or by committing an offense against the community. Both of these result in the achievement of the shared project being less likely. An offense

against the laws destroys the relationships that make common pursuit possible and a defective character makes one unable to contribute to achievement.

Aristotle (as cited in Nicomachean Ethics 1140a, as translated in Thomson, 1953, p. 150) posits as a central virtue the idea of *phronesis*, or the ability to exercise judgment in particular cases. It is doing the right thing, in the right place, at the right time, in the right way. Halverson (2001, 2002) defines it as thinking about the means and the objective together. Aristotle saw *phronesis* as an intellectual virtue that we need before we can utilize any other virtue.

The exercise of practical intelligence requires the virtue of character so that it does not simply become the means to an end. The excellence of character and intelligence cannot be separated and thus, genuine practical knowledge requires knowledge of the good. The modern man separates character and intelligence while for Aristotle these two concepts were intimately connected (MacIntyre, 1984).

MacIntyre (1984) connects our ability to achieve the goods in our lives with the possession of the virtues. This leads him to the conclusion that the appropriate way of thinking about moral and ethical concepts is practical reasoning. Both Taylor (1989, 1991a) and Ricoeur (1992) have suggested a similar idea. In Chapter 7 of this thesis I am going to look at implications from the ideas presented in this thesis for schools and school leaders. This concept, of how we think about moral development in schools, will be played out more thoroughly in Chapter 7.

Implications for Education

Is Being Educated a Practice?

MacIntyre argues that institutions are not practices however they are necessary to support practices. For example, schools, as institutions, operate in the support of practices. A practice supports the goods internal while the institution is the place where the goods external are held. Within a good school, the two aspects are held in a situation of dynamic tension. The wise school leader understands the importance of keeping a balance between the goods internal and the goods external.

Learning, within the institution of a school, fits the definition of a practice. It has goods internal to it that are realized in trying to achieve excellence that is appropriate to and defined by the activity. In particular, the goods of moral development and self-understanding are part of what we should strive to help our students achieve. Through our participation in the learning process, our ability to achieve excellence is extended. The more we learn, the better we get at learning. The more we learn, the more we understand ourselves, and our abilities. There are goods that we can only achieve by being part of the practice. For example, understanding different ways of thinking, of understanding how we are where we are, and understanding of ourselves, are goods that can only be accomplished within the practice. The goods that are internal to the practice are often under assault by outside forces or the pull of external goods, but what is key in the practice are the internal goods. We accept the authority of the practice, in that there are standards of what is good and what is not, and we are judged by these standards. Learning is a practice, and there are goods internal to this practice and virtues that derive from our participation in the practice.

Education within the Tradition

MacIntyre (2002) posits that we need to recognize each life as a single, complex narrative in which the different parts become integrated. The pursuit of the goods of home and family should reinforce the pursuit of goods in the school and vice versa. The goal is to integrate all of the goods in a way that allows us to understand these diverse goods as contributing to a single overall good.

Definitional of being a member of an educational community is seeking a practical understanding of "...what is the ultimate human good" (MacIntyre, 2002, p. 10). With education we may not get there, but there are goods internal to experience. One of education's jobs is to help the student grasp the many narratives that exist within the larger traditions. The narratives expose us to questions about our lives in relation to a sense of some overarching human good (MacIntyre, 2002, p.11).

MacIntyre (2002, p. 11) argues that we need to distinguish the harm of compartmentalization from the necessary division of time and labour that is needed to focus upon one thing at a time. This is a natural issue of the way things are set up, but with proper conceptualization we can overcome the harm.

For MacIntyre (2002), an educated public is critical to allowing us to adequately confront issues and conflicts that arise in the public debate. The educated public has three characteristics. First, it has shared standards of agreement to which we can hold each other to in debates. This allows all members of the public to hold each other accountable for the truth of premises and the validity of their inferences. Second, there

needs to be an underlying agreement on both the goods that are at stake in disagreements and on the need to define and achieve the common good, whether stated or not. This makes possible the shared, rational deliberation that is needed for effective debate and to have the kind of deliberation that leads to a commitment to act on the conclusions. The third characteristic of the educated public is that it is willing to ask not only which alternative to choose, but to also look for other alternatives.

Without an educated public, it is rare for anyone to be held accountable for the quality of their arguments as the debate is not scrutinized closely enough, and undisciplined rhetoric displaces rational debate, which leads to seduction by fear or hope. When there are too few shared premises for debate, we get negotiation and bargaining between opposing parties and the established powers will always prevail. Finally the alternatives between which public choices are made are restricted to those selected in advance by the ruling parties.

MacIntyre (2002) concludes that the public of today is, in general, not well enough educated to be able to adequately debate educational issues. The dilemma is that we need to change our schools in order to create an educated public, but we need an educated public in order to be able to bring about the change he sees necessary in our schools.

MacIntyre, the Other, and Ends

MacIntyre (1984) claims that moral philosophy requires a conceptual analysis of the relationship between an agent, his reasons, motive, and intentions. In other words, we have to connect the agent with the society in which he lives. MacIntyre sees the

prevailing attitude of today as an attempt to obliterate any true distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations. The attempt is to treat everyone as the same and, in effect, to treat others as a means to our ends.

To treat someone as an end means is to give a good reason for acting in one way and not in another. We let the other evaluate the reasons and we are unwilling to influence another except by reasons that the other judges to be good. The other is their own judge. To treat another as the means to an end is to make the other an instrument of our purpose. For MacIntyre (1984), many evaluative utterances today have no point but the expression of our own feelings, and the sole purpose of our utterances is an attempt to align the attitudes, feelings, preferences and choices of others to our own.

Institutions are breeding grounds for this type of thinking in that they define our working (or learning) lives. Businesses are engaged in a competitive struggle for scarce resources to put to the service of their pre-determined ends. Managers direct and redirect the organization's resources, both human and non human, towards these ends. There is an explicit cost-benefit analysis happening and instrumental rationality becomes the primary way of matching means with ends in the most economical and efficient manner.

Both Ricoeur and Taylor posit a key role for the "other" in our moral development. For MacIntyre we have to be constantly on guard against using the other as simply a means to our own end. The paradox is that to fully make use of what the other can give us, we have to treat the other as an end rather than a means.

The Concept of the School

The school must be more than just a place where students learn. It is the keeper of the traditions of learning, and it embeds the student in the traditions of both learning and the life of the school. It sustains the practice of being educated and protects the virtues associated with this practice. It is itself “whole”, in that it supports its own authentic identity, and has its own narrative and history. It helps us learn our roles and allows us to experiment with the various roles we may play.

In essence, then, the school helps us define “the good life”. In order to do this, it must itself be clear and consistent about what it believes this good life to be, live this life, and support practices that foster such a life. As such, it will play a fundamental role in the development of its students’ moral development. We discover our moral identity in and through our membership in the various communities in which we participate – family, neighborhood, city, country, school etc. The school, therefore, is not simply a place we attend to learn the stuff of academics. Rather, it is a place where we learn and discover who we are, as well as where we have come from (MacIntyre, 1984).

Schools are special places of learning. They support the practice of learning, but the students, as beneficiaries of the practice, are on a quest of their own: an individual search for self. They are both the producer and product of the environment. Their quest goes to goods internal that are at the heart of who they are as people. While other practices may inform who they are as “selves”, the purpose of the practice of learning is to help our students understand and become who they are. Thus, the primary focus of this practice is moral development.

Conclusion

MacIntyre sees the virtues, or types of excellences, that allows us to achieve the goods in our lives, will require the nurturing of a practice, a connection to our lives as a whole, understood as a narrative, and a connection to the communities that we are part of for their full development. What we are seeking, and achieve through developing the virtues, is an understanding of ourselves as moral beings. In a similar path to Taylor, MacIntyre situates the sources of moral development outside of us, in those we experience as “others”. He suggests that in thinking about the self in this way, we need to look beyond the dominant mode of scientific thought, and look at life through the lens of practical wisdom.

I want to now turn to the work of Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur’s work shows that our understanding of ourselves is a mediated one, and that it is only through the process of mediation, or dialogue with significant others in our lives, that we develop the key ideas of self-esteem and self-respect.

CHAPTER 4

PAUL RICOEUR: MEDIATION

Introduction

In this Chapter, I am going to lay out some aspects of Paul Ricoeur's theories for the formation of an ethical and moral life, and how these ideas can contribute to the goal of forming a good school. A large function for schools is the development of an ethical and moral identity. A key element identity formation has to do with self-understanding. Ricoeur connects this with a dialogical relationship with the self, others and socio-cultural matters.

We learn to understand ourselves through what Ricoeur (1992, p. 80) terms an indirect route, that has at its core our interactions with the communities of which we are part, the members of these communities, the various standards of excellence and the various institutions that these communities support. He states that:

...the self does not know itself immediately, but only indirectly, through the detour of cultural signs of all sorts, which articulate the self in symbolic mediations that already articulate action, among the narratives of daily life.
(Ricoeur, 1992, p. 80)

This indirect route takes us through all of the actions and interactions that we have in our lives. The shared experiences that we have are central to our understandings of ourselves and provide the necessary pre-conditions for the development of self-esteem, self-respect and a just attitude. Ricoeur (1992, 1999) sees self-esteem, as our understanding of our capacity to act, do things, and cause change in the world. Our self-esteem is created or experienced when we evaluate our actions in relation to the standards

of excellences that our practices/communities support. We evaluate our actions by submitting them to these public standards with the result being that we can see our actions as worthy of praise or blame. We develop self-esteem when we see ourselves as capable in comparison to the standards that are embedded in certain practices, in the context of both the parts, and the whole of our lives. In appreciating the excellence or success of our actions we begin to appreciate ourselves as the author of these actions. As the basis of our self-esteem lies in our relationships with the others in our lives, it is always provisional at best. However, self-esteem is not founded only on accomplishment, but also on our understanding of our capacity to act (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 181). We are asking ourselves how we measure up in relation to these ‘horizons of significance’ in our lives that cannot be completely brought under our sole control. In Chapter 7 I will explain how the school acts as a horizon itself while also supporting the enhancement of other significant dialogical opportunities for self-understanding.

Ricoeur (1992) sees self-respect as connected with self-esteem because we come to value ourselves because others do, both directly and indirectly. This understanding comes to us directly through inter-personal dialogues and indirectly through the embedded standards found in public practices. Self-respect is formed through our internalization of the external standards and forms and the ‘inside’ dialogue of the self; do we find ourselves to be a person that we value and feel positive about? We learn to see ourselves as worthy of our own respect and trust. Our intuition or our conscience becomes a reliable moral compass that we can trust and use as a guide for how we should act.

This recursive process of the outer dialogue with significant others leads to the formation of self-esteem, “Because I am valued by others, therefore, I am valuable” and this becomes internalized as an inner dialogue that leads to self-respect. This is the manner in which self-esteem and self-respect are linked and co-developed.

The third element that Ricoeur (1992, 1999) introduces is justice. He suggests that justice is what regulates our social practices. It deals with conflicts of interest and rights in particular situations, with the goal of giving to everyone what they are due. Justice expands the idea of the good beyond personal and interpersonal relations to the sphere of everyone and ensures that everyone is treated equally and fairly. It introduces ideas around rights, duties, and obligations, and how we act towards others that we are “equal to”. This is based on Aristotle’s concept of proportional distribution and ideally results in everyone getting their due. Justice extends the idea of the other to the generalized other who we may not know or experience directly and can lead to the concept of universalization.

Ethical and Moral Identity

The Ethical Intention

In working through our interactions with others on our indirect route, Ricoeur (1992, p. 172) suggests that we come to understand a need for a three-fold ethical intention in our lives, that of “...aiming at the good life, with and for others, in just institutions”. He defines the institution as “...the diverse structures of wanting to live together” (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 227). The institution is characterized by our common morals and positions, and its focus is on power-in-common, rather than on domination.

The aim or desire to live an “accomplished life” (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 172) is experienced as a wish that precedes any imperative in our lives. To Ricoeur, this desire could be characterized as, “If I could live well, within the horizon of an accomplished, (and in that sense) a happy life” (Ricoeur, 1999, p. 46). It is a life in which we sense our lives to be more fulfilled (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 179).

Ricoeur (1992, p. 177) sees the “good life” as being created and defined from within the communities of which we are part. It consists of meeting the standards of excellence that are created and maintained within our cultures. These standards are set socially, and require a common culture and agreement on what excellence means. The standards relate to the goods that are internal to the practices of which we are part. Internal goods are goods that can only be achieved by participating in the practice that supports them, and so the type of participation we have in the practices of our lives will be important. This reminds us of how MacIntyre (1984, p. 191) defines a virtue and its relationship to the achievement of goods internal to a practice.

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession of which and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.

The good life develops through an ongoing interpretation of our life as a whole, in relation to the choices that we make as compared to the standards of excellence that we experience. This interpretation goes back and forth between what we see as the ideal of the good life, and the most important decisions, such as love or career, that we make in our lives. The whole of the good life, and its constitutive parts, can only be understood in

terms of each other. In the process of interpreting our choices, we are interpreting and defining ourselves.

The second aspect of Ricoeur's ethos, "working with and for others", is a search for recognition and is experienced best when we achieve solicitude in our interpersonal relations. Ricoeur (1999) defines solicitude as an attitude of earnest concern and attention, the movement of the self towards the other. In turn, the other responds with an interpretation of themselves based upon how the other interacts with them.

For Ricoeur (1999), the relationship between the self and the other is a search for moral equality using the various forms of recognition. It is the reciprocity that helps us feel connected. Without the reciprocity, and recognition, we will not experience a sense of equality.

The concept of "with and for others" is best understood within the idea of friendship. Friendship is what governs interpersonal relations. Aristotle held the friend to be "another self", or another face as it were (as cited in Ricoeur, 1992, p. 185). From Aristotle, Ricoeur (1992, p. 187) takes the ethics of reciprocity, of sharing and of living together, and the idea of mutuality.

In friendship (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 193) we find equality, a common wish to live together, and a place that while the roles are reversible, the persons who play the roles are not substitutable. Solicitude adds the dimension of being seen to have value by the others involved in the friendship. For Ricoeur (1992, p. 193), friendship leads to the idea that should we esteem others "as ourselves", where "as ourselves" means that you too can do

everything that I do. We understand the other as a self, an agent, as authors of their own actions, who have reasons for their actions.

The third aspect of Ricoeur's (1992) ethical intention is the wish to live in "just institutions". Ricoeur (1992, p. 194) defines institutions as "the structures of living together in historical communities" and suggests that these institutions are irreducible to interpersonal relations. An institution is bound together through its function as a distributor of roles, responsibilities, privileges, goods and rewards. Institutions allow us to extend inter-human relations to all of those who are outside of our face-to-face encounters with others.

The institution introduces a relationship with the other that cannot be reconstructed on the model of friendship. The other is a partner without a face, the 'everyone' of the just institution. This everyone is still a distinct other that we can join through the channels of the institution. However, we will not be able to get the same level of intimacy with these faceless others, especially in terms of interpersonal relationships. It is this inability that makes the category of 'everyone' irreducible to the 'other' of friendship.

Ricoeur (1992) sees the ethical aspect of justice in the same sense that the ancient Romans gave it: give everyone their due. Through the other of the just institution, we wind up with the ethical stance of "to each, his or her own rights" (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 194). The institution, then, is related to the individual by way of its regulation of the distribution of roles (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 194). The institution, as a ruler of distribution, exists only to the extent in which the individuals take part.

The concept of justice adds the dimension of equality to solicitude found in friendship. Solicitude provides to the self another who is a “face”, while equality provides to the self another who is, in an ethical sense, an “each”. Justice extends the concept caring for others, to any aspect of humanity.

Ricoeur (1999) suggests that the political and the moral cannot be considered to be the same things. Politics deals with the distribution of power in a given society. The concern is with what is to be shared and as such, the distribution can be seen as power. Thus, political concerns fall within the sphere of justice. Politics is irreducible to ideas such as friendship and love precisely because of its distributive character. By clearly distinguishing between friendship and justice, the strength of the face-to-face is preserved and at the same time, the “everyone without face”, or the other we do not immediately know, is given a place. The institution, therefore, is the main political force in our lives.

With the idea that others are always affecting us, and we are affecting them, and that we are both held together through the stories of our lives, comes the idea that we are at best, a co-author of our own narrative. This means that our narration must touch on ethics and morals. Narratives always deal with actions that are subject to approval or disapproval, and thus the agents are subject to praise or blame.

This three-fold ethical intention is really the pursuit of self-esteem, or our understanding of our own capacity to act and cause change in our lives. We come to understand how we do this in relation to the standards of the communities that we are part of. We cannot lead a good life, without a concept of what it means to lead such a life, in relation to the significant others in our lives and the communities that we are part of.

Ricoeur (1992) sees three key ideas that are necessary for us to live out our ethical intention. First, he shows the primacy of ethics over morals. Second, he moves to the necessity of the ethical aim passing through some form of a sieve of the norm. Finally, he shows the legitimacy of recourse by the norm to the ethical aim when the norm leads to impasses in practice, or when we find ourselves torn between what would help a person lead a better life, and actions that may prevent this pursuit. His recourse is led by a consideration and application of practical wisdom.

The Ethical has primacy over the Moral

In establishing the primacy of the ethical over the moral, Ricoeur (1992), starts with his claim that ethics, the aim of an accomplished life, is about what is considered too good to be, while morality deals with the articulation of this aim, where the norm supports rules that apply to everyone, with the purpose of acting as a restraint upon behaviour. Morality is held to constitute only a limited, although legitimate and even indispensable actualization of the ethical aim. All actions are interactions, and thus hold the potential to do harm to the others in our lives. Our ethical intention is to lead a good life, but Ricoeur shows that this cannot be accomplished without a critical connection to the other, both in our interpersonal lives and our lives within the communities that we are part of. Thus, our actions must always be designed to minimize any harm to the others in our lives. Thus, the wish of accomplishing the good life has priority over how we accomplish this life.

Through the Sieve of the Norm

The primacy of the ethical aim over the moral comes with a price however. Everyone will have their own ethical intentions that will result in actions. Every action is interaction. Within every interaction we have the potential for harm to others. This is quite often seen as a reduction in the other person's capacity to act. The others experience our actions, and the harm we may do can humiliate, destroy the other's self-esteem, or even physically harm the other. The ethical has primacy over the moral, but that does not mean that the moral can be ignored. We always have the potential to harm, and thus we need a way to guard against harming others.

Ricoeur (1992) suggests that it is necessary to subject the ethical aim to the test of the norm. There must be something that we turn to when we act that ensures that we do as little harm as possible to the others that we are in concert with.

However, Ricoeur (1992) shows that using universal norms as criteria to prevent harm to others in both our interpersonal relationships and those that we have with the institutions of our lives is never sufficient. At the interpersonal level he considers norms such as Kant's categorical imperative, to "...act in such a way that you always treat humanity whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end" (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 222, f33), and the Golden Rule, of which one form is from the Bible, Luke 6:31 "treat others as you would like them to treat you".

At the institutional level, Ricoeur looks to the sieve of Aristotle's proportional equality. Justice is the key virtue of institutions but he sees the idea as being ambiguous.

In one sense justice emphasizes a separation; in that what belongs to me does not belong to you. In another sense it puts an emphasis on cooperation and the community of interests. This ambiguity is also seen in the two senses of equal, where we compare exactly the same with proportional equality, where parts are distributed in proportion to some measure, such as merit, social standing or power. Turning to a sieve of the norm will help prevent harm to others at both the interpersonal and institutional levels, but by themselves, the sieves will not take into account the situational contexts needed to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

Practical Wisdom – When the Norm leads to an Impasse

As every action has to go through a sieve of the norm, our critical connections to others, and the potential to do harm, will lead to situations of conflict, and impasses that will need to be dealt with. We will have to reconcile the demands of the universal norm, our sieve, with the possibilities of action present in a particular situation. We look to see if the universal rule can create rules that lead to behaviour that everyone involved can appreciate. We are looking to invent conduct and action that best satisfies the situation, while breaking the rule of the norm to the smallest possible extent (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 269).

The answers to the dilemmas that we find ourselves in lie in understanding and applying a form of practical wisdom. Through practical wisdom we look to find the most appropriate good that can adapt itself in the particular cases where there is tension between the aim of accomplishing the good life, and our critical connection to others that this entails, and the actions that we look to take to reach our aim. Ricoeur (1992)

suggests that when applying the universal norms to difficult cases, and when faced with the inevitable confusion that unsolvable issues create, we must look back upon and consider the fundamental insight of his ethical intention: “the aim of living well, with and for others, in just institutions” (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 240). This insight is that the aim of living well should be more important to us than following blindly the norms of morality. To accomplish this, our explanations have to be situated in the context of the conflict, and it is practical wisdom that gives us this direction.

In finding solutions to the complex issues where the universal norm and the ethical aims are in conflict, Ricoeur (1992) states that we want to avoid two issues. First, we do not want to look to another level, a higher level that could be seen as above both the ethical goal of a good life, and the morality of obligation. Second, a return to the ethics from the morality of obligation does not mean that we reject the moral obligation.

Ricoeur (1992, pp. 287-289) wants to reformulate the ethics of argumentation to integrate the issues associated with only appealing to the situation of the conflict, and the demands that universal standards would give us. The goal is a reflective equilibrium between these two poles that expresses the positions from which result the meanings, interpretations, and evaluations in relation to the multiple goods that we experience in practices and life plans.

As an example, Ricoeur (1992, p. 289) offers what he calls the subtle dialectic in our discussions of human rights. These rights can be held to be the well-argued derivatives of the ethics of argumentation. They have been ratified by almost every state on the planet, yet suspicion remains that they are the fruit of the cultural history of the

West and its wars of religion and move to tolerance. To Ricoeur, this situation shows that universalism and contextualism have overlapped perfectly on a small number of values. The problem occurs at the level of the precise legislation needed to guarantee these rights. Ricoeur suggests that the rules needed are definitely a product of Western democracies. The values produced are not shared by other cultures. The paradox is that on one hand, we must maintain the universal claim attached to the few values where the universal and historical intersect; and on the other hand, we submit this claim to discussion at the level of convictions about concrete life. The path to eventual consensus can only emerge with recognition by all sides that there is meaning that is foreign to us.

The possibility of conflict arises as soon as the otherness of persons, inherent in our understandings of ourselves, proves to be incompatible with the universality of any rules that we may have adopted. Our respect splits into respect for the person and respect of the law. Practical wisdom gives priority to respect for the persons (Ricoeur, 1992).

For this reason, that respect for persons comes before respect for the law, Ricoeur (1992) poses autonomy at the end of the moral reflection rather than at the beginning. He does not see this as using moral rules with the maxim of universalization to lead to duties, but rather as seeing if the rules of the maxim of universalization can lead to rules of behaviour that allow for actions worthy of merit. Ethics, in the complex situation in which the relationship between persons is at stake, are problematic. Persons always have contexts around them and we find ourselves in situations of communication in which we sustain and carry out our convictions. Universal laws are not enough, but respect for the person alone does not recognize the impact of the other or the institution.

According to Dauenhauer (1998), Ricoeur's conceptualization of practical wisdom has three features to it. First, this wisdom always considers the principle of respect for others, and how to apply this respect. Second, it is always in search of Aristotle's "just mean" . The resulting action is not a compromise to the conflict, but rather a reconciliation, in which the resulting position is seen as better than either of the original positions or claims. Finally, in an effort to avoid being arbitrary, we are always consulting with the competent and wise advisors in our lives. As a result, we are always in dialogue with qualified others as we proceed through life.

Through practical wisdom, we look to extend to institutions the ideas inherent in the analysis of friendship, in self-esteem, and in the recognition of the other's equality. Justice, though, contains something that is not contained in relationships with others in our lives. Thus, we have to have universal ethics as well as personal ethics in order to satisfy the demands placed upon us by the institutions in our lives.

The Ethical Intention and the Virtue of Self-Esteem

Ricoeur (1992, p. 171) sees an intimate connection between our ethical intention and the virtues of self-esteem and self-respect. He sees self-esteem, which is connected to our desire to live well, as more fundamental than self-respect, which is connected to the articulation of that aim. Self-respect is seen as the manifestation of self-esteem within the domain of the social norms. Self-esteem develops as our understanding of ourselves as being capable of action, and of making change. We develop this understanding in our indirect path through the cultures and traditions that we are part of. We learn that our actions live up to the standards of excellence that are held by the

communities. Self-respect develops as we come to understand, through our interactions with others in our lives, that we too are deserving of respect, in the same way that the others in our lives are.

This connection between our ethical intention and the ideals of self-esteem and self-respect is the key contribution that Ricoeur makes to a theory of moral education and its related meditational practices. Our understanding of self-esteem plays through solicitude, friendship, and justice. Our schools should be places with a genuine concern for others, and being a just place. It is predominantly through our interactions with others that we learn that we are deserving of our own respect, and that we are capable of being the authors of our own actions.

Solicitude, our genuine concern for others, allows us to meet the ethical aim of “with and for others”. Solicitude unfolds as part of the growing dialogue that leads to self-esteem, that we are having with the standards of excellence supported by the communities of which we are part (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 180). We develop self-esteem as we strive to reach the standards of excellence inherent in the good life, while solicitude is developed in the exchange of giving and receiving with the others in this process. Solicitude adds the dimension of value, whereby each person is irreplaceable in our affection and esteem. Solicitude replies to the others esteem for us (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 192).

Friendship also plays a key role in the ethical intention. For Aristotle (as cited in Ricoeur, 1992), friendship plays a mediating role between the goal of a good life found in self-esteem and justice. Friendship, with its idea of mutuality, is not justice, as justice

governs institutions while friendship governs interpersonal relationships. Aristotle held the friend to be “another self”, or another face as it were (as cited in Ricoeur, 1992, p. 185). From Aristotle, Ricoeur (1992, p. 187) takes the ethics of reciprocity, of sharing and of living together. Friendship involves reciprocity, while the moral injunction of what it is good to do, is asymmetrical and only affects one side.

In friendship we find equality, a common wish to live together, and a place that while the roles are reversible, the persons who play the roles are not substitutable (understood as the reflexive moment of the wish for the good life). We need friends, and as a reaction to the effect of solicitude on self-esteem, the self perceives itself as another among others.

For Ricoeur (1992, p. 193), the result of the exchange between self-esteem, and the solicitude for the other, is our deep understanding that the other is “like me” and is deserving of the same considerations and respect that I have received. We cannot have self-esteem unless we esteem others “as ourselves”; where “as ourselves” means that you too can do everything that I do. We understand the other as a self, an agent, an author of their own actions, and who has reasons for these actions. Ricoeur (1992, p. 194) suggests that our esteem for the other as oneself, and oneself as another, are equivalent. The esteem is part of our understanding of ourselves.

Justice is a good in our lives that Ricoeur (1992) places great importance on through his ethical aim to live in “just institutions”. This move allows him to extend the ideas of the ethical good life from interpersonal relations to institutions. In particular, he extends the virtue of solicitude to the virtue of justice. However, justice presents ethical

features that are not found in solicitude, in particular, the feature of equality. The institution is the point of application of justice, and of equality - the ethical content of justice. We end up with the idea that everyone has rights that they are entitled to (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 194). Justice always has two sides, a side of the good, seen as an extension of interpersonal relationships, and a legal side, which implies a judicial system of coherent laws. Ricoeur is concerned with the first side, the side of the good (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 197).

Justice adds the dimension of equality to solicitude. Solicitude provides to the self another who is a “face”, while equality provides to the self another who is, in an ethical sense, an “each”. Justice extends the field of application of solicitude to all of humanity.

Our schools need to be “just institutions” in the sense that they support a system that allows everyone involved to both flourish, and to experience what it means to be part of a just institution. Every aspect of the school, from the curriculum, to the organization, to the systems of awards, has to be transparent, be seen and be available to all. Our experiences with the ongoing activities of the institution, in our case the school, play a central role in our coming to understand ourselves as deserving of respect and esteem.

Autonomy and Recognition

Ricoeur (1992, pp. 274–283), suggests that our autonomy is dependent upon our being part of a community. We are never free of the influence of others when we make judgments or acts. All actions are interactions and they derive their meaning from the institutions we are part of. We learn to speak, choose, and act from others.

Our autonomy is worked out between two poles. The first pole puts an emphasis on each person's uniqueness, irreplaceability, and self-esteem. The second pole emphasizes our membership and commitments to the community that supports and gives meaning to our actions. Neither pole is voluntary. Ricoeur suggests that these poles are given, not chosen.

Dauenhauer (1998, p. 197) suggests that Ricoeur, in an unpublished lecture, views education's task as conducting the negotiation between the two poles. It is a negotiation between our plea for uniqueness, and the social pressures that we experience. Ricoeur sees his concept of practical wisdom as the appropriate tool to conduct the negotiations as it brings the role of the other in our self-understandings into the debate.

Ricoeur sees recognition as a two-sided phenomenon. We can only flourish autonomously in the sort of society or community that recognizes the value of autonomy. At the same time, we have to recognize that we have a debt to the institution that supports this conceptualization of autonomy. He sees our allegiance to the communities we are part of as an obligation, as our communities are what supports the signs and traditions that we explore in our understanding of who we are (as cited in Dauenhauer, 1998 p. 150).

The school then provides an arena through which we can explore the dialectic of the self and the critical connection to others. A strong sense of belonging to the community is critical to better our ability to explore who we are.

Our Obligation to the Institution

Ricoeur (1992, p. 194) defines institutions as “the structures of living together in historical communities”. He suggests that these institutions cannot be reduced to interpersonal relations. An institution is bound together through its function as a distributor of roles, responsibilities, privileges, goods and rewards. Institutions allow us to extend inter-human relations to all of those who are left outside the face-to-face encounter of the I and you. The institution is related to the individual by way of its regulation of the distribution of roles (Ricoeur, 1992). The institution, as a ruler of distribution, exists only to the extent that the individuals take part in it, and cannot be considered to be the same as individuals who are part of it. The institution plays a role in our understanding of ourselves that cannot be found through our direct interactions with others. It assures that there is cohesion between the individual, the interpersonal, and the societal needs.

The political institution is the most comprehensive of all institutions. It provides the social space for all of the other institutions in our lives and protects the other institutions from domination by another. The power-in-common that we look to create when we live together is fragile, and can exist only as long as we continue to act together. This power-in-common will survive as long as we want to live with and for one another (Dauenhauer, 1998).

To Ricoeur (as cited in Dauenhauer, 1998), it is the associations with others that allow us to develop our self-understandings. This leads to the conclusion that we have an obligation to the communities that we are part of. We all need to ensure that society as a whole promotes development and actualization of the types of capacities that make us

worthy of esteem and respect. Recognition is a two-sided phenomenon. We can only flourish in a society that recognizes the value of being an autonomous individual, and the individual has to recognize the debt that they owe to the society that allows them to be who they are.

Thus, we have an obligation that is a responsibility for the well-being of both our friends and the institutions that we are part of. For Ricoeur, (as cited in Dauenhauer, 1998), this responsibility is connected to the idea of “impute”. To impute is to attribute an action to a person as praiseworthy or blameworthy. To understand an action, we have to be able to evaluate it. The moral injunctions that we have, develop from the fact that we share our lives with others. Our first ethical move then, is to pledge ourselves to others. We become responsible for both our actions, and the consequences of actions that impact others.

For Ricoeur, the institution allows us to extend the idea of “other” to the other of everyone who we do not know directly. This places upon us an obligation to do more than just belong to a community. All members of the community have to participate and work to ensure that the needs of everyone are met. It is only through our full participation in our communities that we come to our full realizations of who we are.

Narrative Identity

Ricoeur (1992, 1999) suggests that developing a concept of a narrative identity, that holds the stable and changing aspects of ourselves together in a life story, is the way to resolve the problems of the dialectic of sameness and change, and the constitutive role of the other in our development, that he sees inherent in personal identity. His concept of

narrative identity is very similar to the one proposed by Taylor in Chapter 2, and like Taylor's, it is based on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, whose work I looked at in Chapter 3.

As I mentioned above, for Ricoeur (1992), our narrative identity is the mediating concept between our sameness and selfhood. The identity of the story makes the identity of the character (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 142). The construction of a narrative plot integrates diversity, variability, and discontinuity into permanence in time. The plot unifies elements that appear to be totally disparate. The same plot is transferred from the action to the characters in the narrative and the actors become part of the dialectic between sameness and selfhood.

The identity of the character in a story is comprehensible when seen as part of the overall plot. The characters themselves are plots and there is a close relationship between the character and the narrated plot. The character has a unity and an identity that correlates to those of the narratives and is seen to have a role in the narrative. A character's role in the narrative involves the same understanding of the plot itself, and the identity of the character is comprehensible through the transfers of character to the operation of the plot, thus becoming a plot themselves. The character shares the dynamic identity peculiar to the story and the narrative constructs this identity (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 143).

For Ricoeur (1992) there are three key ideas we can take out of a concept of narrative identity. First, we can see ourselves as similar to the characters in the story and we look to understand ourselves in the same manner that they do. They act, suffer, think

or die and they use the same worldly vision we do. Second, the character is always related to others. Interaction is constitutive of the narrative situation and cannot be bracketed out. Finally, narrative shows that self-knowledge goes beyond the narrative domain and that we find self-knowledge in the indirect route through our interactions with our communities. Through narrative we see that knowledge of the self is interpretation. Narrative interpretation allows for a self who interprets the self in the context of the situation and practices that it finds itself.

Ricoeur (1992) suggests that a narrative identity is the appropriate identity for institutions. The institution of language develops according to the rhythm of traditions and innovation. This is true of all institutions and of practice whose models of excellence are products of history. Ricoeur further suggests that institutions, in the precise sense that we use when we apply the rule of justice to them, can only have a narrative identity. He suggests that we cannot appropriate the ideas around identity that we use for persons or communities. Rather, the narrative identity, with its dialectic of change and maintenance of the self, is the appropriate one for institutions. In Chapter 7 of this thesis, I will examine the idea that when the socio-cultural idea is combined with the institutions of school, that this concept of institutional identity will have to be expanded to something closer to Taylor's concept of authentic identity.

Schools represent a narrative, or horizon, and encourage individual students to see themselves as narrativized. We are our stories. The school and the horizons are represented in the narratives of the school – i.e. they maintain traditions and what is important. This connection encourages a dialogical narrative related to traditions and practices of our communities. In Chapter 7, I am going to talk about schools as places of

moral and cognitive apprenticeship. Our students apprentice in the lived narratives that the school supports, and it is through the immersion in these narratives that they develop morally.

Conclusion

Ricoeur's work looks at what type of attributes we will have if we are to be the individuals that we are. He suggests that we can never be sure about who we are, that we can at best attest to who we understand ourselves to be. Thus, we are always searching to come to an understanding and acceptance with who we are. The "other" in our lives mediates our understandings of who we are. For schools, this other is not limited to the physical other, but can be extended to such ideas as the curriculum, the standards of the school, and the standards of the community and culture. The key goods of self-esteem and self-respect are found through this mediation of others, and in particular through our ongoing dialogues with the standards of excellence we experience in our indirect route to defining ourselves.

Ricoeur's work adds the idea that institutions also mediate our explorations of identity. He introduces the idea that the institution of the school, rather than being just a place to "learn", is both a source of the self and a keeper of sources, and is a critical aspect that we have to consider when we are looking at our students' moral development.

What is significant educationally is that schools can play a key part in supporting and enhancing this dialogical relationship which Ricoeur maintains lies at the heart of the development of self-understandings. The relationships with other students, with teachers and school administrators can therefore be carefully shaped through attention to what is

sometimes known as the 'hidden curriculum'. Later on it will be shown how, in the creation and operation of a school, creating an ethos that is based on providing opportunities for these kinds of dialogical experience for students can enhance the development of these virtues within the individual. The school, in a most important sense, represents a 'horizon of significance' in relation to which the development of self-esteem and self-respect can take place. The justice component must also be present both in terms of the inner working of the school and in its relationship as a just institution in the global context.

CHAPTER 5

KEY THEMES

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis I outlined the work of Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Paul Ricoeur. I focused on the ideas in their work that I feel will inform a concept of moral development in the educational process. I have been following Tappan's (2006) suggestion that moral development should be seen through a socio-cultural lens rather than a strictly intellectual, or even a rational lens. There are other philosophers that I could have chosen, but it seems to me that Taylor, MacIntyre, and Ricoeur offer insights that can readily inform our educational practices in relation to moral development. In this Chapter, I want to synthesize the key themes that I think have developed in the journey through their work. This will be a shorter Chapter than the others as, for the most part, it is a consolidation of work presented.

In Chapter 6, I am going to connect the themes I put forward in this Chapter to curriculum, through the work of Michael Oakshott and Kieran Egan. I will also introduce two key ideas that are connected to the work of school leaders rather than curriculum. In Chapter 7, I am going to tie this together by considering how the implications and connections made can help school leaders provide an environment that supports the moral development their students.

The first theme that develops is the idea that moral development is, if not the same as, at least critically connected to our sense of who we are, or our identity. For Taylor, we cannot consider what it means to be a "self" without understanding the moral connection and vice versa. Our identity is intimately connected to the stand we take on

matters of importance. Ricoeur shows that a key aspect of our sense of self is the development of an ethical and moral identity, while MacIntyre suggests that a person's moral position cannot be understood without some reference to the reasons, motives, intentions, or actions that define them as a person. When we discuss moral development then, we are discussing how a person develops and defines their identity.

The second theme that has developed is the idea that the community empowers the individual. Our moral development has a strong socio-cultural component to it. Taylor (1979) suggests that we are not born with an identity, but rather we have to acquire it. We do this through our interactions with the communities and cultures that we are part of.

We are introduced to personhood by being initiated into a language. We learn moral discernment by being brought into the conversations of those who bring us up. In talking about something, it becomes shared, and a common, relational space is created. We learn about concepts such as anger and love through a shared language. As we get more comfortable with the language, we may try to innovate, but this innovation takes place within the parameters of our shared language. As individuals, we exist within “webs of interlocution” (Taylor, 1989, p. 36). The conversation partners that we have are essential to our achieving self-definition and our developing grasp of our languages that we are using. We develop our moral discernments in our ongoing shared experience of language. We present our purposes to ourselves in language and we are able to reflect on these purposes. The way that we interpret ourselves is through language. Through language we make the types of discriminations that define us. This language is not our personal language, but rather the language of the cultures we are part of. Our self-

interpretations then are not drawn just from our own reflections, but rather these reflections in connection with the standards of our cultures.

All of the philosophers that I look at, including Oakeshott and Egan, whose work is the focus of the next Chapter, see a critical role for language in our moral development. For the educators, the connection of curriculum to language is at the heart of their understanding of learning.

Our cultures support strong values or goods. These goods are the standards of excellence that we seek in our ongoing participation with our cultures. We are searching to achieve an understanding of what it means to be a good person in relation to these standards. Through internalizing the goods that our cultures support into our understanding of ourselves, we feel ourselves moving towards being a good person. For Taylor (1989), we are oriented to the good. In taking on these goods, or strong values, we start to understand who we are as an individual, and define ourselves, in our own unique way. This process is better when we are able to articulate these goods, through our language, in ways that allow us to explore and understand them better.

Most of the goods that we experience in our lives are inherent in and supported by the practices that we are part of. Taylor (1989, p. 206) sees these practices as the constituent parts of our cultures, and includes such ideas as family, work, religious and political affiliations, and intellectual and artistic endeavours. MacIntyre (1984, p. 187) defines a practice as a "...coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity". These practices, which are part of our everyday lives, support the standards of excellence that we strive to achieve in our lives. The only way to achieve

most of the goods supported by these practices is to embrace all of the parameters inherent in the practice. A key focus of Chapters 6 and 7 will be looking at the standards of excellence that are inherent in the practice of “learning”, and how our ongoing dialogue with these standards informs our moral development.

There are goods that are larger than and exist beyond the practices. MacIntyre (1984) suggests that the integrity of a full life is one of these. These goods require us to look at our lives in their unity, connected to the traditions of our cultures and communities.

There are four things that are important about the goods we experience in our lives. First, the goods in our lives take three main forms. Hypergoods are the most important of these goods. A hypergood is a good that becomes supreme for us, and our sense of self becomes intricately linked to the hypergoods in our lives. To move away from the one or two supreme goods is to lose our sense of who we are. These supreme goods help to orient and order the other goods in our lives. Life goods are those goods, such as freedom or autonomy, which are part of a good, moral life. Constituent goods are goods that make our life goods worth of desire. Second, some goods can only be achieved through our participation in our communities. Taylor (1989) sees these as shared and constituent goods. Third, these goods help us define our understanding of what it is good to be, what it is good to do, and how we elicit the respect of others (dignity). We need to achieve goods in all three of these areas if we are to achieve a full and good life. Finally, to achieve these goods, we need to develop virtues, or qualities and behaviours that enable us to achieve these goods. The goods and virtues of our lives are best acquired if we know what they are and how they affect us.

The community then empowers the individual. It is through our ongoing interactions with the standards and values supported by the communities that we are part of, that we develop the positions and stands on matters of importance that define our identity.

The third theme that has developed is the critical role of the other in our moral development. All three philosophers suggest that it is self-defeating to shut out the demands that our interactions with others place on us. Our self-definition will always include some sense of the others in our lives. Taylor (1989) goes so far as to suggest that when we shut out the demands that emanate from beyond the self, we are not able to reach a full, rich, sense of the “good”. He suggests that shutting out these demands would result in a very strange perspective of the self that did not make any sense to anyone. We learn who we are by considering our relations to others in our lives.

We take what Ricoeur (1992, p. 80) calls an “indirect route” to learn who we are. We do not learn about ourselves by looking at ourselves but rather in our ongoing exchanges within the communities we are part of. The signs and symbols that are part of our communities that we are exploring and interacting with on this route mediate our understanding of ourselves.

These others can take on many forms. There are certainly the physical “others” that we encounter, both people and institutions in our lives. There is also the “other” that is the standards of excellence and the strong values that are supported by the various aspects of the communities and cultures that we are part of. As well, the knowledge and understandings that our cultures support, and that we encounter as we learn, should also

be seen as others. Ricoeur (1992), for example, considers fiction as a means to explore the possibilities of we might be. The concept of other then, should be taken to mean, anything that we connect with in our journeys that is beyond the self.

Taylor (1989) suggests that we are fundamentally dialogical in nature. Our understanding of our selves comes not from looking at ourselves, but in the ongoing dialogues that we have with others in our lives. The answer to the question of “who am I” is found in these dialogues. The dialogue we are part of can be real or imagined, with someone alive or dead, with an idea in our minds, or even with an inanimate object, such as a tree or the forest. These dialogues with others are not just something that is important to us, but rather the connections made are at the very core of our understandings of ourselves.

The most important dialogues that we have are with significant others in our lives, regardless of the forms that they take. These significant others will be the main source of inspiration and direction to us. We look to these significant others for such important ideas as self-esteem. Our ongoing dialogue with them will give us the yard markers that allow us to judge ourselves and perceive that we are meeting the standards that we are being held to in our lives. We come to understanding through a fusion of horizons with these others, and we take on part of the others that we are in dialogue with. To not measure up to the standards of those who are significant to us results in lowered self-esteem. Our identity is for the most part defined through our dialogue with, and sometimes against, the significant others of our lives. When these significant others in our lives hurt us, or stop being a strong aspect of our lives, then we will move onto other significant others. Those that we deem as insignificant cannot hurt us.

Our interaction with others is a reach beyond the self, to something bigger than the self. In reaching beyond the self, we are stretching ourselves. At the same time, we are giving ourselves some sense of position and place that gives us a sense of security. Taylor (1989) suggests this pull to connect to ideas that are larger than ourselves is an anthropological constant.

Part of this reach beyond the self is a need for recognition. Both Taylor (1989) and Ricoeur (1992) posit that without fulfilling this need, we can never achieve truly who we can be. This need for recognition is wrapped up in both our dialogical nature and the need to define ourselves beyond our self. Taylor (1989, p. 42) suggests, "...one of the basic aspirations of human beings is the need to be connected to or in contact with what they see as good". We need to be recognized for who we are. Taylor (1989) suggests that this need for recognition is a part of the good of equal recognition for all that our society has embraced. Historically, recognition was based upon our position and role in society. Our modern society does not have this connection, and thus, we have a need to be recognized.

One of the others in our lives that plays a larger role than we may give it credit for, is that of the institution. For Ricoeur (1992), the institution introduces the idea of the other of everyone, the other that we do not know, but who will still have an influence on us. The institutions of our lives play a significant role that cannot be ignored. Almost every aspect of our lives is connected to an institution in some manner. MacIntyre (1984) suggests that the institutions support the practices and that the practices need institutions to thrive. The practices support the goods that we strive for in our lives. The institutions

support the practices. Indirectly at least then, the institutions will play a role in how we achieve the goods internal that the practices support.

To understand who we are, we need to understand our relationship with the institutions of our lives. This will put a responsibility on the way that we participate and belong. Taylor (2004 a, b) in particular suggests that we need to belong in ways that are meaningful, rather than treating our membership as something that is for our benefit only, and only when convenient. Without an understanding of how we should belong, we run the risk of not achieving the full range of goods that is, not only possible, but needed for our moral development. As importantly however, the institution has to understand its relationship to the individual.

Membership in a community should empower us in ways beyond pure membership. There are goods, such as friendship or loyalty that we can only achieve by being in common. Our membership should help us explore and realize the goods that are part of our shared life, but also the individual goods that we aspire to. There has to be an allegiance to the shared goods of the group, and to common understandings. The rules and procedures of the groups, as laid out by the institutions that support them, need to create spaces that allow for all to explore and develop. This idea, that the nature of our membership in a community is important to us in critical ways, will be a key theme that is played out in the remaining Chapters of this thesis.

The fourth theme that arises is that our understanding of our self is always fragile. Ricoeur (1992) suggests that we can, at best, attest to our understanding of who we are. We are at once trying to stay the same, to hold true to our understanding of ourselves, yet

change and grow. The external and integral nature of the other in our development means that we are always being acted on and influenced. We have, at best, a belief that we are who we understand ourselves to be. We are constantly updating our sense of who we are. Taylor suggests that we do this through a “best account” approach, where we take on new ideas or understandings, and feel ourselves moving forward. This is a series of small steps and changes, and takes time.

The fifth theme that develops is our need to consider the entirety of our lives, or our lives seen in the contexts of the whole, not just the individual parts. We can experience the standards inherent in a practice, but these standards have to be judged in relation to how we live our entire lives, not just the aspect involved at the level of the practices in question. Without context, the individual parts do not reach a full and complete articulation. For MacIntyre (1984), we can only understand the types of virtues we develop in the search for the goods of our lives, if we consider these virtues not only in terms of the practices that support the goods, but also the unity of our lives, and the traditions that support both the practices and our lives. The concept of a larger context leads all three philosophers that I have reviewed to the idea of a narrative identity, where we understand ourselves not only in the situations that we are in, but also in the context of how we understand the situation in relation to our entire life, and to the traditions, or communities that we are part of.

The sixth theme is that we are in dialogue with horizons of significance in our lives. These horizons support the goods that we seek in our lives. In striving to reach the ideal embodied in the horizons, we are striving to understand ourselves. This is one of the key connections to something beyond the self. Taylor (2004 a, b) shows that even if

there is no overriding horizon that applies to all of our society, we still need to have these horizons in our lives. We do not have the horizon of religion as an overriding horizon for all, but many in today's society still use this horizon. Many also use the horizon of the autonomous, self-sufficient person, or the horizon of nature and its goodness as moral sources. Part of the responsibility of people today is to figure out the horizons of significance that we strive for today. The fact that society does not have a dominant horizon for all does not mean that we can do without any horizons. Rather, it becomes our responsibility to learn to recognize and understand the horizons in the noise of our lives. These horizons support the hypergoods in our lives, or goods that help us define and order the other goods in our lives. Both Taylor and MacIntyre suggest that there are many competing goods in our lives today. The hypergoods help us define which goods we strive for, and the order of importance of the ones that we have already internalized. As part of my conclusions in Chapter 7, I am going to suggest that an informed educational institution can help the students in their exploration and search for goods in their lives. In particular, the institution can help by defining and clarifying the goods involved in the practice of learning by clarifying and supporting the horizons of significance at work in the community, and by acting as a horizon itself.

These six themes will be the references that I use in looking at the work of Oakeshott and Egan in the next Chapters. However, the work of Taylor, Ricoeur, and MacIntyre suggests two other ideas that I see as having implications for our understanding of how schools play a role in the moral development of our students.

The first idea arises from the dialogical nature of the self, and our dependence on the others in our lives for self-understandings makes it important that we both understand

and live a more integrated way of belonging to the various groups that we belong to. Belonging is part of our self-definition. Our freedom comes from the appropriate understanding of how we belong.

In summarizing the work of Charles Taylor, Smith (2002) shows that we need to look at the relationship between the rights that enshrine the freedom of the individual and the collective good of sustaining a well-functioning community. The central goods prized by liberal theory, autonomy and freedom, can only flourish given a background socialization process and a stock of cultural resources. The various social and cultural forces, which shape the modern individual, create a significant obligation to belong to the groups that affirm the rights. For affirmation of a conception of the good to make sense, some background must be given to the individual. The individual is dependent upon something social in our capacity for self-determination. This background comes from the intertwining of the self-defining purposes of the individual and the community.

Taylor sees us as having an obligation to belong in ways that are better and more meaningful than the modern individual currently does. Since we can only maintain our identity within a culture or society of a certain kind, we have to be concerned with the shape of said culture or society. We will have to reposition, or at least clarify, what it means to belong to a group and how this is important in our moral development.

The second idea is that we have to clarify and reinforce what Taylor, Ricoeur, and MacIntyre see as the appropriate way of thinking about human relations and interactions. Development of the self is dependent upon our interactions and relationships with others, whatever form they take, in our lives. All three of the philosophers that I have looked at

suggest that Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom is important. In practical wisdom, the focus is on doing the right thing, in the right place, at the right time, in the right way. In these considerations we are always thinking of both the means to accomplish our objectives, and the objective itself, at the same time. The means cannot be considered without reference to the objective and vice versa. This type of thinking, which Aristotle calls practical wisdom, and that Taylor (1995) calls engaged reasoning, should dominate our deliberations not only on how we act in regards to each other, but also in how we resolve ethical and moral dilemmas that do not have an easy solution. In Chapter 7, I am going to suggest that school leaders need an understanding of how practical wisdom can ensure that both the needs of the individual and the needs of the community are always met, and that both sides need to work to support the other at all times.

I now want to start to put the ideas put forward so far in this thesis to our work in schools. In Chapter 6, I will use the work of Michael Oakeshott and Kieran Egan to see how this socio-cultural look at moral development plays out in curriculum. The socio-cultural perspective will not be of any use to us in schools, if we cannot show how the perspective will influence our deliberations in schools. Chapter 6 will focus on how the curriculum of the school plays an integral role in the development of our students' moral understandings. In Chapter 7, my concluding Chapter, I am going to connect all of the ideas presented to the idea of the school as a whole, and how these ideas can inform and guide the creation of a school that plays a significant role in the moral development of our students.

CHAPTER 6

CONNECTING TO CURRICULUM

Introduction

In this Chapter, I am going to connect the idea that moral development in schools, understood as a dialogue with our socio-cultural lives, to the concept of curriculum. I will be touching on all six of the major themes that I identified in Chapter 5 as part of this exploration. As a lens for this, I am going to introduce the work of Michael Oakeshott and Kieran Egan, who, while differing on the role of curriculum, both look at curriculum from a socio-cultural perspective. Oakeshott sees curriculum as our inheritance, and the way that we are brought intellectually into the world that we inhabit, while Egan sees our interaction with curriculum as leading to the development of the various types of cognitive tools that allow us to better explore our world.

Through curriculum, we will see that our interactions with the knowledge and understanding that we inherit are what guide us in our interactions with the goods of our lives, and our moral development. This is an ongoing process, and the interactions happen every time that we engage in learning. All members of an educational community should know and understand how our modern understandings and moral development proceed so that we can integrate these ideas into the work that we do.

Michael Oakeshott: Our Inheritance

What is Education?

Oakeshott (1989) sees education as an initiation into our civilized heritage through which we come to know ourselves. The activities of the learner should lead to

developing self-realization, and individual potentialities. Education is learning, in circumstances of direction and restraint, how to recognize and make something of ourselves. It is a two-fold process in which we enjoy an initiation into our civilization and in doing so discover our own talents and aptitudes in relation to the civilization, and start to use them. The interaction with our heritage, through culture, gives context to our learning. The fundamental job of educators will be to initiate the young into those specific practices associated with understanding the world and themselves.

Education is the transaction between generations in which newcomers are initiated into the world they inhabit. This is a world of understandings, meanings, imaginings, moral and religious beliefs, relationships and practices that can be seen as states of mind in which the human condition is to be discerned as recognitions of and responses to the ordeal of consciousness. We can only enter into these states of mind by understanding them and we can only understand them by learning through them. To be initiated into this world is to become human, and to move freely within it is being human (Oakeshott, 1971).

In this view, education should be seen as the continuation of a living tradition:

Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to the conversation. And it is this conversation, which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance. (Oakeshott, 1967, p. 198)

The curriculum of education is comprised of the “languages of understanding” that we chose to pursue. To be able to speak in these particular modes of understanding

requires an inventive engagement on our part and we must also learn the particular conditions each language imposes on our utterances. In exploring the curriculum, we learn to make utterances that display genuine understanding of the language spoken (Oakeshott, 1967, p. 38). Oakeshott sees this as a journey into the world of imagination.

The world we inherit does not have meaning per se, rather it is a set of interlocking meanings that establish and interpret each other. This world can only be entered and enjoyed through the process of learning. The purpose of education (Oakeshott, 1971, p. 45b) is to initiate pupils into this world of meanings.

Education is about acquiring some understanding of the human condition in which the “fact of life” is continually illuminated by a quality of life. For Oakeshott (1971), learning and education are always related to the historic inheritance of human achievement. They are concerned with what is to be handed on, and learned, known and understood, in the form of the thoughts and various expressions of thoughts.

Through this education, we learn to think with an appreciation of the considerations that belong to the different modes of thought that make up the conversation of our culture. Our inheritance consists of a variety of abilities and each ability combines information and judgment. While both information and judgment are components of knowledge, judgment does not consist of a set of statements in the way that information does. Judgment cannot be summarized into a set of explicit propositions and it can only be acquired in conjunction with information. Information can be instructed, but judgment can only be imparted. Judgment, is that which, when united with information, generates knowledge or ‘ability’ to do, make, understand, or to explain.

Understanding the rules of a language or situation does not automatically lead to understanding the intent or context. Learning such things as skills and tools are one thing, to have acquired the ability to use them is another thing altogether. Judgment is being able to think with appreciation of the considerations that belong to different modes of thought. What is significant is that until we can speak a language of understanding in a manner that is more than what is provided for in the rules, we cannot say anything of significance. Judgment can only be taught in conjunction with transmission of information. For the student, the ability to think is a by-product of information. The ability to think is taught obliquely in the course of instruction.

Oakeshott (1971) sees the role education, and in particular the role of the teacher as initiating the student into the inheritance of human achievements. The teacher guides the student in learning how to think. Education ensures that the inheritance of thought and ideas is passed on to the next generation.

Curriculum as Languages of Understanding

Michael Oakeshott (1989) suggests that the ancient Greek exhortation to “know thyself” really meant, “learn to know thyself”. It meant to contemplate and learn what we have, from time to time, made of the struggle to be human. The great human adventure of learning is about learning to understand the self. We are what we learn to become. The differences between us lie in the differences of what each of us has learned. As such, we are what we have learned to think, to imagine, and to do.

Culture: the Keeper of the Languages

Oakeshott (1989) suggests that we cannot gain self-knowledge simply by looking at what we know about ourselves. He sees that "...human self-understanding is...inseparable from learning to participate in what is called culture" (Oakeshott, 1989, p. 28). The world is one of meanings and our understanding of the world of meanings, our inherited culture, is what makes us human. This inherited culture it is not an add-on but rather an integral part of what we learn to become. For Oakeshott (1989), consistent with Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Paul Ricoeur, our self-understanding is inseparable from learning to participate in a culture.

Oakeshott (1971) defines a culture as a continuity of feelings, perceptions, ideas, engagements, attitudes, and so on, all pulling in different directions and often critical of one another. Culture is not a body of knowledge or a "canon", nor is it a set of beliefs, perceptions, ideas, attitudes, sentiments or engagements. Rather, he sees a culture as consisting of unfinished intellectual and emotional journeying, and light-hearted adventures or dramas that reach us as a diverse and varied set of invitations to look at, to listen to, and to reflect on. Culture exists in everything we learn. It has a contingent, historic nature, and it represents a continuity of thoughts that go off in different directions and are used to be critical of other thoughts.

A culture is not a set of abstract aptitudes. Rather, it is composed of substantive expressions of thought, emotion, belief, opinion, approval or disapproval, moral and intellectual discriminations, enquiries and investigations. Learning, properly conceived, is coming to understand and respond to these substantive expressions of thought as invitations to think and to believe. The "stuff" of learning is the substance of the culture.

Self-understanding comes from being part of the conversation and learning to understand and speak in an intelligent manner.

To Oakeshott we cannot make our self-understandings a “subject” of learning in ways that separate the subject from our participation in our cultures. We only learn who we are through our participation in the culture.

Oakeshott claims that our cultural understandings are structured around modes of thought, or ideas that have achieved a coherent structure. Each mode has certain categories or postulates that make them intelligible. History, for example, has ‘past’ and ‘event’ and fiction has ‘plot’ and ‘character’. Such categories define the standards of relevance within each mode. Learning their meaning forms an important part of any initiation into the modes of knowing and we have to understand the categories in order to understand the language of the disciplines.

Each of the modes of thought can be understood as a language. A language is an organization of grammatical and syntactical considerations and rules to be taken into account and subscribed to in making utterances. To learn a language is to learn to make utterances that display a genuine understanding of the meaning within the language. Further, we learn to recognize and discriminate between the various languages, and to becoming familiar with the conditions that each imposes upon utterances. None of these languages were invented yesterday, and each is a continuous exploration of its own possibilities. We have to also attend to both its history and its future if we are to truly understand and use the language (Oakeshott, 1967).

The virtue of these languages, or modes of thought, lies in their difference from each other. They give us different ways of understanding the world. In using them to articulate our understandings, we are changing our own understandings as informed by the mode of thought that we are using. In participating with these languages, we learn the particular conditions that each language imposes on our utterances, and to make utterances that display genuine understanding of the language spoken. By learning the various languages we learn to see ourselves and find ourselves through different lens. Each mode of thought, or language, constitutes the terms of a distinct, conditional understanding of the world and a similarly distinct manner or style of self-understanding. For example, in learning to understand the language of science, we learn to understand ourselves from a scientific point of view. This point of view is a particular way of understanding the self, and makes up only one of many ways in which we understand both ourselves, and the world around us.

Oakeshott (1975) encourages us to think of these languages as voices joined in conversation. Each voice has a distinct and conditional understanding of the world, each has a distinct idiom of human self-understanding, and each has distinct understanding of the culture itself. The conversation is an endless, unrehearsed, intellectual adventure. Through our imaginations we enter into a variety of modes of understanding the world and ourselves. What we have to learn is how to distinguish these various modes of utterances that the languages give us, and to acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to this conversational relationship.

Our culture exists in the conversations that we have with our intellectual inheritance. There are a number of different voices in this conversation and in learning

we gain access to those voices. We acquire the ability to join the conversations in which these languages are spoken. The role of tradition is to maintain the rich variety of such languages of experience, in all their diversity. For Oakeshott, to have command over the languages of our civilizations is more than having the rules of the language; it is to have the syntax and vocabulary that allows us to think for ourselves.

For Oakeshott (1995) then, it is in the modes of thought, the languages of philosophers, scientists, and historians that the great explanatory adventures of mankind are to be found. Philosophy, science, and history are different adventures in the realm of understanding. The languages of understanding support a great intellectual adventure of understanding and explaining, and in exploring them, we come to self-understandings.

In this view, learning

...is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to the conversation. And it is this conversation, which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance. (Oakeshott, 1967, p. 198)

The Subjects that we Study

Oakeshott (1975) suggests that the present shape of curriculum includes the languages of understanding of the natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences and poetic imagination. These languages are seen to offer something capable of being learned, and present themselves as a distinct enquiry, or mode of human understanding. Oakeshott (1971, p. 37) sees these are the four key “languages of understanding”.

The world of science gives us a wealth of facts and knowledge about the world, but to Oakeshott (1971), its real value lies in giving us a way of understanding ourselves within the world. We learn to understand ourselves through the scientific perspective. The danger lies when we start to see the world in parts that can be viewed in isolation from one another.

The humanities are more directly concerned with expressions of human self-understanding. Language is an investment in thought, records of perceptions, and of analogical understandings. Literature is the contemplative exploration of beliefs, emotions, character, and relationships, in imagined situations that are liberated from commonplace life. Histories are stories in which human actions and utterances are made clear and intelligible in terms of their contingent relationships. Philosophies show that every achievement of understanding becomes a subject of enquiry into its conditions and the importance of reflective undertakings.

The social sciences, (Oakeshott, 1975), such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, and politics, are a mixed lot that purport to be directly concerned with human conduct. Their concern is with human beings as self-conscious, intelligent persons who are what they understand themselves to be. They do not see the human being as an organism but as a mind to be understood. For Oakeshott, the social sciences give us access to the concept of jurisprudence, the science or philosophy of law, and are profound philosophical enquiries that are one of the most ancient and respected components of liberal learning.

Finally, poetic imagination is a dream for its own sake, an end unto itself, while the practical is a dream followed by an effort to make it true.

The world for the poet is not material to be used for satisfying wants; it is something to be contemplated. Poets allow the world to form itself around them without any urge to make it different from what it is. Poetic imagination is not a preliminary to doing something, it is an end in itself. It is not work. (Oakeshott, 1995, p. 7)

Each of the languages of understanding that we learn contains distinct ways of thinking and understanding ourselves. In our explorations of these languages, we articulate our understandings, and develop new understandings. We explore the strong values or goods that the languages support, and we are able to develop a vision of ourselves that references the standards of excellence supported by the cultures and communities that we are part of.

Our curriculum gives us the opportunity to continually explore the types of thinking, understanding, and ways of seeing ourselves that are inherent in our cultures. Every intersection with knowledge can and should lead to a further understanding of ourselves, and where we stand on matters of importance.

Schools as Special Places of Learning

Oakeshott (1971) suggests that schools are places where the dialogues we have with significant others, and the conversations of our cultures, are ongoing. One of their key roles is to impart the manners of the conversations and dialogues. To Oakeshott (1971), the idea of school has five key components to it. These five come together in an

important way to support the transactions between the generations and the initiation of the newcomer into being human.

First, school is an orderly and serious initiation into our intellectual, imaginative, moral and emotional inheritance. It is designed for those who are ready to embrace this invitation. There is a considered curriculum of learning to direct and contain the thoughts of learners and to provoke them to focus and discriminate. One of the things that we recognize is that the first and most important step of education is to become aware that possibilities are not limitless.

Second, school is a place of engagement to learn to study. This requires persistent effort. As learners, we must stay with the study until we remember and understand what is to be learned. Through this perseverance we learn the habits of attention, concentration, patience, exactness, courage and intellectual honesty. As importantly, we learn that difficulties are to be beaten and conquered, not surrendered to or evaded.

Third, school is a place of detachment. It takes us away from the loaded questions of life and away from how things are being used or misused. In school we should be free to pursue things uncorrupted by the need for immediate results. We can pursue things and seek satisfactions that we have not yet imagined or wished for. In our normal world we learn to speak the language. In school we learn to see the words as an investment in thought and we learn to think more exactly. We learn to see the works as articulations of understanding, beyond their meanings. Schools should be places where excellences are not crowded out by the world, and can be truly appreciated for what they are.

Fourth, school is a personal transaction between a teacher and a learner. To Oakeshott (1971), the teacher is the only indispensable equipment of a school. The teacher has something that he or she has mastered to impart to a learner they know. In some ways teachers can be considered to be the custodian of the practice of language being taught, and the practice of learning. To teach is to bring about something intended and of worth that is learned, understood, and remembered. For Oakeshott, teaching is anything that does not run against the engagement to impart understanding, and learning is anything that does not work against the engagement to think and to understand.

Finally, school is a historic community of teachers and students with its own traditions that evoke loyalty, piety, and affection. It is devoted to initiating newcomers into the human scene. A good school is one where learning is itself a golden satisfaction. It is a place where learners enjoy the initiation into the mysteries of the human condition, the gift of self-knowledge and a satisfying intellectual and moral identity.

The institutions of our lives, and for the purpose of this thesis, our schools, play an important role in our moral development. They are not just places to learn, but rather they are places to learn and in doing so, we learn about our inherited culture and understandings, as well as learning to understand who we are.

Moral Practices as Languages of Understanding

Oakeshott (as cited in Franco, 1990, pp. 173-178) claims that through our moral practices we learn to understand ourselves better. Franco (1990, p. 172) states that Oakeshott sees a practice as prescribing “procedural conditions to be taken into account when choosing and acting.” This is developing self-understanding is an ongoing process

of defining, specifying, and differentiating, as we learn what it is that we do. He sees morality as part of our daily lives, and the medium that we use for connecting with both the self, and with others. All of our actions, including speech, take place within our moral practices. These moral practices have a history, and our moral actions reflect the historic self-understandings that we have developed.

Oakeshott claims that our moral practices are like a language. They are instruments for understanding and interaction, and they have a vocabulary, and syntax of their own. We can automate the rules, and speak without thinking or really knowing what we are saying. The only way to truly learn a language is to apply what we know as we live the language. The skilled performer is the one who speaks like a person for whom the language in question is a first language. The skill, and the background knowledge, and understandings, are displayed in the way that the person talks. Further, while we all share the language, each speaker will have their own way of expressing themselves. Part of learning a language is learning the different ways that people use them to express themselves.

In this view, our moral practices are languages of both self-disclosure and of motive or sentiment. In order to understand a moral act, we must take into account not only the intention of the act, but also the motive or sentiment, such as fear, benevolence, pity, or compassion that the actor has at the time of the act. Moral acts are both self-disclosure, in that they say something about us, and self-enacting, in the sense that they say something about our motives. Both of these aspects of the moral act must be understood if the moral act is to be understood (Franco, 1990, pp. 173-178).

Moral practices are always more than a set of rules. Oakeshott (as cited in Franco, 1990, p. 175) shows that our moral practices cannot be reduced to a set of rules. When our acts are represented in rules alone, we lose the flexibility, and interconnectedness of our acts. The rules can only give a limited or abbreviated account of going on. As a guide, the rules only give considerations that could be taken into account. They are used in good conduct, but they are not applied in good conduct. Rule-following alone is not enough to ensure that we have good conduct. If we simply follow the rules, then we are like the person to whom the language is new, without the history and knowledge that the skilled speaker shows in their conduct.

Kieran Egan: The Tools of Our Minds

Kieran Egan will help us delve more into the relationship between the horizons, the dialogue, and the school. His work on the nature of learning and children provides us with the final piece of the puzzle. This is the answer to the question of “how do children learn authentically.”

Egan (2002) claims that through our participation in our cultures, we develop different sets of cognitive skills, or “tools”. These skills, and the types of understandings that we are able to develop as we gain them, are connected with our senses, with our ability to use language in an oral culture, our ability to use writing, our ability to organize information into our theoretic patterns of understanding, and our ability to reflect on these patterns as we develop them.

The cognitive tools that we develop are the key ways that we interact with our cultures. These tools surround us and are gradually internalized as we grow. According

to Vygotsky (in Egan, 1997) these tools begin as inter-psychoic processes and develop into intra-psychoic processes. Higher psychological processes (such as question and answer dialogic structure) begin in interactions with others as external social functions and eventually, over time, become internal functions. In Egan's view, the process of intellectual development is best recognized as our degree of mastery of the tools and the sign systems such as language that we experience and master as we live.

To Egan (1997) the system of signs that we use restructures our entire psychological process and informs the kind of understanding that we have of the world. To Vygotsky (as cited in Egan 1997, p. 30), development is seen in the emergence or transformation of these sign systems. The mind extends into and is constituted by its socio-cultural surroundings and its kinds of understandings are products of the intellectual tools created and used in those surroundings.

Egan (1997, p. 32) starts with the culturally accumulated complexity of language, then extends the concept of cognitive tools to literacy, and the development of systematic, abstract, theoretic linguistic forms, and finally to the habitually and highly reflexive uses of language. In his theory, each degree of sophistication in language development restructures the kind of sense that we make of the world.

Egan suggests that we develop cognitive tools through our interactions with culture, and the types of artifacts that they support. Kozulin (as cited in Egan 2002, p. 75) suggests that these tools are the cultural artifacts that help us master our own natural psychological functions. He includes songs, symbols, texts, formulae, and graphic-symbol devices within his tools. Egan suggests that there are large-scale tools that we all

share as humans with the ability to communicate through some form of language. These include the tool of oral language itself, of literacy, of the ability to make theoretical abstractions and deliberate on and question our own thinking. These major tools will have smaller scale tools that we develop. In language these would include the recognition and formation of metaphor and of story structure, of a concept of fantasy, of binary structuring, of rhyme and rhythm and the ability to form a mental picture from our words. We use these cognitive tools in our thinking and they allow us to make other tools. As we create a tool, it has the potential to become a cognitive tool for others, and thus expand, enlarge, or enrich their own toolkit.

These tools develop from within our interactions with others, including the knowledge and understandings supported by our cultures. The development of these cognitive tools gives us two advantages. First, as we develop better tools, we become better at interacting with the environment we are in. We are able to understand things in new and better ways that we were not able to before our cognitive tools reached the level they have reached. Better cognitive tools then give us a greater ability to understand in ways that we could not before our cognitive tools improved. Secondly, better understandings allow us to create larger, more complex cognitive tools that allow us to explore our worlds in more efficient ways.

We go out into the world and learn from it. Our imaginations interact with our environment and start to help us piece understandings together. Our minds create cognitive tools, or skills, to help us become more proficient at interacting with our worlds. As we develop these cognitive tools, we are able to better understand our worlds. As we develop better understandings, we are able to create increasingly complex

cognitive tools, both expanding the ones that we have, and creating newer, more complex tools. This is an iterative cycle that we are always growing from.

Kinds of Understandings or Toolkits

Egan (2010) proposes that we develop five distinct kinds of larger toolkits, or cultural understandings, that are “constituted by the generative play of the human imagination, constrained and conditioned by the logic whereby knowledge can be accumulated and the process of human psychological development” (p. 33). These understandings are developed through the cognitive tools that are derived from our cultures, and help us interact with the same cultures. In outlining these larger toolkits, I am going to briefly introduce the first three kinds, and then spend longer on the fourth (Philosophical) and fifth (Ironic). Our understanding of ourselves starts to become authentically ours during the time period (very roughly, in Western cultural settings, about ages 14 or 15 and up) that these philosophical understandings develop, and thus, a more thorough understanding of these stages is needed. My description of the first kind of understanding, somatic, will again be brief.

The first kind of understanding, somatic understanding, is unique in that in many ways it is the precursor to the other four (as the infant learns to be at home in the world at a pre-language state) and exists in some form in within all of the other kinds of understanding. Egan sees somatic understanding as a general embodied kind of understanding. This understanding can be quite sophisticated even if we cannot put in words what we know. In this way, language could be seen not as a beginning of understanding but rather as a new kind of expression of our understanding. We have

knowledge from the body that is beyond our words and we are constantly trying to put voice to this knowledge (Egan 1997, p. 168).

Somatic understanding continues to develop within, and is modified by, each of the other understandings even as we develop our ironic abilities. We develop a mimetic skill in which we have the ability to produce conscious, self-initiated, representational acts that are intentional but not linguistic in nature.

Egan (1997) suggests that there are seven constituent cognitive tools involved in somatic understanding. First our understanding is intentional. We can do things to draw attention to objects. We can point for example. Second, we can break actions down and recombine them into other actions. We reenact things as a way of physically reflecting on an event. We are trying to get the 'feeling'. Third our somatic understanding encompasses a form of communication. Fourth, it allows us to reference; to distinguish between the real and the pretend. The fifth tool is that we have an unlimited variety of objects that we can represent. We can represent anything as long as it is concrete and episodic in nature. Sixth, our somatic understanding is auto cueing; we can reproduce our mimicry of other objects on the basis of internal, self-generated clues. Finally, rhythm and musicality allow us to learn about how things go together. Crucially, it is characterized also by use of emotions, humour, and patterning abilities.

The second kind of understanding, mythic understanding, is developed as we master oral language. This understanding is a direct result of our learning language structure, and it represents our attempts at causal explanation, prediction and control. Mythic understanding is the mind's way of reaching beyond its perceptions of the

universe to try to find a comprehensive model. This ability to reach beyond our perceptions starts to develop soon after we start to speak, and this awareness represents our initial attempts to make sense of the world. The capacity for abstract thinking and rich creativity arises along with the development of speech.

Mythical understanding is the ability to create a story in our minds about what is happening to us and around us. It helps give richer shape and meaning to our thoughts and lives. It is the ability to use language orally to discuss, represent, and understand things, even if a person has not experienced them first hand. The types of cognitive tools associated with this kind of understanding include binary structuring, fantasy, abstract thinking, the use of metaphor, rhythm and narrative, and the ability to create images in our minds.

The third kind of understanding, romantic understanding, is developed as we master the written word. For Egan (1997, p. 74), romantic understanding is best seen as the product of moving from oral language to written language. Writing is a technology for externalizing language. Adequate development of romantic understanding comes from learning both oral and the written forms of language fluently.

The ability to use the written word allows us access to the stored experience, the ideas and the dreams of our culture. It allows us a new consciousness about reality; where the world is seen as detached and open to systemic investigation. To varying degrees again, we learn forms of sophisticated rationality. The types of cognitive tools that we develop include developing a sense of reality, exploring the limits of reality, an

association with heroes, collecting and hobbies, and developing a sense of revolt and idealism.

Romantic understanding is a somewhat distinct kind of understanding that is supported by an alphabetic literacy with a bent, in Western cultures, to the development of rational thought. Romantic understanding is the result of a gradual development and as it develops we experience a corresponding growth in our own sense of autonomous reality. The danger, what potentially can be lost, is that we come to see ourselves as being cut off from the world and possibly losing the intensity of first hand participation in the natural world that mythical understanding gives us.

The fourth kind of understanding, philosophic understanding, is developed through our ability to create systems of understanding for ourselves. As this kind of understanding develops, we get increasingly better at combining ideas into complex processes. We learn to think and work from a disengaged perspective, by stepping away from the immediacy of the situation that we are in. As this understanding matures, we create increasingly sophisticated theories about what we know and we become increasingly interested in how the processes we are involved in work and fit together. With philosophic understanding, we start to see ourselves as being connected to the world through complex chains and networks rather than through a series of rules and regulations that control us. We recognize ourselves as part of these processes. Philosophic understanding exercises and develops the capacity to see patterns, search the reoccurring, find processes, search for essences, and make ordering principles and theories (Egan, 1997, p. 105).

At this level of understanding, education should strive to develop a richer and more complex sense of the traditions to which we belong. With a more diverse and intricate factual base, we are able to create a richer and more reliable scheme to describe and make sense of the world.

As this kind of understanding develops we start to see past the events or pieces and we start to see things as complex processes or continua. Connections between events become clear and we start to see ourselves as part of the complex processes of the world. We start to question things in new and different ways as we focus on the connections that we see amongst things. In making connections, constructing theories, laws, and ideologies we are trying to tie together what we know. Once we have developed a scheme, we start to acquire knowledge to round it out. At the level of romantic understanding we would ask what side or party we support during an election. At the philosophic level, we are interested also how the process works, and how it fits together.

Philosophic understanding opens us to possibilities as we start to look at things in terms of systems. This understanding starts to emerge during our romantic understanding and incorporates the capacities that we develop during the creation of both mythic and romantic understanding.

In developing our philosophic understanding we move from just thinking beyond ourselves to becoming a social agent. We have a constantly changing sense of ourselves and over time we start to see ourselves as connected to the world through complex chains and networks, rather than being simply subject to the myriad of rules and regulations that

control us. We start to become part of the process, rather than simply being controlled by it and we can experience this enlarging consciousness as liberating and energizing.

In establishing the truth (in our minds) about these processes, we are able to discover the truth about ourselves. We need an adequate understanding in order to construct a pattern from the wide array of knowledge that we have, but the more diverse and intricate our factual base is, the more reliable our theoretic scheme can become.

In trying to establish hierarchies and in sorting things out we create increasingly sophisticated distinctions that are still general in nature. New or conflicting knowledge requires revision and refinement of our scheme. The goal is to create the most refined scheme possible that actually supports our view of the world. Crude schemes will support anything. Knowledge and understanding then is the base that we use to revise our schemes.

Philosophic thinking exercises and develops the capacity to see patterns, search the recurring, find processes, see the essences and make ordering principles and theories. In Egan's theory, philosophic thinking actually generates these facilities. The development of philosophic understanding starts to give us increasing control over the world and as we start to generate and refine our schemes we start to understand the conventions that we have and that others have.

While mythical and romantic understanding is supported by the constant use of language and literacy in our daily lives, philosophical understanding is not equally supported by the kind of theoretic language that is crucial to it, and it needs certain kinds of institutions that use those forms of language to develop fully (Egan, 1997, p. 136).

The cognitive tools supported by philosophical understanding are those connected with developing our theories of how things work, and include a drive for generality, understanding processes, a desire for certainty, understanding the flexibility of theory, and a general search for the truth. Philosophical understanding requires sophisticated language and literacy systems, and particular kinds of communities and institutions that can support and sustain it. We learn to think and work with a disengaged perspective, with the idea of trying to establish the truth about reality with some form of rigorous, theoretical clarity.

The fifth and final kind of understanding, ironic understanding, is an understanding that allows us to reflect on our own thinking. We develop the ability to see strengths and weaknesses inherent in our thinking and to be skeptical of the models and theories, ideologies, metaphysical schemes, and so on, that have constituted our philosophic understanding. This kind of understanding keeps us questioning, looking to improve our own understandings, and opens us to new possibilities. With this openness to new possibilities, we learn to move between different perspectives and see “through the eyes of the other”. We become able to understand and support the claims of another without becoming a believer, and we learn to expand the group “us”. The result is the development of a rich consciousness of the varied ways of understanding that we have in the world. We learn to recognize and celebrate the differences within the group “us”. Our world contains multiple perspectives, meanings and narratives, recognizes the inadequacies of the stories we have told ourselves, and the theories we have framed for ourselves. Ironic understanding enables us to embrace the ambiguities we discover.

Irony involves at its center, a high degree of reflexivity about our own thinking and sensitivity to how crude and limited our conceptual resources are. Irony allows us to keep at the front of our thinking the inadequacy of the categories that we develop, and the characteristics that we are trying to represent. We are able to keep the theoretic generalizations that we contrive through philosophical understanding, but we can stand back and see these understandings with some degree of skepticism. Through irony we gain flexibility as we start to see the things that we accept as not simply being true. It opens us to possibilities and we start to see the features of the world in the stories as being imposed upon the world by our minds. We impose these structures to make the world meaningful, and determine how we feel about them but we do not necessarily accept them as being simply true. Kierkegaard (as cited in Egan, 1997, p. 143) suggests “it is by means of irony that the subject emancipates himself from the constraints upon him by the community of life”.

We live in a world in which multiple perspectives, meanings and narratives vie for our attention. The fluent ironist can move from perspective to perspective easily and readily. Shifting between perspectives allows us to doubt the security of any of these perspectives being an absolute truth. Historically, as our scientific knowledge grew, we learned that the world was really quite unlike what our senses told and gave us. The common sense framework of understanding we had was replaced with a framework informed by science. As we develop the ability of irony, our ironic minds start to see that how we have organized the world is at odds with our aspirations and interests.

The intellectual capacities that make up philosophical understanding enable us to bring very complex, and seemingly diverse, knowledge into coherent general schemes.

At the philosophical level, we tend to believe that the general schemes can mirror reality and deliver a true account of how things are. Ironic understanding allows us to absorb the abstract, theoretical capacities that can bring intellectual order to the complex, but prevents the absorption of the belief that general themes can mirror truth about reality in an uncomplicated way. It allows us to support other claims and to see the benefits of these claims without being a believer and without saying that the claims enshrine some truth. For example, there are things within socialist philosophy that may appeal to us even if we do not consider ourselves to be a socialist.

Irony shows the inadequacy of the categories that we create or use, and the characterizations that they are trying to represent. Through irony we gain the theoretical generalizing capacity of philosophic understanding while keeping in check the easy belief that truth resides in general schemes.

Ironic understanding allows us to see the features of the world in our stories as imposed on the world by our minds in an attempt to make the world more meaningful and determine how we feel about them. The ironic mind sees the connection between what is perceived and the perceiving mind, and it gives us the flexibility to not accept things as simply being true. It creates a form of openness to possibility by creating a view of a flexible recognition of our multi-vocal worlds both within ourselves and outside of ourselves. We develop a rich consciousness of varied ways of understanding, and we can appreciate these more varied ways. Our mind is open beyond the simple truth that our truth is the only truth.

The first kind of understanding, our somatic understanding, gives ironic understanding something beyond language; something that is foundational to all understanding. Irony has the central reflexiveness that enables us to apply our own sense making, our own understanding and our own beliefs and opinions the questions and doubts that we may have. It entails ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual dimensions and it requires us to expand our sympathies and sensitivities onto those we see as quite unlike us. We learn to expand the group we call “us” and it is the general strategy for putting into language the meanings that the literal form cannot. Somatic understanding allows us to take ironic understanding beyond what we can put into words but that we still know.

Egan sees the five kinds of understandings as developing in the order given and building upon one another. In some ways they augment each other. At the same time, the previous understanding is incorporated into the new understanding. We can be literally at any stage in our development and show signs and usage of all of the understandings. We hope that an adult mind has progressed to a full development of ironic understanding (the ability to question what we feel within us is certain) but this is not necessarily so always. Finally, as we progress through the stages, the cognitive tools we can develop become increasingly complex. Binary structuring, or the ability to compare contrasting binary ideas, such as hot or cold, is part of learning language and oral culture (mythic understanding). At the theoretical understanding level, the cognitive tool of “searching for authority and truth”, leads to a far more complex and nuanced form of understanding than an exercise in binary oppositioning would. We do not develop past any of the cognitive tools, but rather we always have all of the tools available to us at any

time. Adults, even at the ironic stage of understanding, will still use tools such as metaphor, rich mental imagery, or binary opposites in their thinking.

For curricular purposes, we develop the various understandings almost in parallel with the types of grade structures that we have. Mythic understanding typically develops in Western cultures from around ages 2 to 6/7/8, and romantic understandings develop from then till around 14/15/16. As our students are in their high school years (grades 9 and on) they may, if well-taught, enter into the stage of theoretical or philosophical understanding. This stage will develop over the course of their high school years. As they reach the end of high school, and enter into university, they may enter in ironic, or reflexive understanding.

Developing Self Understanding

Each of these kinds of understanding, and their constituent cognitive tools, plays a particular role in our developing self-understandings. We learn through our experiences with the written word differently than we learn from our experiences with the spoken word. The written word opens us to ideas that we may not have experienced directly, and our minds develop tools to help us organize and use the increased knowledge that we have access to.

As we develop the understandings, our sense of agency in the world changes. At the somatic level, we are trying to find our place in the world. At the mythic level, we are trying to extend ourselves out into the world. We place ourselves within the stories we are part of, and in play we explore the “what if”. At the romantic level, we are starting to experience a growing sense of independence and separateness from the world.

We are trying to find our sense of place and reality, while at the same time seeing others as having their own worth and virtues. Egan (1997, p. 101) suggests that central to our romantic understanding is our own growing sense of autonomous reality. In exploring the limits of our world, we are situating ourselves within the world as we search for safety and security, as we gradually develop our sense of independence and control. At the philosophical level, we are starting to develop a sense of ourselves as a social agent. We believe that we can change the world that we are part of, and we are moved to help deal with the inadequacies of the situations that we are exploring, either in person, or through our learning. We become part of the process, with a role to play and the ability to make a difference. In looking for the author's truth, we see ourselves as the author of our own lives. In ironic understanding, we develop the tools to see through the eyes both of ourselves and the others in our lives. We gain flexibility in our understandings, and we are able to develop our own ways of understanding things, based upon what we believe to be the best of what we are experiencing. It is at the philosophic and ironic levels that we start to develop our sense of autonomous identity.

At this level of philosophic and ironic understanding, we are creating what Taylor (1989) calls a "best account" of our understanding of who we are. We are constantly working to update our self-interpretations, and in doing so we construe ourselves as moving forward in our understandings and moral positions. Egan (1997) uses the parallel idea of a hologram approach. We develop an understanding of who we are that seems to be "whole", but is really out of focus. We have some clear pieces, and hold onto other pieces that we do not quite have a full grasp of. As we develop our understandings and cognitive tools, we slowly bring our understanding of our positions into clarity. Progress

is not seen as adding more on, but rather bringing into focus the understanding that we have.

Our moral development proceeds in parallel with our developing ability to understand the world. As we develop increasing complex cognitive tools, we are able to see and experience the world in ways that allow us to explore where we stand on matters of importance. An understanding of the different types of cognitive tools and a sense that these describe something significant about how our students develop will allow teachers to help their students explore the culture, knowledge and understandings that both Oakeshott and Egan suggest is at the heart of our developing self-understandings.

Egan (1979) suggests that many adults get “stuck” in the romantic kind of understanding. If we are stuck in this understanding, then we do not master the cognitive tools that we will need to fully explore who we might be, nor can we make more richly sophisticated our moral discernments. Moral development will also get stuck at this level.

While mythic and romantic understanding is supported by our daily lives, philosophic and ironic understanding are not, and they need a certain kind of institution to develop fully (Egan, 1997, p. 136). I will explore this idea more fully in the next Chapter, but for now, I want to point out that the institutions of schools are more than just places to learn. They are institutions that support the development of the type of thinking that allows us to explore fully our self-understandings.

The Importance of Emotional Engagement

Egan (1997, 2002, 2005) suggests that one of the critical ideas in education is emotionally engaging the students in their learning. When we place the knowledge that we are learning within the context of the story that it is part of, we are able to increase the engagement that our students have. All learning requires at least some connection to the emotions of the learner. Egan suggests that,

All knowledge is human knowledge and all knowledge is a product of human hopes, fears, and passions. To bring knowledge to life in students' minds we must introduce it to students in the context of human hopes, fears, and passions in which it finds its fullest meaning. The best tool for doing this is the imagination. (Egan, 2005, p. xii)

Our emotional engagement with knowledge should include a connection to how we understand ourselves. This engagement then should happen along three axes. The first axis is a direct connection to how we are affected by the knowledge. We should be asking ourselves how this knowledge helps in our self-interpretations. The second axis is placing the knowledge directly within the context of our own understandings. We are looking to see how this knowledge can help us change our positions in ways that we would experience as better. The third axis connects us with the horizons of significance in our lives. These horizons are ideas that are developed and supported by our inherited cultures, and allow us to explore what we might become.

In Chapter 3, in my review of MacIntyre, I suggested that learning should be considered a practice. There are goods internal to practices that can be achieved only through participation, and there are virtues that lead to our achieving and realizing these goods. MacIntyre (1984) suggests that the practices themselves need the virtues of truthfulness, justice, and courage. Ricoeur (1992) shows that self-esteem, and self-

respect will also come to fruition as we explore the institutions of learning and the standards of excellence that the practices, and in particular, Oakeshott's languages of understanding support.

One of the key virtues that we need to develop is that of being a risk taker, and being open to error. Taylor, in his "best account" approach, and Egan in his hologram approach, see learning as being a cycle of imagination and trial and error. Without an embracing of risk and error, we cannot fully explore who we can become. Thus, one of the key virtues that our explorations of self through curriculum will require is that of risk taking.

In our curriculum, we should be striving to help our students develop a full and rich life. Taylor (1989, 1991a) sees this as achieving goods on the axes of what it is good to be, what it is good to do, and achieving a sense of dignity. As we dialogue with the horizons of significance in our lives, we strive to achieve goods on all three axes. Our curricular approach then should include the exploration of all three axes in relation to the horizons of significance that are at play in our students' lives. Ricoeur's (1992, p. 180) ethical intention, of "aiming to live well, with and for others, in just institutions" should also guide our explorations. This ethical intention is a quest for self-esteem, through which the virtues of self-respect, and justice, or equality for all, come to fruition. Our explorations within the curriculum then should always be referencing the critical connection to both the other and the communities that we are part of. In the next Chapter, I will be exploring the connection to the institution further.

Our explorations of who we are must always connect both to the larger life of the student and to the traditions that are part of our lives. MacIntyre (1984) posits that the virtues can only reach their full potential within the narrative of a whole life, and in connection to the traditions. Our explorations within the curriculum, and our attempts to connect knowledge with self, must always connect not only to the self, but also to how we see the ideas as part of lives as a whole, supported by the communities that we are part of.

Self-Understanding is an exercise in Imagination

Both Egan (1997) and Oakeshott (1967) see our developing understandings of ourselves as an exercise in imagination. It is the imagination that allows us to grow and change.

Egan (2010, p. 27) defines imagination as the “human capacity to think of things as other than they are”. He sees imagination as a “generative, meaning-constructing, rather mysterious capacity which each of us possesses” (p. 32). For Egan, imagination is the “efficient cause” of learning, or the power of the mind that allows change and growth to occur. By defining imagination as the efficient cause of change, Egan is able to move knowledge accumulation and changes in psychological conditions to a position of support for the process rather than causes of learning. He sees both knowledge accumulation and changes in psychological processes as constraints on the learning process. The three concepts work together to produce the distinctive ways that we make sense of our experiences. Egan (2010, p. 33) claims that “the imagination can only work with what it

can grasp, and that is constrained by the logical sequence of knowledge accumulation and the psychological developmental process human beings have to go through”.

For Oakeshott (1967), it is through imagination that we enter into a variety of modes of understanding the world and ourselves, and we are not put off by the inconclusiveness of it all. The curriculum of education is the “languages of understanding” that we chose to pursue. To be able to speak in these particular modes of understanding requires an inventive engagement on the part of the individual, and the speaker must also learn the particular conditions each language imposes on his utterances. In exploring the curriculum, we learn to make utterances that display genuine understanding of the language spoken (Oakeshott, 1967, p. 38).

Oakeshott, sees our journey as:

...an education in imagination, it is an initiation into the art of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices; to distinguish their different modes of utterance, to acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to this conversational relationship, and thus to make our debut *dans la view humaine*. (Oakeshott, 1989, p. 39)

The Role of Knowledge in Developing Self-Understandings

As we explore and learn the knowledge of our curriculums, we develop our cognitive tools and understandings. The temptation is to focus on the development of the cognitive tools at the expense of knowledge. However, Egan (1997) suggests that it is in learning in depth that we are able to both utilize and create better cognitive tools and understandings. Knowledge is not something to be used only as a vehicle for creating the cognitive tools, rather, its presence and our ability to use it in further deliberations, will lie at the heart of our ability to create new information. Our imagination cannot function

unless it has knowledge at its disposal. Egan (1997) shows that learning things, having access to knowledge is a critical aspect of our intellectual development.

Conclusion

The purpose of this Chapter was to introduce the idea of curriculum as both a socio-cultural idea, and to connect the curriculum to our moral development. We develop as individuals when we are able to explore the rich inheritance that helps us understand who we are. Egan shows us that it is within this exploration that we develop not only our understandings but also the types of cognitive tools that allow us to more fully participate in these explorations.

Oakeshott's work positions the curriculum as one of the vehicles through which we can explore the kinds of self-understandings and self-enactments that we develop as we explore our inherited world. The curriculum gives us the opportunity to encourage our students to enter into dialogues with this inheritance, with a goal of developing not only self-understandings, but also an understanding of how others work and play.

Egan's work helps us to understand the kinds of mental skills and understandings that we develop as we explore these dialogues. These skills and understandings give us increasingly better access to our inherited curriculum. One of the key theoretical systems that we will develop is that of our own moral practice, defined through our self-understanding and self-enactment.

I started this thesis by asking what moral development in schools would look like if we approached it from a dialogue with our cultures. In this view, the communities that

we are part of empower our self-understandings and moral practices. We learn who we are, where we stand on matters of importance, and how we interact with others, through our participation in our communities. The rules that we follow give us only a part of the knowledge we need. In participating in the culture, we learn the inherited background and nuances of membership.

The concluding Chapter of this thesis, Chapter 7, is an exploration of how the ideas that develop out of the first 6 Chapters might look at the school level. In many ways, Chapter 7 develops the guiding principles that I believe are necessary in creating an excellent school. Egan and Oakeshott both show that the institution of school plays a key role in supporting the kinds of learning that leads to our developing self-understanding and moral discernment.

CHAPTER 7

CREATING THE SCHOOL: IMPLEMENTING THE IDEAS

Introduction

In this concluding Chapter, I want to apply the ideas that have developed over the course of this thesis towards setting out the precepts for the type of school that I believe will best support our students in their moral development. The ideas presented in this Chapter represent the distillation of my understanding the works of the philosophers that I have considered with the idea of creating an apprenticeship of moral and cognitive development in our schools. I am going to start by trying to pull together the perspective on moral development that develops within all of these works, and then look the idea of school as a moral apprenticeship, the importance of creating an ethos of participation, the critical ideas involved in defining my school, and finally, on the necessity to create what I will call a “focus on the individual”. The end result will be that we have defined an “authentic” school that has defined itself, and knows where it stands on matters of importance, and in which we help our students develop as authentic selves and good people. At every level, schools should be about supporting our students in their quest to be good people.

Moral Development: A Summary

The communities we are part of, including the communities within institutions, support strong values, and standards of excellence that we strive to internalize and make our own. These values and standards do not arise from within us, as part of our rational deliberations. Rather our rational deliberations help to make sense of the values we

encounter in our dialogues with the communities that we are part of. As we explore these values and standards, we start to internalize them, and make them our own. Moral development should be considered as a process allied to developing an identity, or coming to understand ourselves. In coming to understand ourselves, we explore where we stand on matters of importance and internalize our own position on them. These strong values are “goods” in our lives, or things that we should strive for. Taylor (1989) sees these goods as “sources of the self”, or things that help us understand who we are.

In exploring the communities we are part of, we develop virtues that allow us to explore and achieve the type of excellences that we look to achieve in our lives. To Aristotle (as cited in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1116a, as translated in Thomson, 1953, p. 69,) these virtues are always the mean between two vices. The virtue of courage, for example, is the mean between the vice of having too much fear (being a coward), and the vice of not having enough fear (being rash). The virtues we acquire allow us to explore in rich and meaningful ways the strong values or goods that are part of the various practices of our lives. These practices, which MacIntyre (1984, p. 187) calls “complex forms of socially established cooperative behaviour”, will include such domains as family life, work, learning, and the languages that we use, including Oakeshott’s languages of understanding.

As we explore the goods we encounter, we strive to internalize them and make them our own. Taylor (1989, p. 32), in suggesting that we are “oriented to the good”, is claiming that we are moved to acquire the types of values that we experience as being good for us. There are internal goods, or goods that can only be achieved by participating in a practice that supports them, and external goods, or goods that are not connected to

practices, that can be achieved by anyone. Some of these goods we acquire on our own, such as an understanding of truth, while others, such as language, or friendship, can only be achieved by interacting and being in common with others. The goods we acquire help us to achieve our own understanding of what it is good to be, what it is good to do, and being thought well of by others. As we acquire the goods of our lives, normally one, but sometimes a select few of them, becomes supreme for us. These goods, which Taylor (1989) calls “hypergoods”, help us to order, in terms of what we see as important, the other goods in our lives. These hypergoods come to define what is most important to us in our lives. A hypergood might be a sense of family first, fairness, or loyalty. Although we may still act in ways that are not consistent with our hypergoods, we judge all of our actions in relation to the overriding force of our hypergoods. If we are continually acting in ways that are discordant with the hypergood, then our hypergood has changed, and we will experience a change in our understanding of who we are.

We experience the goods that we feel to be the most important in our communities as horizons of significance. Taylor (1991a) uses the metaphor of horizon to show that we are striving to reach for an ideal that we sense as off in the distance but still achievable. The horizons are “inescapable” in our lives (Taylor, 1991a, p. 31). We understand and are striving to achieve the goods, but these goods exist independent of us, sustained and supported by the communities in which they have historically developed.

We have an ongoing dialogical relationship not only with these horizons and the goods that they support, but also with the others that we share our lives with. Ricoeur (1992) shows that these “others” are not only our own experiences with the goods in our lives, but also the interpersonal others, and the societal others. Oakeshott (1971) shows

that our inherited knowledge and understandings that we explore as we learn should also be considered as “others” in our lives. In our ongoing dialogues with these others we explore the goods that we encounter and eventually internalize. We can only understand ourselves, or reach our potential, if we understand ourselves as being connected to strong values, or goods, that have significance to us. Our experiences with these goods come through our interactions with significant others in our lives that we share our life quests with. These significant others can be people, societal structures, or ideals that we explore. We experience these goods within horizons of significance.

Ricoeur (1992, p. 180) suggests that this leads to our ethical intention: “...the wish to live well, with and for others, in just institutions”. This ethical intention is essentially a search for self-esteem. Our self-esteem is our understanding and belief in ourselves as being able to act, and seeing ourselves as the authors of our actions, in ways that meet the standards of the communities that support the goods of our lives. In achieving self-esteem, we come to see ourselves as being worthy of respect, leading to us developing our sense of self-respect. In this sense, our self-esteem, combined with the dialogical relations we have with significant others in our lives, leads to the development of our self-respect. When we extend the ethical aim of “wishing to live well, with and for others” to include “just institutions”, we are exploring the universal ideal of equality, and so our search for ourselves does not become focused solely on the self, but rather on the combination of the self, the others in our lives, and our societal obligations.

Oakeshott (1971), and Egan (1997, 2002, 2005) show that the curriculum we use is a culmination of the ways that we have historically developed and understood knowledge and information. To Egan, what we actually recapitulate are the kinds of

understandings that we are able to develop as we explore the knowledge of our worlds. Inherent in the curriculum will be our explorations of what it means to be human, and the kinds of goods that our societies support. One of the key theoretical systems that we develop is our moral position and understanding.

All of the philosophers that I have looked at suggest that we need to constantly be referencing not only the contexts that we find ourselves in at any given time, but also the larger contexts of our cultures. Things only make sense if they are understood and explored not just as an issue for us at the individual level, but also as an issue for everyone. We learn to understand ourselves through our ongoing dialogues with the others in our lives, including our friends and acquaintances, the standards of our institutions and communities, the standards of our inherited knowledge and ways of knowing and judging. We learn to see ourselves as the authors of our own actions, capable of positively affecting others, and changing the ways that the world around us works.

Taylor (1989, 1991a), MacIntyre (1984), Ricoeur (1992), and Oakeshott (1971), all, in their own way, suggest that the issue that stands in the way of our authentic understanding of ourselves, is our own, and seemingly societal, disconnect between the self, and the others in our lives. We do not see ourselves as interconnected, and this leads to us not putting the credence into the kinds of understanding that can only develop when we are in common with others. Without an ongoing, dialogical relationship with the others in our lives, including the standards of excellence that our communities support, then we will not become who we are capable of being. We need others, both as individuals, and as communities, in our lives to reach our potential.

We develop morally as we engage in dialogue with the horizons of significance and significant others in our lives. Through this dialogue we come to see ourselves as being the author of our own actions and able to create change. We learn who we are. The role of the institution, and of school leader, will be to create an environment in which every member of the educational community can enter into a dialogical relationship with the significant others in their lives. The school should define itself in ways that make the idea of the school, so defined, a significant other in the lives of all members of the community.

Creating a Cognitive and Moral Apprenticeship

Michael Oakeshott (as cited in Tripp, 1992) argues that moral behaviour, and other skilled behaviours, can only be acquired through an initiation into the traditions of the behaviour. The traditions are understood as the ways of acting and thinking that show important, implicit knowledge that can never be made explicit. In other words, through our behaviour, we show that we know what we are doing, in ways that go far beyond our ability to put our understanding into words.

The only way to do this is to have what Oakeshott (as cited in Tripp, 1992, p. 11) calls a “cognitive apprenticeship”. True skill, in addition to requiring explicit informational knowledge, also requires a massive exposure to the traditions of the domain of the activity. We act based upon our intuitive judgments formed through the experiences that we have. Skilled behaviour is only acquired through an initiation into a tradition. In this case, a tradition will be a way of acting and thinking that captures important tacit knowledge which can never be made explicit (Tripp, 1992, p. 12).

Oakeshott suggests that our actions are always carried out in relation to the traditions of the activity to which the actions belong (Oakeshott, 1962, p. 99). Our actions are rational if we first figure out what to do, and then take action in a way that maintains the knowledge and traditions of the activity. In moral development, the traditions will be what it means to be good in relation to the standards of excellence of the practice that the activity is part of. The idea of “what would a reasonable man do”, is really asking if the behaviour in question conforms to acceptable standards inherent in the community. The determination of rational is made after the fact.

Our abilities always imply knowledge that goes far beyond any rules that may be known. Oakeshott suggests that the rules and propositions that we follow are always created either during or after we gain the ability and our understanding of how to use it appropriately. Our ability is both what we know and the way that we use it. The two are always together. We do not have knowledge apart from its application.

The goal for the school community will be to create an ethos of a cognitive and moral apprenticeship. In this community, the standards of excellence that all members of the community model themselves on are clear, and the community members are immersed in opportunities to participate in behaviour that shows understanding of the standards of excellence. For this to happen, the school must set out what it believes to be important. It must, as Taylor (1989, 1991a) suggests, define where it stands on matters of importance. At the same time, it must decide how it is significantly different from the other communities that it is part of. In other words, how can the educational community help its students develop in ways that they could not necessarily get from not being involved in the school community.

Creating An Ethos of Participation

In order for the school to fulfill the potential that it has in the moral development of our students, we will need to create a strong connection between the constituent members of a school, and the school itself. This authentic connection between the community and the individual that is critical in moral development is not something that can be left to chance, but rather is something that the school community should always be actively working on. This connection is made through a clear articulation of what the school stands for. This clear articulation allows for the understanding of the overlap of goods that Taylor (2004a) shows is at the heart of committing oneself fully to membership in a group.

Taylor (1979) suggests that we have an obligation to belong to communities that we are part of and to contribute to their ongoing welfare. We are dependent upon a broader community of others, not only for the conditions of our moral development, but also for the content. Our sense of dignity is bound up with membership in some group. We acquire a sense of importance in our lives through identifying with a larger community, one that has its own history and distinctive purpose and which necessarily includes non-familiar others. If we do not participate fully in the community, then we do not realize all that we might be, and we do not contribute in genuine ways to the development of others in our lives. Since we can only maintain our identity within a culture or society of a certain kind, we have to be concerned with the shape of that community. For us to realize fully who we are, we need to have an intertwining of the self-defining purposes of the individual and the community (Taylor, 2004a).

In order to enhance our commitment to a group, we must have some common understanding of what the group is about (Taylor, 2004a, p. 188). This common understanding provides the framework or reference points through which we are able to carry on our deliberations. To Taylor, the keys are that we are able to debate about the common identity, and that everyone has the chance to be heard and recognized. To accept a decision that will go against us, we need to be able to see ourselves as part of the community that has made this decision. There has to be a felt bond, and a willingness to go along with a decision that we disagree with, as we still understand the advantages of being part of the group. At some level, we are sacrificing our individualism as we understand the importance of the community aspect of our self.

Defining the School

Excellent schools clearly articulate the constitutive goods and horizons of significance that they operate within. Members of the community then are able to commit to this identity through a common understanding of what is being strived for and how this is to be accomplished. The principles that govern the community need to be clearly articulated and open for all to understand and adhere to. The horizons of significance can be seen and understood in the operation of the school, and in the daily life of the school. The principles guide everyone and everyone understands and knows the precepts and constitutive goods of the community.

The school, by encouraging a dialogical relationship with the horizons, empowers all members of the community to be involved in creating a shared understanding of what it means to be a member of the community. We do this when we create an environment

where the shared values are openly discussed and debated at the appropriate levels. The students should be encouraged to question and challenge, so as to strengthen their commitment to the principles, and their understanding of the frameworks that guide the deliberations. The democratic ideal of being able to be part of a community, even when your voice is not the one chosen, is open for all to attain.

The horizons of the school shape the dialogue that is used to help the students create their authentic selves. The values of the school and of the community become part of the student's character through the process of shared understanding. The students become part of the community and it becomes part of them. The school becomes a "significant other" in the lives of our students and provides the horizons of significance for the students. In this way the overlap between the group identity and personal identity is built on and extended. The greater overlap will lead to an embodied understanding of the shared horizons.

The clear articulation of the horizons of significance under which the school operates will help all members of the community to identify what they want their end product to be, and what the exemplars of excellence within the community will look like. If the development of strong citizenship and membership is left to chance, then there will be a minimum number of students who reach the target. The identification of the end goal, the excellent example of a member of the community, will develop an improved understanding of where the goalposts are set for all members of the community.

Without a clear articulation of the standards of excellence in place, a culture is created whereby any member's special interest can be advanced. This is a form of what

Taylor (1991) calls soft relativism. Soft relativism allows for any special interest stance to be advanced as all of the stances are of equal importance. A clear articulation of the frameworks will give the community a standard to measure by and to evaluate what programs are needed or should be in place, and as importantly, what programs should not be offered. In this way, the special interest groups can be successfully held at bay.

The community will know what it stands for and what is important to it. The school will meet the individual learning needs of its students with the context of the community. At the same time, the school has the understanding of what it stands for and supports to prevent a special interest group, such as three parents committed to a program that will significantly reduce the resources available to all, from hijacking the school agenda. A compromise can be worked towards that balances the individual and group rights.

Taylor (2004a, p. 168) suggests that in our communities today there are spaces where people are together without necessarily having a common purpose. These spaces of horizontal, simultaneous, mutual presence are often simply of mutual display, and not of common action. Yet commonality helps to build a dialogical culture, it helps the individual identify with the shared goods of the community.

These spaces can be spaces of togetherness that lead to common action or sharing of emotion. These are the times that we as a group share in the excitement of the success of a member of our community or something occurs that we can all be part of. These spaces have the potential to become spaces of common action and can lead to a further bonding of the group. This bonding helps to build what Taylor refers to as strong

evaluations. These strong evaluations speak to us and have strong pulls for us. We understand intuitively that we want to be part of something that is greater than ourselves alone. We understand that there is something in the group that is necessary to my individual well-being (Abbey, 2000).

Creating the School: Seven Roles for School Leaders

There are seven key roles that fall to leaders of schools in creating the school as both a “keeper” of the horizons of significance that it maintains, and in becoming a horizon itself. The idea of the school, and what it stands for, should be something that our students strive to achieve in their lives.

The first role for school leaders is to ensure that everyone involved in the school community has a high degree of knowledge about how the modern, dialogical, moral self develops through the process of learning. The school community should have a common understanding of this, and be able to work this understanding into all aspects of their deliberations.

The second role for school leaders is to ensure that the curriculum reflects the kinds of explorations that support self-understanding and the development of the cognitive tools that Egan suggests. In this view, curriculum, and what we do with it in the classrooms, always has a secondary outcome. As both Oakeshott and Egan show, the knowledge itself is important unto itself. More though, it is through the knowledge that we enter into the types of dialogues that we have with our inheritances that we develop the types of self-understandings, and moral practices that we do. The role of the curriculum leaders, be it the school principal or designate, should include incorporating

into the classroom work the idea of exploring the kinds of self-understandings the curricular explorations can lead to.

The third role of the school leader is to ensure that the dialogical relationships with the standards of excellence of the community are extended to all aspects of the school life. The arts for example, allow us to take an inward look at ourselves, and the positions that we take. Taylor (as cited in Abbey, 2000) suggests that art is a moral statement by the artist. The self-expression allows us to be introspective as an artist and at the same time encourages the audience to challenge and reach for their own ideas. At the same time, the arts promote our interactions with the others in our lives. There are ideas around sharing and teamwork in most arts, as well as performing to the standards of excellence that are imbued in the institutions of music, theatre, or sculpture. Athletics is also a form of self-expression and it is a strong method of reaching out and challenging our limits in relations to other, similar institutions. It allows us the opportunity to celebrate our strengths and build upon our weaknesses. At the same time, we are striving to reach the standards of excellence that are inherent in the games that we play, guided by the rules of the game. There are even times that we learn that what we are doing is not good enough. Service or citizenship within our community allows us to reach out and challenge ourselves against the frameworks and horizons of the larger communities in which we operate. We are asked to connect with the larger sphere, just as we are asking our students and parents to connect with the larger sphere of the school. Finally, the school should look to organize programs that lead directly to the student being able to explore who they understand themselves to be, their relationship with the school, and

their relationship with family and other practices of their lives. There are times when such contemplation is needed.

The fourth role of the school leadership team is to ensure that there is clear articulation of the horizons of significance that guide the school's deliberations. The leadership must ensure that policies and procedures of the community are adhered to at all levels, including input from parents, and that the horizons are not allowed to slowly or suddenly erode or morph into something that they were not intended to be. In the same way, the leadership should lead the drive to ensure that horizons that are outdated or that work against the community are either replaced or modified. The clear articulation is vital in supporting the creation of situations where individual members of the community can play an active role within the community, allowing them the latitude to grow as individuals, while at the same time keeping the strong bonds that define the community.

Ozolins (2010) shows that it is important that the set of horizons we create include "openness" to extending what is "good for us" to others who are not part of our group. Our horizons should include reference to sharing what is good about our community, and inviting others into it, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs. Communities that only look into themselves are not healthy, and will not survive.

The fifth role is that of the perpetuation of clear, open, and public communication of horizons that define the school community. There is an important role for ritual here. In schools, ritual should work to remind all members of the community of the standards of excellence that guide the deliberations of the community, and to keep these standards alive to all. These types of celebrations, where the exemplars of the community are

showcased and we experience the shared goods of the community, are critical in creating the bonds that speak to the individual members of the community. Ritual allows us to celebrate who we are, and reminds us of the horizons of significance that guide who we are. For too many of our schools, and their constituent members, ritual is seen as something to be endured at year-end or start-up or at special times (such as Remembrance Day) during the year. Yet ritual should play an important role in helping us create the strong bond and understanding of the horizons under which we operate, by reminding all of us of what these horizons are and how they guide our deliberations.

Ritual helps the development of avenues for the community to celebrate the accomplishments of both the individual and the community. Each of the rituals supports the idea of incorporating a connection between the self and others.

The awards systems that are in place should work to reinforce the standards of excellence that all students and teachers strive for. These systems should reflect what is publically stated about the standards as well as reflect progress in achieving the standards. As well, our awards should have graduated standards. Excellence is something that all students should be able to achieve to some level. Our students are striving to live to the ideals that the school has put forward, and our awards systems should reflect not only attaining these standards, but also what exemplars look like. Far too often, awards systems go only to the top few. This is not a call to lower the levels of achievement, but rather a call to put in place graduated steps through which a student can be recognized for achieving the standards that are set out. The “top” awards should reflect the achievement in excellence in all of the standards that we have set out. These awards should recognize striving to achieve the ideal that the school stands for.

The sixth role that school leadership plays is to ensure that the primary contacts in the schools, the teachers, understand the horizons that guide the school and live them. Teachers then need to be authorities within their fields. They are the arbiters of truth, and act as role models for the students on their academic and personal journeys. They have the ethical responsibility to tell the truth within their academic disciplines. The teachers are the “masters” of the apprenticeship of learning for our students. The leadership of the school should work to ensure that the teachers are empowered to be such arbiters of truth. The key here is the need to ensure that all of the teachers both understand the horizons of significance in the school, and use them to guide their deliberations. Teachers who act outside of the horizons, or who do not accept the role of the horizons can be as upsetting as, or even more so, than parents who are not willing to consider the role of the community in the education of their children. They wind up working against the standards that the school community strives for.

The final role is to ensure that the school itself understands how the frameworks work in its own identity creation. Taylor suggests that we learn to be moral persons--who we truly are--in dialogue with ourselves and with others. If a school is to be an authentic institution then it must step outside of itself and enter into a dialogue with the communities that it operates within. It must work to become a “good person” and strive to work to form the bonds that will enhance the relationships with the community.

The role of school leadership then is to ensure that the horizons under which it operates are clearly articulated and are understood by all members of the community. As well, the leadership should work to ensure that all of the constituents of the school understand the dialogical nature of our development. They are constantly working to

keep the frameworks open and transparent and guiding the deliberations around them. In this way, the school is able to create its own authentic identity, and all members of the school can be involved in a meaningful dialogue with a significant other, in this case the institution, and what it stands for.

The idea of the authentic institution leads to the idea that schools cannot be, nor should they be, “all things to all people”. In order to be excellent, to be authentic, the school community must clearly identify the horizons of significance that govern their lives and work to enshrine their meaning in the everyday life of the institution. Even with a universal horizon in place, there is the possibility that some members will not be in concert with the aims of the community. This can lead to a healthy debate about what the school stands for, but strong dissention should not be a good enough reason to not take a position. Rather, it is a reason to review the horizons and standards of the community to ensure that the community is just. There may be times however that a member does not see the community as just, and so the individual may have to choose, or be directed to membership in a different educational community.

The school then sets out what it stands for. It defines what is important, the standards of excellence, and how these standards are achieved. In essence, the school sets out the traditions of the educational community.

Focus on the Individual

Underlying all of these ideas on developing our school is the idea of a “focus on the individual”. Schools are interesting places. They are institutions, and as such they operate to sustain the ideal of the institution and what it stands for. At the same time,

what we stand for is the development of the individual. We are striving to create an ethos of dialogue between the ideals the school stands for and the individual who is striving to achieve these ideals. Ricoeur's work shows that it is easy for any one aspect of the dialogue to be subsumed or harmed by the other and that we always must be on guard for this. This ethical moral identity of the school ensures that both the needs of the community and the individual are always respected.

The focus of both the curriculum and the school community as a whole is not only on what the students know, but also on how the student's ongoing dialogue with the inheritance is informing their self-discovery, and helping them develop the types of judgment and wisdom that the inheritance can lead them to. The rules of either aspect of this dialogue can overwhelm the goal.

Our deliberations about the school can happen at the school level, but they should always have an eye on how these deliberations will affect the individual students. Oakeshott (as cited in Tripp, 1992) suggests that we look at the application of rules after the fact to see if we did what the wise man would have done. What the wise man would do is maintain the dignity and integrity of the individual within the needs of the community, without letting either side dominate or harm.

As part of its authentic identity, the school will also have what Ricoeur (1992) calls an ethical and moral identity. The ethical and moral identity will allow the school to ensure that every student is dealt with as an individual within the community in a just way. In its deliberations, the school sets out what it means to lead a good life. In all of its deliberations, at all levels, the idea of the ethical, of the aim to live well, will have

priority over the moral, or how the aim is implemented. The traditions of the school take on the role of the “sieve of the norm” (Ricoeur, 1992). These traditions are the standards by which we run our communities and interact with each other. Ricoeur shows that these standards will stand as guides in most cases, but there will always come a time when the needs of the individual, with the given situation that they find themselves, are at odds with the rules of the community. Ricoeur proposes that at this time we need to turn to a form of practical wisdom in order to take action. In essence, we are looking to find a way to act when the rules run out, that maintains the dignity of both the individual and the community. In interpersonal affairs, Ricoeur, in concert with Taylor (1992), and MacIntyre (1984) suggest that we need to use practical reasoning, rather than rationalism and instrumental reasoning.

Aristotle suggested that practical reasoning is the way that we ought to make decisions in the ethical domain. Smith (1999) suggests that in practical reasoning we begin with a question or situation, and then proceed to think about the situation in light of our understanding of what is good or of what makes for human flourishing, and we are guided by a moral disposition to act truly and rightly. As we think about what we want to achieve, we alter the ways in which we might achieve it. In the practical there is no concrete starting point. We start with the issue at hand, and start to think about it in terms of what we understand to be good. Practical reasoning, (Wallace, 2003), is the “human capacity to resolve, through reflection, the question of what to do”. It is practical in that the subject matter is concerned with action, and the consequences or issues move people to act.

In practical reasoning we ask ourselves which, if any, of a given set of actions would be the most desirable to do? We assess and weigh the reasons for the actions and the considerations that speak in favour of or against any particular action. We need to be in the situation in order to explore this type of thinking. Practical reasoning always results in an intentional action that can only be understood fully if we know both the situation, and the traditions of the situation.

Dauenhauer (1998) shows that Ricoeur's conceptualization of practical wisdom has three features to it. First, this wisdom always considers the principle of respect for others, and how to apply this respect. Second, it is always in search of Aristotle's "just mean". The resulting action is not a compromise to the conflict, but rather a reconciliation, in which the resulting position is seen as better than either of the original positions or claims. Finally, in an effort to avoid being arbitrary, we are always consulting with the competent and wise advisors in our lives. As a result, we are always in dialogue with qualified others as we proceed through life.

In considering how to solve dilemmas, we are looking to find the best solution for both the individual and the institution that represents everyone else in the community and the community standards. We are constantly looking to find a solution that keeps the dignity of both sides, and that is seen as just to all parties. Applying institutional rules, without regard to the individual situation, may seem to sustain the rules, but if it is done at the expense of the individual ethical aim everyone in the community learns that this is how they might be harmed in the future. They see themselves bound by the institutional norms, rather than supported by the combination of the institutional norms and their own ethical aim.

Leading to The Authentic School

Our goal for the school will be to create an environment in which there is significant overlap between the goods of the school and the goods of the individuals within the school. At the same time, the school should stand as both a supporter of the horizons of significance in our students' lives, and as a horizon of significance itself. The school should embody the standard of excellence that our students should be looking to in their moral development.

In creating a place for moral development, a school develops its own authentic identity. Taylor posits an authentic identity as being true to oneself.

There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for me...Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. (Taylor 1991a, p. 29)

The authentic identity of a school will be defined through a clear articulation of where it stands on matters of importance, and how it sees these issues being implemented in the daily life of the school. What the school community believes in, and what it stands for, will and should be different for every school. There will be significant overlap, but the entire ethos will be unique to the school. The idea that our identity is built on understanding the self in relation to, and through, our dialogical relation with others in our lives, means that we will define what we understand excellence to be in relation to the standards of excellence that are supported by the communities that we are part of. In

other words, our understanding of our school community, and what we understand as important in helping our students develop, will necessarily be connected to the unique situation that is our school.

The promise of the mission statement was to set out what is important to our community, what we believe in, and how we will live to the standards set out. This is both the hard work, and new work, of the educational community. Unfortunately, our mission statements have become statements of trying to be everything to everyone. In making general, sweeping statements, we have not defined who we are, or where we stand on matters of importance. Rather, we have tried to not say anything that might seem different, and in doing so, have not set any position for ourselves.

In my experience, our schools have become places in which there is little, if any, clear connection between the ongoing moral development of our students and the school itself. The work of the philosophers that I have looked at in this thesis show that for the modern individual to reach their potential as individuals, strong, dialogical connections need to be created with the various practices of the school and the school itself. Moral development is facilitated on an everyday approach, in every aspect perspective of what we do, rather than on a “we did this on Thursday afternoons”, or a “word of the week” approach.

Taylor (1991a) sees this type of approach as a retrieval of what has been lost in our relatively new understandings of what it means to develop a sense of self. Our schools, as a significant other in the lives of our students, should take a strong role in the

formation of the “good” self. To do this, all aspects of the community need to understand and live the dialogical and communitarian nature of how our students develop morally.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

This thesis is an exploration of what moral development in schools might look like if the topic was approached from a socio-cultural perspective rather than the moral voice perspective of such authors of Carol Gilligan (1982) or the cognitive development perspective of Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) that seem to dominate the topic in education. The thesis is not an attempt to replace these perspectives but rather take a different road to the same end. There is in fact support for the idea that these other perspectives are incorporated into a socio-cultural perspective. For example, Tappan (2006, p. 6) concludes that within the work of Gilligan and Kohlberg, there is “very compelling evidence” that our use of moral language is what shapes and mediates our responses to moral situations in our lives. He is suggesting then that the socio-cultural approach is inherent in the works of both of these perspectives.

In setting the philosophical background to this exploration, I took what Ricoeur (1992, p. 80) calls an “indirect route”. I went outside the field of education to look at what the philosophical anthropologists, or those who consider the human condition in the world we inhabit, could add to the field of education. As mentioned in my opening chapter, I did not see the current work inside education as leading to any conclusions that gave us real direction.

Potentially, this thesis could have included the work of any of the philosophers who look at our experience of being in the world with others. In deciding which philosophers to consider in this thesis, I focused on authors who believed that community empowers the individual. One of the key ideas that I was looking to put forward was the idea that our educational communities play a much more significant role in our students

development than is commonly recognized in the literature. Taylor, MacIntyre, and Ricouer, all show a strong connection of community and self, and posit that we are always looking to find a balance between the needs of the community and the needs of the self. In some way, they all posit that we develop our self-understandings within the self-community dialectic.

I did not look at any depth into the philosophers who work focus on the experience rather than the context of creating the experience. These authors would fall in the phenomenology, existential, or hermeneutical camps. I could have looked at Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, or Georg Hegel, who was a major influence on the work of Charles Taylor, and whose work I used extensively in this thesis. I am going to quickly review the work of three of these philosophers, Jurgen Habermas (1929 – 2006), Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002) to briefly show how their work connects to my thesis.

Habermas (1981), in his work on the communicative act, places rationality, or how we come to conclusions, and act in ways that are consistent with our reasons for acting, in the dialogical relationships that we have with others. He saw all speech acts as having as mutual understanding as their objective. In this thesis, I place great emphasis on the connection of community to self and Habermas looked at this same connection. He claimed that community has become a place where the individual competes for the resources of the state, rather than a place of common consensus (Habermas, 1962). With this change, he saw that public sphere having less and less influence on individuals.

Martin Heidegger's (1927) main interest was to make sense of our capacity to make sense of things. He claimed that we are always a being amongst other beings and

so our experience is always situated in the world that we exist in. Further, our consciousness is always intentional; it is aimed at something. Heidegger posited the idea of Dasein, or “to be there”, where “there” is the world that we exist within. His work looked at our understanding of ourselves that arises from our being-in-the-world. In particular, he looked at the everyday meanings that we have of such ideas as time, being, mind, body, and matter to name a few. He saw these understandings as being dialogical in nature (Hornsby, 2011).

Gadamer, a student of Heidegger’s, claimed that we are in the world through language, and that it is through language that we encounter both others and ourselves. For Gadamer, *phronesis* or practical wisdom is what gives us insight into our understandings. These understandings are always connected to the situation at hand, and they cannot be reduced to sets of rules. Developing understandings is an ongoing process that is never finished or completed. Gadamer (2001) claims that all education is self-education. We must learn to take control of our own learning as we strive to become “at home” in the world. To do this, we must have a connection to the others that we share our space and time with. He suggests that we need an attitude to “keep open to what is other, to other, more universal points of view” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 17). For Gadamer then, our self-understandings have a dialogical nature, in similar ways to the work of Heidegger and Habermas.

In the thesis, I tried to describe the process involved in implementing a socio-cultural perspective rather than looking at the individual experience of the students. I looked to authors who could help inform the implementation. At the same time, Taylor (1989, p. 58) claims that the central focus on any moral philosophy must be the human

experience. We have to explain “people leading their lives”. Any philosophy of morality must take seriously human perceptions of the independence of the goods we experience. This places the fundamental level of moral theory not at the level of our choices or decisions but rather at the level of our moral reactions, experiences, instincts and intuitions. Any consideration of moral development then will have to consider how the process explains “people leading their lives”. This step, into the individual experience through the lens of such philosophers as Habermas, Heidegger, and Gadamer would be a next step for implementing a socio-cultural perspective.

There are many questions that seem to arise out of this thesis, and indeed out of my conclusions. I offer my conclusions as being relatively straightforward, but the actually implementing these ideas is what seems to me most problematic.

The first area of concern centers on the teachers who would be involved in such a process. The perspective I put forward would require teachers to be far more invested emotionally in the educational process than they commonly are now. Hogan (2003) claims that most teachers view their work as either a job or a calling. He suggests that both perspectives are dysfunctional, and offers a view of teaching as a lifestyle of teaching and learning. In this view, the teacher is not someone just doing a job, nor is the teacher a person working to meet the directions of a higher authority. Rather, in a lifestyle of teaching and learning, the teacher is embarking on a journey of learning with the students. Hogan’s perspective moves us away from the issues of teaching being a job or a calling, but further consideration should be given as to whether this type of move would be enough to have the teachers invest in the ways and to the depth that I believe teachers would need to.

There would also need to be considerable professional development in the area of moral development. Few, if any, teachers have experience in this type of area. Most of our experience, both as individuals and professionally, has been within the Gilligan or Kohlberg perspectives. For practicing teachers, this means a professional development focus on what is a very complex concept. It would require an entire school focus and assumes that the entire school could in fact come together on this. For new teachers, this would mean introducing new perspectives into the teacher training programs at the universities. Teachers, regardless of their level of experience, would need to learn the language of their particular subject area and how an exploration within this language could lead to student self-understandings. So it would be fair to conclude that the gap between current conditions of teachers' common views of their job and how large-scale a reform in this area would be required to enable teachers to support the changes I recommend points to a problem I may have not adequately attended to in the thesis. This is an area that will require close attention in the future.

The next area of concern would be at the school-leader level. For a socio-cultural perspective to be implemented, the entire community would have to be part of all aspects of the process. This is the hard work of education and, for it to move forward, school leaders have to have more control over their staff than they currently seem to have. Outside influences, such as union contracts, may work against the type of implementation I am advocating.

Further, most schools operate within a philosophy, stated or unstated, of having to accept everyone who shows up. This idea, that every student can attend the local school works against an implementation of the type of perspective that I am talking about. For a

community to succeed there has to be both a choice to be part of the process, as well as the choice to opt out. The need for a comprehensive, school wide perspective on what the school is trying to achieve would mean that increased research into what the school stands for is needed not only by students and families, but also by the teachers who may be joining the school. One thing that I have not looked at is whether or not this type of position would be in opposition to current standards of teacher autonomy.

At the same time, the school must have, at some level, the ability to deal with members of the community who are not willing to work within and support the common objectives of the school. In this sense, it would be up to the entire school system to offer everyone the chance to be educated, rather than each individual school looking to meet the needs of everyone. This ability to deal with those who will not participate appropriately would have to be extended to the teaching staff as well and, again, this will most likely be problematic.

I also want to suggest that in our schools there are emotionally charged issues that seem to dominate our discussions on moral development. Quite often the student's family values are in conflict with the some subject being explored at the school. Gay marriage, or the pro-life / pro-choice debate, are examples of these issues where the values of the family may be in conflict with even the idea of the subject being explored at the school. These types of issues seem to dominate the discussion on moral development, and we lose the idea that most of moral development is about, as Taylor (1989) suggests, what it is good to be, and achieving a sense of dignity. We will struggle to deal with these situations of emotional conflict, but that does not mean that we should not address

them, or that we should let them be the dominant focus of moral development. These types of issues will have to be addressed, but not to the exclusion of topics and ideas.

In this thesis then I have not focused to any depth on how a socio-cultural approach to moral development can be implemented into our schools. There are considerations at every level, from the student and family, to the teacher, to the school leader, and to the curriculum itself. The actual implementation of the ideas that I have put forward would require careful analysis and planning in almost every aspect of the school.

At the same time, I do see a number of directions that this work could lead to. One logical next step of this work that was hinted at in my reasons for using the philosophers that I did would be to extend the ideas to look at the individual experience that our students would have within the socio-cultural perspective that I explored. My focus has been on setting the stage, but all of the philosophers seem to indicate that the lived experience of our students within such a socio-cultural perspective would be an important consideration. As Taylor (1989) suggests, we need to consider how our students actually perceive and experience moral development. A consideration of the individual experience within the socio-cultural perspective would be an interesting next step.

Almost every aspect of this thesis connects to language at some point. This connection includes the actual use of language in dialogue, to the kinds of understandings that Egan (1997) claim develop as we use language, to Oakeshott's (1975) languages of understanding. An investigation into the role of language in moral development within a

socio-cultural perspective may help us to better understand the lived experience of our students.

A key area that I introduce for moral development is the link with curriculum. Kieran Egan's work in particular should be the starting point for further investigation. Egan claims that one of the key roles of curriculum is help students develop the types of cognitive tools that we use to explore the world we are part of. There should be further work on looking at how the kinds of understandings that Egan identifies help to shape our student's moral development and understanding. Are there moral cognitive tools that develop and help us as we develop morally? If so, what are these tools, and in what ways do they help our students develop understandings. If the moral understandings are, at least in one sense, built into our explorations of knowledge, then we should be working to understanding how these understandings change the ways in which we see things.

Further to this, more work could be done that looks at the overlap of the socio-cultural perspective, with the moral voice perspective and the cognitive development perspective at the school level. These two perspectives, of moral voice and cognitive development, seem to dominate our conversations at the school level. A review of all three perspectives may lead to helpful directions.

It would also be interesting to extend this work to look at particulars within the school setting. Most of my considerations have had, as a basis, the standard B.C. school setting. It would be possibly fruitful to explore how these ideas would be implemented in classes of adult learners. Could they be implemented in classes that are strongly multi-cultural in nature? Could they give direction in changing the schools that struggle to meet the needs of students in impoverished areas? One initial inquiry would be to see if

this type of perspective has been tried in other schools and jurisdictions, and how this implementation may have worked or did not work.

I also see three large challenges that may be made to my thesis. First, the perspective and conclusions that are offered could be seen as working to create a community that is insular and out of touch with the rest of the larger community or society. Ozolins (2010) claims that we prevent a closed community by ensuring that we inviting other communities to join us in what we believe to be good, and by going out to join other communities in the same manner. In keeping our community vibrant and part of the larger communities around us, we help to prevent the insular, inwardly looking perspective that might otherwise arise. Secondly, the thesis could be seen as forcing the views of a dominant group onto a less privileged group. By ensuring that the process of creating, communicating, and being in dialogue with the common standards is open, dialogical, and connected with all of the community members we ensure that everyone has an appropriate voice in the dialogue. The public declaration of, and a commitment to, the standards of the community will work to ensure transparency. Ricouer (1992) claims that one of the key roles of the institution is to be the distributor of justice and fairness to all. He recommends ways in which we can ensure that everyone gets their due. The community will have to constantly guard against instantiating the perspective that MacIntyre (1984) describes as using others as means to an end. It is important that every member of the community recognize that they are valued members of the community and feel that their voice is heard and attended to. Finally, in the perspective that I offer, there is always the potential for, what MacIntyre (1984, 2002) calls “evil practices” or communities that others feel have an immoral foundation or worse. The process of moral

development, of developing self-understandings, does not prevent such communities from arising. At a local level, being open to the impact of our pursuit of our ethical aim on others, and to the connection of our community to larger communities, will work to ameliorate much of this concern. The problem arises when we try to extend to cultures far beyond our own. For example, a school in one culture may stand for or promote what other cultures believe is wrong. While we may hope for a global village, with universal standards of rights and privileges, and of how we work, "...with and for others" (Ricouer, 1992, p. 172), a global common understanding is proving to be difficult to achieve.

What my thesis shows are some likely benefits that will result from looking at moral development in our schools from a socio-cultural perspective rather than the moral voice or cognitive-development perspectives that dominate current discussions. Exploiting these benefits more fully will require educators to look outside the current educational literature to the work of those who consider the human condition in a richer context, such as the three main authors on whom I have drawn, and whose work is too rarely referenced and used in this literature. My thesis argues that such a step will prove fruitful to the moral education of our students.

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