PARENTAL RIGHTS IN RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WITHIN A LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis engages in a critical examination of parents' rights in religious upbringing and religious education within a liberal perspective.

One of the central features of a 'liberal perspective' is taken here to be a commitment to the importance of valuing and developing the autonomy of the child. This commitment has important implications for the defensibility of both religious upbringing and religious education, and for the scope of parental rights that can be exercised in relation to them.

In the first three chapters it is argued that, given this perspective, parents have a right to give their children a certain kind of religious upbringing; one where their children are brought up to have an initial determinate religious commitment, but one which is both open to, and compatible with, the child's eventual achievement of autonomy. This view is defended against a range of objections and the character of such an upbringing is explored in some detail.

In the next four chapters it is argued that, following on from this claim about religious upbringing, a broadly similar claim can be made about religious education and schooling. Parents are seen as having the right to give their children a distinctive kind of liberal education, including a form of religious schooling, which seeks the development of their child's autonomy from a particular starting point. The argument proceeds from an analysis of parents' rights in general concerning education, through a critical exploration of the notion of liberal education, to an outline of the concept of the 'liberal religious school' and an analysis of the difficulties to which it gives rise.

The thesis concludes with an exploration of further considerations which support the view that a plurality of forms of liberal education, including education in religion, should be acknowledged, in relation to which parental rights can legitimately be claimed and exercised.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As its title indicates, this thesis engages in a critical examination of parental rights in religious upbringing and religious education within a liberal perspective.

Liberal educators, and liberals more generally, have often been at best cautious about such rights and about forms of religious upbringing and education which seek to develop faith. This is because liberal educators typically place a high value on developing the autonomy and critical independence of children and are worried about the dangers to autonomy arising from undue early influence on matters which are, in objective terms, highly controversial.

In this work I shall show that, whilst there is a tension between liberal values such as personal autonomy on the one hand and forms of upbringing and education which develop faith on the other, it is possible to establish within the framework of liberal values the right of parents to give their children forms of religious upbringing, education and schooling which develop faith. These acceptable forms provide children with one of several bases from which their development of autonomy and their liberal education more generally, can proceed.

Throughout, my argument is situated within a liberal framework of assumptions, although not without sensitivity to the many objections and difficulties to which this framework gives rise.

In Chapters One and Two I discuss the right of parents to bring up their children in their own religious faith, and I outline my view that a form of such upbringing can be compatible with liberal ideals. In the process, I defend my view against several philosophers who have mounted strong challenges to it. In Chapter Three I offer a

fuller exploration of the kind of religious upbringing I defend and how it can be rendered compatible with the development of the autonomy of the child.

In Chapter Four I argue that parents have more extensive rights over formal education and schooling than many liberals concede. On grounds consistent with respecting the autonomy of their children, and their need for liberal education (a notion which I analyse in Chapters Five and Six) I claim that parents may choose from among a number of different contexts in which the liberal education of their children can take place.

In Chapter Seven, I outline a proposal that one such context is the 'liberal religious school'. This offers a form of liberal education from the basis of a particular tradition of religious faith and practice. In both this and the final chapter I discuss a number of problems and difficulties concerning both the interpretation and defence of this notion. I conclude that, although much more argument and research is necessary, the proposal is one which is worthy of further serious consideration on liberal grounds.

Underlying this thesis is the more general issue of the significance for liberal education of the involvement of pupils with particular traditions of belief, practice and value. I claim that such involvement can benefit the task of the liberal educator, and can help to avoid some of the dangers inherent in liberal education when conceived in too abstract a way. This reinforces my claim that there is a necessary plurality in the forms that liberal education can take.

Although I confine myself in this discussion to philosophical and theoretical issues, I hope that the ideas developed here are not without significance to the practice of both the upbringing and education of children.

CHAPTER ONE

Parental Rights and the Religious Upbringing of Children:
A Preliminary Argument

Do parents have a right to bring up their children in their own, particular,

religious faith? The right of parents to give their children a religious upbringing (or, for

that matter, an anti-religious upbringing) is often merely taken for granted in liberal

democratic states and is seen as a right of a particularly important and fundamental

kind. But can such a basic parental right be defended?

This important question has been neglected. Within the liberal tradition in

Philosophy of Education, for example, much has been written about the illegitimacy of

developing in children an unjustifiably determinate conception of 'the good life', but

discussion has tended to focus almost exclusively on teachers and schools, rather than

on parents, as indoctrinators.

The rights of parents are now being subjected to increasing scrutiny by

philosophers and philosophers of education. One of the most controversial areas of

debate is the extent to which parents can claim the right to choose and control the formal

education and schooling of their children on religious grounds. It is clear, however,

that little progress can be made in this debate without clarification of the underlying,

more fundamental, claim of parents to the right to determine religious upbringing. This

work opens with an examination of this fundamental claim.

I shall take as a starting point an argument which I advanced in my article

'Parental Rights and the Religious Upbringing of Children'. (McLaughlin,T H 1984)

Whilst this argument has been found convincing, at least in general, by a number of

writers (See, for example, Hobson,P 1984; Thiessen,E J 1987a;1987b;1990a;

Buetow,H A 1988:149-151; Laura,R S & Leahy,M 1989), it has also been subjected to

attack and criticism. (Callan,E 1985a; Gardner,P 1988;1990) In response to the points

made by my critics, I have defended and developed my view. (McLaughlin,T H 1985;1990)

This chapter consists of a preliminary statement and defence of my position. The chapter has two sections. In the first, I outline the context of my argument and its implicit assumptions. In the second, I sketch my argument in the form in which it appeared in my original article, with the aim of giving an overall 'feel' for the position which I advance.

In the next chapter, I shall examine the various criticisms which have been made of my argument. This will involve not only a development and refinement of my original view but also, I shall claim, a strengthening of it.

(1) Context and Assumptions

An important point to make clear at the outset is that my argument is developed explicitly within a particular context and set of assumptions. These can broadly be described as 'liberal' in character. I am interested in the question: Can liberal parents - committed to a familiar range of liberal values - consistently and in good conscience claim a right to give their child a religious upbringing? To bring out the issues clearly, I shall therefore conduct my argument within the framework of a fairly strong form of liberalism, involving the following assumptions:

(a) that the development of personal and moral autonomy is a fundamental value and parents should have this as a major aim in the upbringing of their children;

(b) that the most justifiable form of society is an open, pluralist, democratic one where there is maximum toleration of diversity and a commitment to free critical debate as the most rational means of advancing the pursuit of truth in all its forms;

(c)   that no one set of religious beliefs can be shown to be objectively true.

These assumptions are, of course, widely challenged, especially by religious believers seeking to justify their rights over the religious upbringing of their children. (There is, however, no reason in my view why a religious believer *must* reject these assumptions. They are not only compatible with but also demanded by many forms of religious faith, as I shall seek to bring out in Chapter Three). The assumptions face challenges from other directions too. But in my argument I shall be leaving to one side the adequacy of the liberal position and shall argue within a framework provided by its central assumptions. My argument, therefore, has a narrow focus, and does not seek to address some fundamental questions about the justification of liberal values and of religious upbringing generally which could not be ignored in a fuller account.

Even if questions of justification concerning (a),(b) and (c) are left to one side, there remain a large number of issues of clarification and interpretation of the assumptions which are worthy of much critical analysis and discussion. There is, for example, a host of issues which arise in relation to the concept of 'personal and moral autonomy', and there is much also to be explored concerning 'liberalism' and 'liberal values'. (1) However, I shall be forced to restrict my examination of these matters to considerations which are of direct relevance to my overall argument. To this I now return.

Commitment to (a), (b) and (c) rules out - or severely limits the scope of - a range of arguments that might be deployed to defend the fundamental parental right in question.

(a) - the importance of developing the personal and moral autonomy of the child - calls into question, for example, two arguments used by David Bridges in his article, 'Non-paternalistic Arguments in Support of Parents' Rights'. (Bridges,D 1984) First, Bridges quotes approvingly Coons and Sugarman's question - 'How can the best interest of the child be pursued by society when there is no collective perception of that interest?' (Coons,J E and Sugarman,S D 1978:45) and claims that 'the division of

opinion among the adult community as to what is in fact good for children undermines their claims to paternalistic intervention in children's liberty in the name of such good'. (Bridges,D 1984:56) This stress on the indeterminacy of the child's interest provides a starting point not only for arguments emphasising parents' non-paternalistic rights over their children but also for arguments claiming that, in the midst of perplexity, parents are in the best position to perceive and determine any paternalistic intervention that may be justified on behalf of their children. (See, for example, Coons, J E and Sugarman,S D 1978:Ch4). Commitment to (a), however, involves the claim that, whilst there may be some indeterminacy as to what is in the detailed interest of particular children, there *is* something that can be shown to be in the general interest of all of them; the development of their personal and moral autonomy. Coons and Sugarman themselves seem to recognise this when they claim that the development of autonomy is 'an indispensable intellectual and ethical ideal' (ibid:72) and that they 'know no worthier objective'. (ibid:72) Their commitment to autonomy is equivocal however, in that they describe their position as merely a 'personal view' (ibid:71) and one that has no generally binding force. Thus, whilst they try to show that their proposals for family choice in education are consistent with the development of the child's personal and moral autonomy (ibid:esp Ch5), they see no grounds for insisting that *all* parents must value that development. (ibid:85) Their position is therefore in conflict with (a), which sees parents' rights as limited by - or defined in relation to - their duty to ensure their child's eventual autonomy. (2) The second argument used by Bridges is that parents have a right to give their children a religious upbringing as an extension of their right to practise their own religion. (Bridges,D 1984:58-59) But a commitment to (a) introduces a restriction on this right. Bridges makes the criterion of restriction here whether the child actually rebels against the religious upbringing being provided. Thus he claims that, if the child does not rebel,

> *people standing outside a parent-child relationship which allows both parties*
>
> *to lead a life which satisfies their value preferences, are put in a position of*

interfering in both lives in order to impose on them a set of values which the

observers prefer.

(Bridges,D 1984:58)

Bridges considers that this is an interference which 'it is in practice very difficult to justify'. (Bridges,D 1984:58) Although the *practical* problems are very difficult here, from the perspective of (a) the issues of *principle* are clearer. Just because the child does not complain it does not mean that all is well; his or her docility may well be the result of indoctrination or the manipulation of natural affections and loyalties. As Steven Lukes points out, a person may exercise power over another not only by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but also by 'influencing, shaping or determining his very wants'. (Lukes,S 1974:23) Indeed, Lukes argues, the securing of compliance by controlling thoughts and desires is the 'supreme exercise' of power. Failure to recognise this, he claims, leads to the false assumption that 'if men feel no grievances, then they have no interests that are harmed by the use of power'. (Lukes,S 1974:24) (3) Against this, Lukes insists on a distinction between wants and 'real interests'. On the liberal view, an important aspect of what is in the 'real interests' of children is their development into personal and moral autonomy. Since this development can be clearly frustrated by the use of power in the manipulation of wants, parents, at the very least, must balance their right to exercise their religious freedom against the right of their children to become autonomous individuals.

A commitment to (a), therefore, introduces a crucial factor into the determination of parental rights. In itself, of course, it does not indicate clearly what these rights should be, since there are problems in determining exactly what is *meant* by personal and moral autonomy both in general and in relation to religion, and how it is developed. But (a) asserts that the questions must be taken into account when discussing parents' rights over their children's religious upbringing.

The kinds of defence of basic parental rights over religious upbringing excluded by (b) and (c) can be quite easily brought out. (b) clearly excludes arguments of the

form that a given religious upbringing is necessary for the child to become an acceptable member of society or to avoid disadvantage or discrimination. (c) excludes arguments based on a parental claim that their religious faith is demonstrably true and that therefore they are justified in transmitting this faith to their children at all costs. This infringes the liberal principle that nobody can claim a power by asserting a privileged insight into the good for man.

Having outlined some of the implications of arguing from a liberal perspective, we can now turn directly to the question: from this perspective, do parents have a right to bring up their children in their own, particular, religious faith?

(2) A Preliminary Sketch of My Position

One answer which has emerged concerning this question is an apparently negative one. Thus John White argues in 'The aims of education re-stated' that

> *if the parent has an obligation to bring up his (sic) child as a morally*
> *autonomous person, he cannot at the same time have the right to indoctrinate*
> *him with any beliefs whatsoever, since some beliefs may contradict those*
> *on which his educational endeavour should be based. It is hard to see, for*
> *instance, how a desire for one's child's moral autonomy is compatible with*
> *the attempt to make him into a good Christian, Muslim or Orthodox Jew...*
> *The unavoidable implication seems to be that parents should not be left with*
> *this freedom to indoctrinate. Ways must be found, by compulsion,*
> *persuasion or enlightened public opinion, to prevent them from hindering*
> *the proper education of their children... The freedom of the parent to bring*
> *up his own children according to his own lights has long seemed*
> *sacrosanct. But I would urge objectors to reflect on the rational basis of this*
> *belief. Has it a rational basis, in fact? Or is it just prejudice?*
> (White, J 1982:166-167)

In this way, White challenges '... the parent's alleged right to bring a child up in his own religion, political persuasion or *weltanschaung*'. (White, J 1982:166)

There is an important distinction which is blurred here between 'bringing up' and 'indoctrinating'. At times White seems to be referring to the former, as in phrases such as 'to bring a child up in his own religion' and 'to bring up his own children according to his own lights'. But in other places there is a more direct reference to indoctrination. White's view of indoctrination is that it involves an intention on the part of the indoctrinator to bring about belief that a proposition (or series of propositions) is true in such a way that nothing will subsequently shake that belief. (White, J 1972) Clearly a liberal will object to a religious upbringing in this sense, since it constitutes an attempt to restrict in a substantial way the child's eventual ability to function autonomously.

But must a religious upbringing be of this indoctrinatory kind? Is there not a less stringent form of upbringing where a definite world view *is* presented to the child as part of a 'coherent primary culture', but where the parents abide by the liberal principles calling for them to allow the child to develop and exercise the freedom eventually to challenge that culture and form his or her own life ideals? Can a religious upbringing in this sense be acceptable to a liberal, where it is seen as one of a range of acceptable 'primary cultures' that might be provided for a child?

The notion of a 'primary culture' is one which is developed by Bruce Ackerman in 'Social Justice in the Liberal State'. (Ackerman, B A 1980) Ackerman acknowledges the dilemma arising for a liberal from the fact that children are not born fully fledged and autonomous participants in the liberal form of life. In their earliest years they are necessarily dependent both physically and culturally upon adults and their development towards autonomy is a slow and gradual one. Parents are therefore justified in giving their children a stable and coherent 'primary culture' since this is the precondition of the child's subsequent development into an autonomous liberal citizen.

Thus, in Ackerman's view, the need for stability gives parents the right to determine the character of this 'primary culture' themselves, without undue interference from other individuals or agencies. A parent, for example, has a right to shield his

child from a group of adults 'ringing the door simultaneously, each demanding the right to provide different moral vocabularies and environments within which the child may understand his resistance to his primary culture'. (ibid:155) The need for coherence gives parents the right to introduce their children to a substantive set of practices, beliefs and values since:

> *while an infant may learn English or Urdu or both, there are limits to the*
>
> *cultural diversity he can confront without losing a sense of the meanings*
>
> *that the noises and motions might ultimately signify. Exposing the child to*
>
> *an endless and changing Babel of talk and behaviour will only prevent the*
>
> *development of the abilities he requires if he is ever to take his place among*
>
> *the citizenry.*
>
> (ibid:141)

For Ackerman, the argument for the need for cultural stability and coherence gradually loses force as the child develops 'dialogic competence' and the ability to face challenges to his or her primary culture without being disorientated. Indeed Ackerman argues that parents have an obligation not only to take the developing questioning of their children seriously but also to provide them with 'a *liberal* education - with cultural equipment that permits the child to criticise, as well as affirm, parental ideals'. (ibid:117 Emphasis in original)

Ackerman is unclear about the possible restrictions that might be placed on the notion of an acceptable 'primary culture'. He argues that

> *no single method of child-rearing can pretend to provide the unique path to*
>
> *liberal citizenship. While different parents will present vastly different*
>
> *dialogic and behavioural models to their children, the outcome so far as*
>
> *liberal theory is concerned, will typically be very much the same.*
>
> (ibid:140-141)

This seems to be because of the basic point that whatever the initial culture provided, conflict will arise between the parent and the child (i.e. the child will have desires frustrated by parental attempts to constrain them), and as a result of this conflict the child will be able to obtain the beginnings of dialogic competence.

At this point, they will not only cry when their desires are frustrated; they will sometimes challenge the legitimacy of their constraints by manipulating the symbolic forms placed at their disposal by their primary culture.

(ibid:141)

Presumably, this basic requirement excludes some forms of child-rearing (those that fail to develop the child's language or self-control for example). But given the satisfaction of these basic requirements, are all 'dialogic and behavioural models' equally valuable as far as an outcome acceptable to a liberal is concerned? Granted Ackerman's commitment to the principle of autonomy and the obligations he lays on parents in relation to the realisation of this ideal, it seems that he needs to say more about restrictions on forms of 'primary culture'. An indoctrinatory form is inconsistent with his basic principles, for example.

Is it possible for a non-indoctrinatory form of religious upbringing to constitute a 'primary culture' that is acceptable to a liberal? This might be denied in several ways.

First, is it possible in principle to give a child a religious upbringing which preserves autonomy? One way in which a decisively negative answer could be given to this question is if it could be shown that the notions of reasoning, evaluation and truth are inappropriate or impossible in religion, since this effectively destroys any possibility of (rational) autonomous judgement at all in this sphere. On this view religious belief becomes a matter of non-rational faith or cultural conditioning. Without pursuing this complex issue at this point, we can note that most liberals are prepared to keep an open mind on these aspects of the status of religious belief. We can therefore,

I think, legitimately expand the last of the liberal assumptions outlined in the previous section as follows:

(c)　that no one set of religious beliefs can be *shown* to be objectively true, but that reasoning, evaluation, truth and therefore rationally autonomous faith are not in principle impossible in the sphere of religion.

If the possibility of a religious upbringing which preserves autonomy is admitted in principle, what other considerations are relevant to the notion? Peter Hobson, in his article, 'Some Reflections on Parents' Rights in the Upbringing of their Children' (Hobson,P 1984) seems to present this issue as a matter of avoiding certain methods of religious upbringing and certain kinds of religious content. But this leaves out the important question of the appropriate intention to be adopted by the parent. Clearly this is crucial. To fall within the liberal framework of our discussion, this intention must incorporate the central aim of developing the child's autonomy. But can this intention be characterised coherently in the case of a religious upbringing? The problems here arise from the question: are parents providing such an upbringing aiming at faith on the part of their children or *autonomy*?

My argument seems to imply that both faith *and* autonomy are being aimed at here, but is an intention of this kind a coherent one? Incoherence can be avoided if a distinction is made between the long-term and short term aims of the parents. Their long-term, or ultimate, aim is to place their children in a position where they can autonomously choose to accept or reject their faith - or religious faith in general. Since, however, these parents have decided to approach the development of their child's autonomy in religion through exposing them to their own particular religious faith, their short-term aim is the development of faith; albeit a faith which is not closed off from future revision or rejection. So a coherent way of characterising the intention of the parents is that they are aiming at *autonomy via faith.*

Two worries arise concerning this notion, one from the side of religious faith, and the other from the side of liberal values. First, must not parents who are religious believers value *faith* rather than *autonomy* in their children? The answer is that the conflict between faith and autonomy in the religious faith of a liberal is a false one. From such a position, what is demanded is autonomous religious faith based on appropriate reasoning and evaluation, not mere lip-service or conditioning. The essential freedom of the act of faith must be preserved. Religious liberal parents may well hope that their child's eventual autonomy will be exercised in favour of faith; but in the logic of their own religious - as well as liberal - position, this must remain a hope rather than a requirement. The second worry is that the parent here might not be committed to autonomy in a sufficiently strong sense to satisfy liberal demands. For example, autonomy might be seen as limited in scope (its exercise being confined to details within a religious faith rather than its fundamental basis) or it might be conceived in a restrictive way (as merely a device for securing a more adequate religious faith on the part of the child). Commitment to a sufficiently strong sense of autonomy is therefore necessary if the 'autonomy via faith' intention is to be acceptable to a liberal.

A general problem which arises concerning this intention can be brought out in the following way: Despite the liberal character of the intention, it is not difficult to imagine that, given the pervasiveness and significance of the child's early experiences and in particular the powerful unintentional emotional and psychological pressures and influences that parents may exert on their children, that the child will end his or her primary culture with a set of fixed religious beliefs that are very difficult to shake later. Two connected questions arise from this observation:

(i) will not the parent who aims at autonomy in the long run have to take steps during the period of primary culture to see that this development of fixed religious beliefs in the child does not occur?;

(ii)   if this is so, is this compatible with the parents' other aims of instilling a

particular set of beliefs?

With regard to (i), it seems clear that liberal parents *do* have a responsibility to

ensure that their children do not emerge from their primary culture with a set of fixed

beliefs, in one sense of this term. For there is an ambiguity in the notion of 'fixed

beliefs'. In the strong sense, 'fixed beliefs' are so pervasively and thoroughly

established that nothing can shake them. A child with a set of beliefs 'fixed' in this

sense possesses the kind of 'indoctrinated state of mind' deplored by liberals. It is

perfectly true that this state of mind can be developed in a child despite the explicit

intention of the parents, and it is important for parents to be alert to this. Parents,

therefore, have the responsibility not merely to formulate their intentions accurately but

also to monitor the methods, content and consequences of their upbringing - and to

avoid and remedy anything likely to produce 'fixed beliefs' in this strong sense. There

is, however, a second, weaker, sense of 'fixed beliefs' where such beliefs are seen not

as 'fixed' in the sense of 'unshakeable' but 'fixed' in the sense of 'stable'. Whilst

parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child emerges from his or her primary

culture without fixed beliefs in the strong sense, it seems to me that it is part of their

responsibility to ensure that their child emerges with fixed beliefs in the weak or

'stable' sense since such a set of stable beliefs of various kinds is necessary for the

provision of a coherent primary culture for the child. This distinction between a weak

and strong sense of 'fixed beliefs' enables us to offer an answer to (ii), namely that

there is a compatibility between the aim of developing autonomy and the presentation of

a particular set of beliefs provided that the beliefs developed are fixed in the weak sense

(i.e. stable, but open to subsequent challenge and development) and not in the strong

(i.e. unchangeable) sense. It is true that the nature of the beliefs actually developed is

not merely a question of the intention of the parents, though the intention is important:

there is a need for vigilance on their part of the kind outlined above. But it is not the

case that such vigilance demands the avoidance by the parent of the presentation of any particular set of beliefs.

I have acknowledged the important point that, although it is necessary to attend to the explicit intentions of parents, these intentions are not the only factor influencing the nature of the beliefs eventually developed in the child. What must a parent providing a liberal religious upbringing actually *do* in order to 'avoid and remedy' the development of unshakeable religious beliefs? Little research of either a philosophical or an empirical kind has been done on this question, and treatments of religious upbringing in literature and drama tend overwhelmingly to illustrate its indoctrinatory forms. In the absence of a detailed account, however, I claim that the general features of a liberal religious upbringing can be discerned and the notion itself plausibly defended.

Such an upbringing provides the child with a definite religious framework of beliefs, practices and dispositions, but parents must be committed to a range of attitudes and procedures which lay the foundations for autonomy and guard against indoctrination. Some of these can be briefly sketched. At an appropriate point, parents should encourage the child to ask questions and be willing to respond to the questioning honestly and in a way which respects the child's developing cognitive and emotional maturity (4); make the child aware that religion is a matter of faith rather than universally publicly agreed belief, and that there is much disagreement in this area; encourage attitudes of tolerance and understanding in relation to religious disagreement; indicate that morality is not exclusively dependent upon religion; be alert to even subtle forms of psychological or emotional blackmail; ensure that the affective, emotional and dispositional aspects of the child's religious development takes place in appropriate relationship with the cognitive aspect of that development, so that irrational, compulsive or neurotic forms of religious behaviour or response are guarded against; respect the eventual freedom of the child to refuse to participate in religious practices, and so on. Such an upbringing calls for complex and sensitive judgements on the part of the parents concerning the balance to be struck between the presentation and inculcation of their own religious views and the need to respect and facilitate their child's developing

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autonomy. These judgements can never be made in an ideal or abstract way and are necessarily influenced by facts of human nature which bear upon family life. Nevertheless I maintain that the general parental attitudes and procedures implied in liberal religious upbringing can be broadly outlined. These do not have the form of unrealisable ideals, but can be translated into quite concrete terms. It is true, of course, that the ideals involved here are not *wholly* realisable. In the nature of things no guarantee could ever be given that any form of child upbringing will lead to fully autonomous judgement on the part of the child. Indeed, the aim of 'fully autonomous judgement' is itself unrealistic; autonomy is always a matter of degree.

Can it therefore be claimed that a non-indoctrinatory form of religious upbringing can be regarded as an acceptable form of 'primary culture' with which to equip a child?

This claim might be rejected on the grounds that whilst the arguments advanced hold true for the presentation of certain kinds of 'sets of beliefs', the presentation of particular sets of *religious* beliefs cannot be justified in the same manner. The attack might be developed in the following way:- the criterion of an acceptable 'primary culture' is that it should be 'the least restrictive environment consistent with (the child's) dialogic and behavioural development'. (Ackerman, B A 1980:152) But the provision of a religious element goes beyond this necessary minimum. The child unquestionably needs in a very fundamental sense at this stage things such as language, consistency and coherence of parental behaviour and expectations, love, moral training and so on. But is religion *necessary* or *fundamental* in quite the same way? Should it not be left out of children's primary upbringing and introduced at a point when they are beginning to think for themselves? In my view there are a range of arguments which can be developed against this attack:

(i)   Religion is not merely a set of propositions about a range of rather abstract questions such that it can be left for treatment until the child is able to tackle questions of this kind him or herself. Religion involves a range of social practices, attitudes, rituals, etc. and is very much more closely linked to *culture*

(as claimed by, for example Durkheim) than is realised by the proponents of religiously neutral child upbringing. In many cases, to ask a family to excise the religious elements from its culture for the purpose of child upbringing is in effect to ask it to change its culture completely. This would clearly seem to infringe the liberal principle of freedom of religion. As we saw earlier, whilst this principle does not extend to the right to frustrate the eventual autonomy of the child, it cannot be restricted so much that the family is forced to stop practising its religion altogether.

(ii) It is impossible for parents who practise a religious faith to insulate their children from that faith. This is because it will colour their view of life, their substantive moral commitments and values, the patterns of behaviour in the family and so on. So it will inevitably be 'caught' by the child brought up in the family as part of the 'subtle and continuous reinforcement of cultural norms' (Ackerman, B A 1980:147) to which Ackerman draws attention. But far from constituting an argument *against* removing religion at the primary stage, does not this lend substance to the worries mentioned earlier about picking up fixed beliefs? These worries are eased by the argument developed above that it is possible to harmonise the presentation of a particular set of religious beliefs with a concern for the development of the autonomy of the child. What seems clear is that if the right of parents to exercise religious freedom is conceded then it will be impossible for them to isolate their children from being influenced by their faith, despite their concern that ultimately the children should make up their own minds about it. Since 'ought' implies 'can', is it possible to claim that parents enjoying an appropriate degree of religious freedom have an obligation to excise all religious elements from the upbringing of their children?

(iii) If an account of the nature of the religious domain can be given which stresses the significance of *practice* to religious meaning and understanding and the

importance for autonomous choice of being 'on the inside' of a given religion, then a liberal parent could argue that giving a religious upbringing is in fact giving children an experience which will enable them to evaluate religion for themselves in a significant way. This could be linked to the point that it is impossible to develop an adequate understanding of religion *in abstracto*, but that this can only be achieved through a particular religion. So, it might be argued, far from hindering the child's capacity for autonomy in this field, the provision of an appropriate form of religious upbringing may in fact facilitate it.

(iv) It is not possible to separate out moral from religious discourse and values in quite the way envisaged by the proponent of 'religiously neutral' upbringing.

In conclusion, I argue that there is a non-indoctrinatory form of religious upbringing which liberals can in good conscience claim a right to offer to their child. This is because:

(1) there are good reasons for holding that parents have a right to introduce their child to a 'primary culture' that they - rather than the child or other adults - have substantially determined themselves;

(2) in the light of the arguments (i)-(iv) outlined above it can be claimed that this 'primary culture' can contain religious elements;

(3) if parents avoid indoctrination and take other steps to safeguard autonomy such as accepting the eventual exposure of their children to other influences which might help them to form their life ideals, there is little need to be concerned that (1) and (2) will hinder the development of the children's personal and moral autonomy - an aim which, as liberals, they must hold as fundamental.

The commitments on the part of the parents implied in (3) have important implications for the kind of rights they can legitimately claim over the subsequent formal education and schooling of their children. I shall explore these implications in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

Parental Rights and the Religious Upbringing of Children: Criticisms and Development of Preliminary Argument

As I mentioned at the outset, my position has been subjected to a range of criticisms. Both Eamonn Callan (Callan,E 1985a) and Peter Gardner (Gardner,P 1988) point to the dangers to the development of autonomy arising from my view and argue that parents concerned with the autonomy of their children should refrain from bringing them up to have an initial determinate religious commitment of any sort. Callan claims that only a 'weak' form of religious upbringing (avoiding the formation of commitment) is acceptable. Gardner claims that an agnostic or atheistic upbringing is less objectionable than a religious one as far as the development of autonomy is concerned, and concludes (although rather tentatively) that a certain sort of agnostic upbringing is the one best suited to the achievement of the liberal goal.

In this chapter I shall attempt to outline the major criticisms that have been made of my argument and shall seek to clarify (1), develop and strengthen it in the light of a critical evaluation of the points made by my critics. I approach this task under several headings.

(1) Strong and Weak Forms of Religious Upbringing

As part of his critique of my view, (Callan,E 1985a - Hereinafter C), Eamonn Callan argues that the most that can be conceded to parents, given the liberal assumptions of my argument, is the right to provide their children with a religious upbringing in a 'weak' sense, which involves no more than the parents revealing or exposing to their children that they (the parents) happen to hold a set of religious beliefs

and live according to them. Whilst they may provide an explanation of these beliefs - and their related practices - for their children, they must stop short of developing the children's own religious commitment in any way. For Callan, a religious upbringing in any stronger sense, where the children are brought up as religious believers (however provisionally on my argument), is objectionable because it threatens the child's right to self-determination. I shall turn in a later section to Callan's arguments about the character of this threat. I shall concentrate here on Callan's arguments about strong and weak senses of religious upbringing.

Callan writes,

It is important at the outset to make a distinction between being brought up within a particular belief system, such as a religious or political creed, and being brought up in a family where one is merely exposed to the fact that one's parents adhere to certain beliefs. A failure to appreciate that point is one important limitation of McLaughlin's essay.

(C:111)

He argues, in particular, that once this distinction is drawn, it can be seen that several of the arguments I develop in my article license a religious upbringing only in a 'weak' - and not in a strong form. (C:112-113)

Callan characterises the two senses of upbringing in a rather stark and polarised way, and in a manner which is rather misleading as far as an understanding of my argument is concerned. It is clear that if Callan's examples of weak and strong upbringing are intended to represent or illuminate elements of my argument, they should be approached with caution. (See McLaughlin,T.H. 1985:120-122) In particular, the strong form of upbringing as characterised by him should not be taken, as it stands, as an account of the form of upbringing I am defending.

This aside, however, it is true that I did not explicitly distinguish 'strong' and 'weak' senses of religious upbringing in the original statement of my position, and that

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I was concerned with upbringing in (my) 'strong' sense throughout. While Callan's distinction introduces interesting new issues to the discussion, it is not clear that it can be used in an unproblematic way to damage my original argument. In order to assess the claim that several of my arguments only license religious upbringing in the weak sense, it is necessary to examine some of the difficulties and problems inherent in this form of religious upbringing which Callan ignores. Chief amongst these are doubts about the ability of this form of religious upbringing to produce *understanding* of the religious domain on the part of children which will be sufficient to get them launched on the development of autonomy in this area and to equip them with the capacity to make sense of the religious elements of their family background. In this form of upbringing they are merely (informed) *spectators* upon this aspect of their parents' lives and are not themselves part of it. Callan too quickly dismisses the significance of being on the inside of a religion for the capacity to understand and evaluate it (2), and he is over-confident about the value and significance for understanding of the sort of *explanations* which parents are invited to give to their children. This point is rather obscured by his constant use of examples of political upbringing.

Callan revealingly admits that, 'the desire to mould the child in one's own image' seems 'less pressing' in the political case (C:112), and it is interesting to speculate upon why this is so. Do our 'pre-reflective intuitions' (C:117) about this have a basis in significant differences between the character of political and religious beliefs, differences which Callan is keen to play down? One important difference, I would suggest, although I have no space to elaborate and defend the claim here, is that while both political and religious beliefs present difficulties of understanding to the child, they are difficulties of different kinds, arising from the different forms of complexity which characterise the two domains. The significance for understanding of experiencing religion 'from the inside' is considerable. The precise character of this significance is, of course, controversial. There need only be *doubt*, however, about whether the kind of 'external' perspective associated with 'weak' upbringing is adequate in providing sufficient understanding for the purposes indicated, for its status as the only legitimate

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form of religious upbringing acceptable to a liberal to be challenged, and for other forms, including my own, to be licensed.

The importance to children of adequate religious understanding needs to be emphasized if the *coherence* of their initial primary culture is to be achieved. Given 'weak' religious upbringing, what are children to make of the areas of their family life which involve religious elements, such as attendance at religious services, rituals in the family, certain substantive commitments of their parents and so on? Indeed, in an important sense, they may be unable to understand their parents themselves. It is true that religious elements are not essential to the coherence of primary cultures for children *in general*, but they may nevertheless be crucial to those whose parents and families are *themselves* religious; and here, because of the point about understanding, the 'religious elements' may have to include *involvement* rather than just acquaintance. At least it cannot be ruled out *a priori* that this is so.

Callan might argue that the distinction between political and religious beliefs in terms of their complexity is not as clear-cut as I assume; that 'significant involvement' is just as necessary in the case of political as in that of religious beliefs. If this is so, however, it points to the acceptability of 'strong' political upbringing too - I see no objection to parents giving their children a particular set of political beliefs as part of their initial 'primary culture'.

Apart from problems arising from doubts about the ability of 'weak' religious upbringing to produce sufficient understanding, further problems arise for this form of upbringing from the need for families to constitute an *organic unity*, which involves not merely a sharing in practices and family events, but also in some sense a common *world view*, a shared range of commitments and loyalties: a sense of solidarity, which would be diminished if children were merely spectators upon certain key elements of the family's life. It is this kind of organic unit which constitutes the family *as* a family and marks it off from other groupings of individuals. Now while it is true that liberal demands about the need to protect and develop the autonomy of the child prevent such considerations as these from having *ultimate* weight, it is true also that they cannot be

totally neglected. It is a matter of *balancing* the overall needs of the family as a unit

(and indeed the non-paternalistic considerations bearing upon parenthood to which

David Bridges draws attention (Bridges, D 1984)), with the concern for the autonomy

of the child. The need for the family to achieve an appropriately organic, holistic

character and to diminish the attendant dangers of psychic disunity cannot be lightly set

aside or neglected, and 'weak' religious upbringing constitutes a threat to this.

A similar point can be made about the need for a family to locate itself within a

certain broader cultural and religious *community*, again sustained by a range of shared

practices, communal beliefs, etc., all of which may involve religious elements and be

threatened in its organic, holistic character by 'weak' religious upbringing. Indeed, an

insistence upon such a form of upbringing might well threaten the very existence and

continuity of these communities themselves, especially when they are minority groups

in pluralist democratic societies.

In the light of these problems and difficulties with the notion of 'weak' religious

upbringing, it is now necessary to re-assess Callan's claim that several of my

arguments license only a religious upbringing in this form.

These arguments were directed against the suggestion that religion be removed

completely from the primary upbringing of children, and involved claims that such a

requirement was unrealistic and would infringe the freedom of parents to practise their

own religion, and to sustain a particular cultural distinctiveness that might have

religious elements closely integrated with it. Callan is right to point out that further

argument is needed to establish the conclusion I drew from this, that parents have a

right to bring up their children as (even provisional) believers. If 'weak' religious

upbringing is a possibility, then parents need not have their religious freedom

completely curtailed; they can continue the practice of their religion, which their

children merely observe.

Although this position involves unacknowledged complexities (3), I admit that

this is one way in which parents might reconcile their desire to harmonise their religious

faith with their concern for the autonomy of their children. But is it, as Callan

suggests, the *only* way? In considering their course of action, parents need to take into account the problems and difficulties associated with 'weak' religious upbringing, only some of which I have been able to sketch here. Since the overall judgement is a complex one - and no *one* universally 'correct' conclusion can be specified, it is appropriate for a liberal to acknowledge a legitimate plurality of forms of religious upbringing consistent with respect for the autonomy of the child.(4)

(2) The Effects of a Strong Religious Upbringing

Both Callan and Gardner, although in slightly different ways, draw attention to allegedly dangerous effects of a strong religious upbringing from the point of view of the development of autonomy.

Callan claims that a form of religious upbringing of the 'strong' sort that I advocate gravely endangers the child's right to self-determination. (C:113-118) In his attempt to demonstrate this, he admits that, 'there is nothing incoherent' (C:113) about my claim that parents might aim at autonomy via faith since - '... it is clearly possible to be *both* autonomous and a firm adherent of a particular religion, and so parents may reasonable aspire to realise that possibility in the lives of their children'. (C:113) However, he goes on to claim that ' ... what is coherent is not necessarily sensible' (C:114), and it is on grounds of probable or likely consequences that he condemns my proposed form of religious upbringing. It is important to note that his argument is therefore essentially an *empirical* one in character. (In this respect, as we shall see, Callan's argument is rather different from that of Gardner, who also introduces logical elements into this aspect of his critique).

A major feature of Callan's attack on my position is that the concept of indoctrination which I use, with its reference to 'fixed' and 'unshakable' beliefs as its product, uses 'a criterion of the effect indoctrination must have upon the mind of the learner which is much too exacting'. (C:115) According to Callan's own account, the

effect of indoctrination is 'a belief which is maintained without due regard for relevant evidence and argument'. (C:115) He considers that this formulation captures milder but importantly significant cases of indoctrination which escape the fixed/unshakable beliefs criterion. In such cases, 'the victim does have *some* regard for the rational basis of belief but it is much less than we would expect of a reasonable and open-minded person'. (C:115) There is a reluctance to 'give serious attention to the grounds of our beliefs and to the possibility that other views might be preferable' (C:115), an attention which reason demands for beliefs involving 'matters of consequence where there is a substantial risk of error'. (C:115) In such cases, there is - '... a rather frail and fitful seriousness in our relationship to certain deeply cherished personal convictions, a seriousness which is overshadowed but not wholly undermined by some deeply rooted personal fantasy ... we are disinclined to evaluate these beliefs in a truly serious manner, but we are not altogether incapable of doing so'. (C:115-116) Callan claims that a person with this state of mind can be justly described as indoctrinated, and those responsible for it as indoctrinators. Gardner takes a broadly similar view of indoctrination. (Gardner,P 1988 - Hereinafter G- :94-95) (5)

I have little desire to enter into a detailed debate about the complexities of the concept of 'indoctrination'. Fortunately, this is not necessary since, whether or not the process leading to its development can appropriately be described as 'indoctrination', I agree that the state of mind characterised by Callan should be avoided, and that it does constitute a clear obstacle to the achievement of autonomy as we both understand it. I agree that the language of 'unshakability' perhaps fails to do justice to the complexity of this state of mind, arising no doubt from a failure to spell out exactly what is meant by the notion of an 'unshakable' belief. It might have been better had I expressed the obligation upon parents more richly as one of avoiding the development in their children of anything likely to damage the achievement of 'open-mindedness'. (It is worth noting that subsequent critics have overlooked my recognition of this point). (6) I shall be looking in more detail at the concept of 'open-mindedness' later in this chapter.

This problem of characterisation having been acknowledged, however, it should be clear that it is in fact the concept of 'open-mindedness' in the sense outlined by Callan that is implicit in, and being aimed at in, my position. This is seen, for example, in my characterisation of the concept of autonomy throughout, and in my insistence that parents be committed to autonomy in a sufficiently strong sense to satisfy liberal demands. My concept of 'stable' beliefs, which I contrasted with 'unshakable' beliefs, I take to be fully compatible with the achievement of 'open-mindedness'.

Why is Callan so insistent that a religious upbringing of the sort I defend cannot be accepted as one way of bringing about the development of the state of mind that we both seek? It is important to stress again that he bases this judgement on empirical grounds. He admits that, 'very many children who are reared within a religious belief system eventually become adults who are not at all disinclined to question seriously the grounds of the faith that has been instilled in them' (C:117), but goes on to argue that parents 'have a duty to avoid treating the child in ways which involve a significant risk of indoctrination ... and they may fail in this duty even if indoctrination does not occur' (C:117), in much the same way as parents might be argued to be responsible for allowing their child to play with dangerous objects even if the child came to no harm. Callan holds that an abandonment of religious upbringing (in the strong form) is the '*sine qua non* of a reduction of the danger to acceptable levels'. (C:117)

What exactly are the risks that Callan sees here? He illustrates these risks by reference to the case of Arthur, a teacher of politics in a secondary school who seeks to achieve his long-term aim of developing the autonomy of his pupils by inculcating a firm but not unshakable loyalty to the British Communist Party. (C:113-114) Callan rejects Arthur's strategy not on the grounds of coherence, but on grounds of risk. It would be extremely difficult, he claims, for Arthur to achieve his short-term aim '... without employing measures which would undermine his students' potential for autonomy'. (C:114) This is because, granted the controversial nature of the political issues in question, and the imprecise relation of reason to them, *reason* alone could

never lead the child to the kind of substantive commitment demanded in the short term
aim; therefore, non-rational methods would have to be used. Callan writes,

> *...if Arthur's students gave too much attention to the more plausible*
> *alternatives to communism or to the shakier points in the arguments of its*
> *exponents then many might decide that it was not for them, given the doubts*
> *and perplexities they would naturally experience; and so Arthur's short-term*
> *goal could only be pursued with confidence of success if serious attention to*
> *these matters were curbed.*
>
> (C:114)

But is it not likely, Callan asks, that this treatment of pupils will have an effect
upon their ability eventually to achieve the kind of 'open-mindedness' necessary for
autonomy?

Although Callan seeks to play down the differences between the case of Arthur
and that of a parent providing the kind of religious upbringing that I discuss, there is
one important difference which bears especially upon the degree of risk of
indoctrination involved. It concerns the context in which the short-term aim is being
sought. In the case of Arthur, the children are being introduced to the beliefs in
question at a much later stage than in primary religious upbringing and at a point when
their reflective and critical powers are significantly developing. (Arthur after all is
teaching in a secondary school). At this point it may well be the case that some sort of
strategy of the sort that Callan refers to might be necessary to 'hold' the children in the
position of substantive commitment in the way demanded by the short-term aim,
especially when we remember that it is a whole class of children that has to be 'held'.
Further, the strategy is necessary actually to *produce* the commitment in the first place,
since the children from Arthur's class may be from very different backgrounds, and
have embryonic political views to *unlearn*, before the homogeneity of the commitment
of the class can be produced.

None of these difficulties applies to primary religious upbringing as I characterise that because here the initial commitment will be developed through a natural process of exposure to the values and mores of the family by which the child is surrounded. No particular non-rational strategy is involved here since all upbringing is in an important sense non-rational at this stage. It is from this basis of substantiality of belief and value that the child's capacity for reason and autonomy is developed. Might the parent, however, need to use these techniques to maintain the faith of his or her child? Relevant to the notion of 'maintenance' here is the principle of 'tenacity of engagement'. It is true that in seeking to provide their child with a stable set of initial beliefs, parents may well have to urge their children to engage significantly with practices and ideas which are not immediately or continuously congenial to them, and which may go against their current inclinations or beliefs. But this is with the aim of ensuring for the child a *significant engagement* with the beliefs, so that their subsequent assessment - and perhaps rejection - of them will be based on appropriate understanding and acquaintance. This is perfectly compatible with recognising that at a certain point the child's critical rejection of the beliefs is so significant that it be fully respected and its expression permitted. The principle of *tenacity of engagement* seeks to ensure that the child has given the beliefs in question serious attention and consideration based on appropriate understanding, with the ultimate aim of the child's achieving autonomy (compare British Council of Churches Consultative group on ministry among children 1984: para 185; Mitchell, B 1973:122; Hare, W 1979:55-58). But even if the parent does seek to maintain the child's commitment to the religious beliefs of the family on the basis of this principle, the risks of indoctrination involved in this are balanced by the obligation I lay on parents to accept the eventual exposure of their child to other influences, including a liberal education, which should help to put the child's religious commitments into a critical perspective. This is another respect in which Arthur's course of action is much more risky than that of parents: parents can always claim that their influence will be balanced by the subsequent liberal education of their child. Arthur's actions are, of course, much more morally complex than those of

the parent, arising from the different mandates for influence - and the taking of risk - that arise for parents and teachers.

Callan fails to show, then, that the particular risks arising in the case of Arthur apply with the same force to primary religious upbringing as I characterise it.

On the question of risk, it is important to note that liberal religious parents have to be conscious of other sources of risk to their child's autonomy than those identified as arising from religious upbringing. It may well be that there are dangers to the achievement of autonomous judgement in religion arising out of features of the wider society in which the child will eventually live.

These features may well include the predominance of attitudes and views indifferent or hostile to religious perspectives, and a relentless manipulation of human appetites, predilections and wants in such a way that it is very difficult for the child to arrive at a position of genuine 'open-mindedness' enabling balanced judgements about religion to be achieved. Faced with these forms of perceived risks, it seems to me that parents can legitimately argue that they have a right to provide a form of substantive religious upbringing which will counteract them. This will not involve indoctrinating their children, but giving them a substantial exposure to a domain of experience, a tradition of thought and response, a view of and a way of life which tends to be rather stifled in the general conditions of the wider society and which is not therefore as available as it might be for the autonomous consideration of young people. So it is with the aim of *balancing* forces, of putting the child into a position where 'open-mindedness' is more likely to be achieved, that they act. Such a strategy is admittedly not without its risks, but in a situation where risks of some sort are unavoidable, and are not of just one kind, a judgement has to be made about how these risks are to be balanced, and this is not wholly or exclusively a matter of philosophical judgement.

We know very little about how, as a matter of fact, personal and moral autonomy is developed in children, or, for that matter, in adults. In particular, we know little about the significance for this development of an involvement with particular substantive traditions of thought, practice and value, or about the role of virtues and

other practical dispositions in this process. Alasdair MacIntyre's argument in 'After Virtue' has provided us with suggestive ideas about these - and related matters. (MacIntyre, A 1981)

What is needed is an extensive research programme investigating the conditions which facilitate the development of autonomy (especially in the area of religion). This investigation could not avoid dealing with the extensive empirical considerations involved.

In the absence of this, and in the light of my earlier criticisms, I do not think that Callan has succeeded in showing that only one form of religious upbringing is acceptable within a liberal framework of assumptions. (It is worth noting that, in recent writing, Callan has softened his attitude to religious upbringing somewhat). (Callan,E 1988b; 1989) (7)

Gardner is also concerned about the negative effects of the sort of religious upbringing I discuss as far as the achievement of autonomy is concerned, although his argument is rather different from that of Callan. Whilst wanting to avoid some of the difficulties involved in invoking the notion of indoctrination (G:94-95), Gardner seeks to characterise the constraining effects of such an upbringing on the autonomy of children by appealing to the alleged (general) phenomenon of the 'persistence of beliefs'. Gardner concludes that, in the light of this phenomenon, parents concerned with the development of the religious autonomy of their children should avoid the inculcation of any particular set of religious beliefs. To do otherwise is, on his view, for them to run a serious risk of predetermining the subsequent religious stances of their children.

A general claim about the 'persistence of beliefs' needs to be examined carefully. It is not clear that beliefs are, in themselves, the sorts of things which persist. For example, it is certainly not true of first person present tense beliefs such as 'There is a ball coming towards me'. We need therefore to look closely at Gardner's account of the three forms which he claims that 'persistence of beliefs' can take.

(a)   Persistence of *early* beliefs. Gardner claims that - '...early beliefs, the beliefs

we grow up with, especially...the beliefs we share with our parents or with

those who bring us up, have a tendency to stick...the dye of early learning

tends to be fast.'. (G:95) Gardner holds that this phenomenon is - '...indicative

of the heteronomous side of our make-up'. (G:95)

(b)   Persistence of beliefs *in general*. Gardner outlines this notion in this way -

'...people tend to be reluctant to change their beliefs...that they believe

something would appear, from their point of view, to constitute a *prima facie*

case for continuing to believe it. Given this phenomenon, then if one wants

individuals to take the kind of reasoned decision about a host of competing

views, we should avoid developing in them a commitment to a particular set of

those views'. (G:96. Emphasis in original)

(c)   Persistence of *important* beliefs. Gardner writes - '...we do not seem to treat or

to be able to treat our important beliefs like Popperians treat scientific

hypotheses; life stances are not things we easily discard and replace with a new

model.'. (G:96) He takes religious beliefs to be examples of the 'important

beliefs' he has in mind here. - 'Religious beliefs occupy a most important place

in the cognitive and the practical life of the believer; they influence how he or

she perceives much of the world and they determine much of what he or she

does or thinks should be done.'. (G:96) For this reason, he continues, they

tend to persist and alternative beliefs are either dismissed or not critically

appraised in any serious way.

Gardner's argument at this point is formulated loosely and in rather a sweeping

way. It gives rise to at least four interrelated categories of question.

First, what is the character of the persistence that is being referred to here and in relation to which kinds of beliefs? ((a) (b) and (c) clearly contain beliefs of many different sorts). Second, what is the justification offered for the claims about persistence? Third, is persistence of belief *per se* always to be seen as a bad thing? And, fourth, if the phenomenon is, as Gardner describes it, a very general one, will not *any* initial set of beliefs, and not just religious ones, prove an obstacle to the achievement of autonomy?

Gardner does not, in my view, provide adequate answers to any of these questions.

An important preliminary point to make is that there is a (broad) category of basic beliefs, falling no doubt mainly under (a), persistence of early beliefs, where the character of the persistence has a fundamental and logical flavour. In relation to such beliefs, ordinary (as distinct from philosophical) doubt is out of place, and it is hard to see that the persistence of such beliefs could be either called into question or seen to be objectionable. The precise characterisation of this category gives rise to some complex questions but perhaps for my purposes here I can sketch it roughly. It includes beliefs about what is logically self-evident and other basic beliefs which are fundamental in another way if not strictly logically founded. For example, Quinton describes propositions such as 'the sun will rise tomorrow' as of a kind which - '...only an epistemologist, in a state of occupational imbalance brought on by over-indulgence in hyperbolic scepticism, could regard as matters for reasonable doubt'. (Quinton,A 1985:47) Although it is true, he continues, that such beliefs '...rest on inductive generalizations which are necessarily not susceptible of complete verification', it is reasonable for us to base our practical lives on beliefs of this kind since all such living depends upon judgements of probability of one sort or another. (Quinton,A 1985:47) In a similar vein, Anthony Kenny discusses a category of fundamental truths, such as the propositions that human beings sleep and die, which are unshakable in that there could never be a reason for disbelieving them which did not call into question the possibility of there being such a thing as evidence at all. (Kenny,A 1983:esp Ch1,2) (8)

Gardner seems to acknowledge that there is nothing objectionable in encouraging children to have persistent beliefs of this kind. (9)

Presumably (b), persistence of beliefs in general, can also be seen as 'basic' in character, since it seems to be a requirement for the coherence necessary for human agency. (However, Gardner needs to say more about exactly what is meant by 'persistence of beliefs in general'). The 'basic' category is also expandable to include basic moral beliefs, although here the character of the fundamentality and the persistence might be thought to be rather different. Presumably Gardner has no objection to children being brought up to have fairly persistent beliefs of a moral sort. For example, despite his suspicion in other writings of paternalism and compulsory curricula, Gardner makes exceptions in the case of moral beliefs and upbringing, and indeed other kinds of belief, on the basis of the kinds of harm that might otherwise result. (10)

What seems common to this (roughly delineated) category of basic beliefs is an element of *inescapability*, although the character of the inescapability needs to be sensitively and variously characterised in the light of the different kinds of beliefs involved. In relation to these 'basic beliefs' the four questions outlined earlier can receive an answer. First, with regard to the character of the persistence, this can be seen in the case of 'basic beliefs' to have a kind of fundamentality to it. It is important, however, to be wary of giving a (merely) causal account of this. There is, after all, nothing to prevent a person reflecting upon these persistent beliefs, even though, in some cases, they may well conclude that in calling such beliefs into question they are straining in different ways at the limits of what can be criticised. For practical purposes too, it might be thought that encouraging such reflection in children might not be a priority, unless they were being introduced to philosophy. (Compare Matthews, G.B. 1980a). It is nevertheless true that the persistence of such beliefs can be seen as rational in its general character. Second, there seems little difficulty in justifying claims that such beliefs do indeed persist in the vast majority of people, although the claims need to bear in mind the character of the persistence that is at issue. Third, the persistence of

these beliefs as a result of their being held unreflectively can scarcely be seen in negative terms. Gardner seems to hold that the persistence of beliefs is *per se* a danger to autonomy and part of the 'heteronomous side' of our make up, but it is hard to see that this is true in the case of 'basic beliefs'. Fourth, since it would seem that the persistence of such basic beliefs is actually *necessary* for the achievement of autonomy, there need be few worries about a set of initial beliefs in this category frustrating it. Indeed, the notion of alternative, competing sets of initial beliefs here seems problematic.

Gardner's main worry is surely more specific; about the persistence of *certain kinds* of beliefs (11), ones which are controversial and open to serious doubt, and which cannot be seen to be conclusively justified or legitimately seen as fundamental or basic. (For Kenny's claim that a belief such as 'God exists' cannot be seen as basic or fundamental in the same sense as the beliefs discussed earlier see Kenny,A 1983:Ch2-4). Another way of identifying such beliefs would be, perhaps, in terms of what goes beyond the 'necessary minimum' needed to give a child an initial 'primary culture', which Bruce Ackerman characterises as requiring - '...the least restrictive environment consistent with...dialogic and behavioural development...'. (Ackerman,B A 1980:152) The category of 'basic' beliefs identified so far could be argued to be part of this 'necessary minimum' in a way that a determinate religious formation is not. (12)

Let us focus therefore on Gardner's specific concern about the persistence of *religious* beliefs, and see how the four questions posed earlier might receive an answer in this context.

First, what is the character and explanation of the persistence that is being referred to in this case? The logical or fundamental flavour to persistence characteristic of some of the basic beliefs discussed earlier is not easily applicable here. We can also safely assume that Gardner is not advancing a form of deterministic or causal thesis. We must also note that Gardner is not concerned with persistence which is the result of autonomous rational assent, but rather that which is unreflective and heteronomous in its character. Claims about this kind of persistence seem to be essentially *empirical* in

character, and Gardner seems explicitly to acknowledge this in his statement that he has been describing - '...various *empirical* aspects of belief'. (G:97 My emphasis. See also footnote 3,103). This is also seen in his remark that the phenomenon of 'persistence of beliefs' - '...*could* impair the success of McLaughlin's strategy' (G:97 My emphasis), and in his concern to make it clear that he is not claiming that the form of religious upbringing I discuss will render reflection and assessment *impossible*, but merely, granted 'persistence of beliefs', inadvisable. (13) Gardner also admits that a psychological or ethological issue is relevant to the phenomenon of 'persistence of beliefs' (G:97), although he does not explore this 'explanatory territory'.

If all this is so, the answer to the second question, about the justification of the 'persistence' claims, comes into focus. Gardner's claims depend on the empirical (particularly psychological) evidence that can be adduced in support of them. An assessment of this evidence would need to take into account, for example, the widespread phenomenon, in the case of religious beliefs, of the many people who, in fact, turn away from, and reject, their initial religious formation, (14) or at least put it into critical perspective. (15) It is important to remember too that my argument is situated in the context of a pluralistic society, where the child not only will be surrounded constantly by a range of religious and non-religious perspectives, but also inevitably will be drawn into the open debate about such matters which is part of the tradition of such societies, particularly through Liberal Education, the provision of which I enjoin on parents as a responsibility. Above all, however, the parents in my argument are specifically charged with the task of being alert to the dangers Gardner has identified and of taking steps to counteract them as part of their active commitment to the development of the autonomy of their children. This includes encouraging the children to hold their beliefs on the basis of reasons. In sum, further justification needs to be provided of the character and significance of Gardner's claim that -

'...upbringings tend to be influential, but some are more likely to be influential than others' (G:97-98), and, in particular further justification is required for his claims about the negative character of a religious upbringing in relation to the development of

autonomy. It is therefore open to me to re-state my point that judgements about the empirical effects of strong religious upbringing are complex and that there are (at least) two sides to the story. (16) This is not, of course, to deny or overlook the possibility that the phenomenon of 'persistence of beliefs' does constitute a risk, but merely to point out that it is one which parents on my argument are conscious of, and is only one of a number of risks that they need to bear in mind.

One line of argument which might be thought to strengthen Gardner's position is the claim that there is something of a logical character to the persistence of *religious* beliefs, because they are not, or cannot, be held in the same critical, rational manner as other beliefs since they have a kind of absolute status which preserves them from being called into question or being seen as subject to the demands of justifications, grounds, reasons, foundations and so on. One such line of argument might be of a Wittgensteinian sort. (17) Another way in which the persistence of religious beliefs might be shown to have an explanation linked to the logical character of such beliefs is if it could be shown that *in principle* religion is immune from significant rational criticism, religious belief therefore having an inherently dogmatic and fetishistic character. (See, for example, O'Hear,A 1984:Ch6). A full examination of such lines of argument would involve us in a long digression. Suffice it to say that Gardner does not support his position by arguments of these kinds, say by a development of the hint in this direction in his account of (c) above. It is a presupposition of my argument that religion is a domain which is amenable to reason in a sense which makes the concept of rational autonomous judgement applicable. (On this matter see, for example, Hepburn,R W 1987). In the absence of a convincing argument from Gardner against this position, it seems that he is open to the challenge I have outlined arising from the empirical basis of his claims about persistence.

The answer to the third question, about whether persistence of beliefs in this category is a bad thing from the point of view of the development of autonomy, depends upon the sort of persistence that is at issue. If it is indeed unreflective or heteronomous it does cause concern for the liberal, since, given the status of religious

claims, one committed to autonomy cannot be as content with religious beliefs being held in this way as they might in the case of 'basic' beliefs.

What of the fourth question? Given Gardner's account of 'persistence of beliefs', will not *any* set of initial beliefs in the 'controversial' category be equally persistent and equally problematic as far as the development of autonomy is concerned? Does not an atheistic or agnostic upbringing present the same problems? Gardner rather tentatively claims that the answer to this - '...*might* be in the negative...' (G:97 My emphasis) on the grounds that neither of these alternatives is as *influential* or as pervasive as a religious upbringing, because they do not provide - '... a variety of frameworks within which social and moral issues are to be assessed and judged.' (G:97) Gardner supports this point by observing that, for example, there is no such thing as an atheistic or agnostic view of abortion, adultery, and so on. (G:97) Several points need to be made here. A preliminary point is that caution needs to be exercised in relation to the claim that there is such a thing as *a* 'religious' view of such matters in general. There are, notoriously, within and between religions, different and conflicting views. What the religious views have in common, despite many particular differences, is a set of fundamental assumptions or presuppositions which articulate the basic 'framework' of thought and practice within which the problems or issues are conceived and approached. Atheists and agnostics operate similarly with 'frameworks' of the same formal kind. Must not Gardner describe an atheist, for example, as a person with a persistent belief in the *non*-existence of a deity? It is therefore wrong to single out religious belief as uniquely generating a framework. But is it a framework of a more substantial kind, such that it is more generally significant or influential across the person's life as a whole?

It might well be admitted that religious positions do have more ramified and complex implications, say of an ethical sort, than their atheistic or agnostic counterparts, and in this sense are more substantial than them. But a move should not be made too quickly from this substantiality to the notions of 'significance' and 'influence'.

In the light of my earlier discussion, the pervasiveness or degree of influence of a form of upbringing is essentially to be seen as an *empirical* matter (a matter, say, of a person's *reaction* to a given set of beliefs rather than (necessarily) anything about the logic or character of the beliefs themselves). It might be argued that the very complexity of religious positions makes them harder to grasp and to adhere to in the conditions of modernity. Further, it cannot be denied that atheistic and agnostic frameworks, if less ramified, nevertheless provide a clear perspective within which particular matters are viewed, a perspective also open to the 'persistence of beliefs' danger. Perhaps the most important thing at issue between these various 'world views' is their fundamental presuppositions. The kind of upbringing I discuss should help these to be reflected upon.

Another point to insist upon is that such 'frameworks', and the traditions which house them, should not be seen as immutable, fixed, givens. There are, in relation to many such traditions, resources within the tradition for rationality and for calling the tradition itself into question, (See, for example, MacIntyre,A 1988:esp Ch18), and it is only traditions of this kind which fall within the terms of my argument. So to bring up children in a particular tradition is not necessarily to entrap them.

Gardner concedes that - '...tensions exist between the liberal ideal and atheistic and agnostic upbringing' (G:97) but needs to provide further defence of his claim that - '...stronger tensions are more likely to exist when the upbringing is of a strong religious kind' (G:97), and of his overall (tentative) conclusion (18) that a *certain kind* of agnostic upbringing is particularly suited to the promotion of the liberal goal.

In specifying a *certain kind* of agnostic upbringing Gardner seems to be appealing to a distinction between two kinds of agnosticism (G:94) similar to that drawn by Kenny, who distinguishes 'necessary' and 'contingent' forms of it. 'Necessary' agnosticism is characterised by Kenny as - '...the belief...that knowledge whether there is a God or not is in some sense impossible because of the limits of the human mind...' (Kenny,A 1983:88) Agnosticism in this sense is seen as inevitable and inescapable in that it is - '... something which is built into the human condition rightly understood'.

(Kenny,A 1983:88) In contrast, 'contingent' agnosticism, Kenny's own position, is more open and provisional, as seen in the case of a person who says - 'I do not know whether there is a God, but perhaps it can be known; I have no proof that it cannot be known'. (Kenny,A 1983:88) The suggestion that a 'contingent' agnostic upbringing places the child in the most 'neutral' initial belief position (in the 'controversial' category) might appear attractive. But there are difficulties here. One problem is that, granted the phenomenon of 'persistence of beliefs', is not 'contingent' agnosticism going to persist and dominate the child's mind? A further difficulty is that the child may be unable when young to distinguish between 'contingent' agnosticism on the one hand, and on the other either 'necessary' agnosticism or the belief that religious matters are unimportant. (On this, see Barrow,R 1974b).

A vital consideration to which Gardner does not refer in his discussion here is the issue of the beliefs that the *parents themselves* hold. I shall refer to this matter later. One aspect of the parental dimension which Gardner does not ignore, however, is his anticipation of my claim that parents can avoid the 'persistence of beliefs' problem by taking the steps I recommend as part of the upbringing I characterise. However, Gardner argues that there is a hidden implication in the strategy for parents which I recommend here which greatly affects its chance of success in this respect. I turn now to his arguments about this.

(3) The Intentions of the Parents

Gardner notes that an important feature of the form of religious upbringing that I discuss is that, in addition to being brought up to share their parents' religious beliefs and practices, the children should be made aware of alternative beliefs, as part of what is needed to facilitate the development of their autonomy. He raises two questions in relation to this. First, what will this awareness amount to? And, second, should this

feature of my argument be seen as a liberal one? In the light of the answer he offers to the first question, Gardner delivers a negative answer to the second.

Gardner begins his critical argument here by interpreting my position in relation to alternative beliefs as implying that - '...parents have not only to make sure that their children understand what certain beliefs involve and are aware that there are those who hold those beliefs, but also that their children appreciate that the beliefs in question *conflict* with what their parents and they themselves believe'. (G:91-92. My emphasis) There is considerable complexity in the notion of 'conflict' when applied to differing religious beliefs (See, for example, Hick,J 1985:esp Ch6), in contrast perhaps to differences between religious and non-religious positions, although even here caution is necessary. However, let me accept for the purposes of argument both that a fairly straightforward notion of 'conflict' does apply to the differing sets of beliefs referred to in my position and that, unless the children are aware of these conflicts, they will be unable to grasp the significance of the beliefs for the development of their autonomy. What follows from this?

Gardner holds that if the parents are concerned with (i) bringing their children up to share their religious beliefs (ii) making them aware of alternative, conflicting beliefs which ought to be evaluated in due course and (iii) developing the rationality of their children, they must (or should), as a consequence, (iv) want their children to believe that the alternative beliefs in (ii) - '...are *false* and that those who believe them are *mistaken.*'. (G:92. My emphasis) Any other possibility, Gardner claims, involves children being led to have inconsistent beliefs (*viz.* that both their own beliefs and the alternative, conflicting, beliefs are true), and this will frustrate (iii). Once this import of my conception of religious upbringing is realised, Gardner continues, its illiberal character becomes clear. For how can the danger of the 'persistence of beliefs' be ameliorated, and autonomy facilitated, by parents leading their children to see alternative, conflicting, beliefs in terms of falsity and mistakenness?

But is Gardner correct about this import of my position? Let us look more closely at each element of the argument, beginning with (iii) the development of rationality.

Gardner lays a great emphasis on the avoidance of inconsistent beliefs in his characterisation of a rational state of mind. This seems to follow from a logical point about the nature of belief. The term 'belief' can refer, of course, both to the psychological state of a person who believes something and to what is believed. Let us look first at belief in the sense of 'what is believed'.

Let us suppose that a child believes the following proposition:

Santa Claus is an existent entity who has a direct causal relationship to the delivery of Christmas gifts. (SC)

It would seem to follow that, from a strictly logical point of view, a child believing in SC is committed to at least the following two beliefs:

Not-SC is false, and

Those believing Not-SC are mistaken.

This logical point can be accepted, given that the beliefs at issue satisfy some conditions such as the following:

(a) That they are significantly identifiable and understandable in terms of their meaning and implication.

(b) That they *do* genuinely conflict with each other in terms of truth and falsity.

Granted the satisfaction of conditions such as these about belief in the sense of 'what is believed', it seems to follow that a child believing both SC and not-SC would seem to have inconsistent beliefs in the 'psychological state' sense of belief, provided:

(c) That the child is aware (to an appropriate degree) of (a) and (b). (19)

Such inconsistent beliefs constitute an obstacle (though only one sort of obstacle) to the child's achievement of rationality, and this seems to be reinforced by observations such as those by Bernard Williams that, regardless of the status of the opposition of different beliefs to each other at the level of 'what is believed', it is possible under certain conditions to see their opposition in the mind of the believer as logical in character.(Williams,B 1965)

It is important to stress, however, that consistency of beliefs is only a *part* of rationality or a rational state of mind understood more fully. For example, consistency in itself says nothing directly about the truth or justifiability of the particular beliefs involved, as distinct from underlining a formal point about the implications of accepting that to believe p is to believe that p is true. Williams puts the major formal point as follows - '...it follows from the nature of beliefs that a conflict presents a problem, since conflicting beliefs cannot both be true, and the aim of beliefs is to be true.' (Williams,B 1965:177) Williams goes on to remark that - 'A rational man in this respect is one who (no doubt among other things) so conducts himself that this aim is likely to be realised.' (ibid:177) But the principle of consistency, in itself, is uninformative about what is involved in such conduct. For example, little can be derived from the principle about the *way* in which beliefs should be held by the person. (i.e. dogmatically?, in the light of relevant reasons which have been personally assessed after a process of reflection?, in a way which leaves them open for future reconsideration and revision etc?) Nor is anything said by the principle about what is necessary in terms of qualities of mind and character for the person to assess their beliefs in an appropriate way and to achieve a rational mind in its fullest sense. One such quality, I have argued, is that of 'open-mindedness', which - crucially - is mischaracterised and neglected by Gardner. The principle also has little to say about the *process* by which rational beliefs ought to be formed in a child. I shall be arguing shortly that an undue stress on consistency during this process is not necessarily a good

thing from the point of view of the development of rationality. These range of considerations about rationality and its development can now brought to bear upon (iv).

In (iv) Gardner attempts to derive directly from the principle of consistency the conclusion that a child being confronted with beliefs which conflict with his or her own must be brought to regard these beliefs in terms of falsity and mistakenness. There are a number of things wrong with this conclusion, many of them related to what has been said about rationality.

The conclusion involves an unduly static and 'finished' view of the state of mind and beliefs of the child. As noted above, conditions of the sort (a), (b) and (c) need to be satisfied before the principle of consistency can be applied with confidence. Further, before such an application, if one were seeking to develop the rationality of the child, one would be concerned about the child's existing beliefs in terms of their justifiablity, the way in which they are held and their capacity for development. The child's existing beliefs cannot be treated in an unduly sacrosanct way. It is not easy to see that beliefs which are still in a relatively ill-formed and developing state can easily satisfy the conditions which would lead one confidently to invoke 'the principle of consistency'. Too much stress on this principle by parents at early stages of the formation of the beliefs of their children, may lead the children to an undue confidence in, and complacency about, the beliefs that they currently hold in such a way that they fail fully to understand the nature of the beliefs and their implications before they are settled (20) and also fail to see alternative, conflicting, beliefs as worthy of consideration and critical evaluation. One of the complexities here is that beliefs in, and about, the religious domain are complex in terms of their meaning and structure, and judgements are rarely made about the truth and falsity of isolated propositions. A given belief is typically part of a web of beliefs which constitute a person's 'noetic structure'. (21) Gardner's insistence that a child be asked to see an alternative, conflicting set of beliefs as false when compared to their existing beliefs glosses over considerations of this kind. One implication of this consideration is the need for sensitive exploration of the complex webs of belief involved, not immediate judgements of truth and falsity. Surely

it is better to get children to be aware of the need to subject their own beliefs and their alternatives to critical scrutiny rather than to get them to regard the alternatives as false and mistaken, which will surely invite (too hasty) dismissal of them. This is not, of course, to suggest that concepts of 'truth', 'conflict' and 'mistake' should be avoided during the process of belief formation, and invoked only at a later stage when the child's beliefs are more fully formed. Such concepts are clearly necessary for the coherence of belief formation itself. What is at stake is a matter of *emphasis*. My general point here is vividly illustrated by another paper of Gardner's, 'Believing Others are Mistaken - a Rational Consequence of Multicultural Education'. (Gardner,P 1989a) (22) Here Gardner poses the question: How should students who experience multi-cultural education regard the beliefs they have been introduced to which conflict with their own? As in the case of my argument, he concludes that, for consistency's sake, the students should neither believe these conflicting beliefs, nor be open-minded about them, but believe that they are false and that those who hold them are mistaken. Gardner wonders why such a conclusion should be thought to be objectionable. After all, he argues, isn't the point being made a strictly logical one about the nature of belief? Apart from the limitations of the application of the logical point to which I have referred above, what is wrong with Gardner's argument here is precisely the neglect of a developmental perspective on the child's formation of beliefs. In Gardner's argument the child's existing beliefs, regardless of their status, are given undue respect. Allowance is not made for the point that the achievement of a rational state of mind requires that a child be encouraged to subject their existing beliefs to critical question and challenge, a process which involves the sympathetic consideration of (conflicting) alternatives, and an exploration of, for example, the concept of prejudice in its various forms. It is one of the important aims of multi-cultural education to facilitate this process.

It is clear that concepts such as truth, consistency, falsity and mistakenness must play a part in the child's formation of beliefs and their reflection on them, particularly in relation to the assessment of alternatives. For example, if the child's beliefs are to

develop and not merely *change*, the process must take place under the norms of rationality, which cannot simply be put on one side, or left behind. However, care must be taken to apply these concepts and norms sensitively during the child's upbringing if the child is to achieve a rational state of mind in its fullest sense.

Another aspect of the manner in which the conclusion presents the beliefs of the person in an 'all or nothing' fashion concerns the *way* in which the beliefs are held. Gardner seems to be one of those philosophers whom Quinton would want to criticise for having - '...an exceedingly constricted view of possible belief-attitudes'. (Quinton,A 1985:46) Quinton insists that, just as evidence and justification can vary in strength, so can belief. For him, the ethics of belief - '...concerns continuously variable degrees of belief and not just the decision between believing a proposition, believing its contradictory and suspending judgement.'. (ibid:48) To fail to accept the notion of degrees of belief, claims Quinton, is to risk the vice of 'intellectual intemperance' - '...of asserting beliefs without qualification when some measure of qualification is rationally in order, when we have some reason, but not conclusive reason for taking them to be true'. (ibid:49) (23) Another problem arising from a failure to acknowledge the existence of 'degrees of belief' is that the characteristic notions of faith and doubt in the religious domain cannot easily get a purchase. (24) The notion of 'degrees of belief' is a complex one, which Gardner does not consider, although what he has to say elsewhere about the similar notion of 'degrees of indoctrination' (G:94) is arguably relevant.(25) The significance of the notion of 'degrees of belief' for my criticism of Gardner is that it calls into question the seemingly monolithic notion of belief which he employs both in relation to a person's existing beliefs and beliefs which conflict with them. The notion of 'degrees of belief' signals that beliefs can be held in different kinds of ways, and that conflicts of beliefs can be seen in a much more nuanced manner. It indicates a range of possible responses to a conflicting belief beyond the response of judging it false. One such response is that of exploration, on the (provisional) assumption that it may contain some truth, or be only *partly* false, and therefore that it may be *partly* compatible with the existing belief; or that it may indeed call for the

existing belief to be abandoned or modified. This general point can be made in a slightly different way without necessarily invoking the notion of 'degrees of belief', but rather that of 'open-mindedness'. It is precisely this attitude to alternative, conflicting beliefs which I regard as an appropriate one to develop in children, and which I take to be compatible with the development in the child of (initial) determinate beliefs.

Gardner rejects this as a coherent consequence of a commitment to (i) (ii) and (iii) because he claims that a person cannot be 'open-minded' whilst holding a determinate belief. He therefore regards the parents in my argument who aim at open-mindedness as seeking a state of mind for their children which is irrational. He asks -

Can it be thought rational to believe a proposition and to be aware of its negation and to appreciate that what one is aware of conflicts with what one believes , and yet be open minded about it while continuing to believe what one originally believed? Surely rational thought cannot be reconciled with being open minded about a proposition whilst appreciating that it contradicts or is inconsistent with what one believes...open mindedness about a proposition requires open mindedness about its negation.

(G:92)

Gardner seems to hold that (merely) 'being aware' of a conflicting proposition must damage commitment to the existing belief with which it conflicts. But surely this depends on the outcome of the evaluation of the conflicting belief. Perhaps what Gardner means here is that it is irrational to maintain one's original commitment whilst seriously evaluating an alternative position.

But Gardner is surely wrong in his claim that open-mindedness is incompatible with holding firm beliefs. William Hare, in 'Open-mindedness and Education', illustrates how open-mindedness does not necessarily imply either neutrality on the part of the agent in relation to his or her existing beliefs or doubt or lack of commitment concerning them: (certain kinds of) commitment are compatible with open-mindedness.

(Hare,W 1979:Ch2 esp 29-40) Paul H. Hirst makes a similar point in his paper 'Education and Diversity of Belief'. He insists that -

> *Commitment and holding to the revisability of that commitment are in no*
>
> *sense incompatible. True, critical assessment of a belief demands*
>
> *entertaining the idea of rejecting that belief, but the 'suspension of belief'*
>
> *for the purpose of critical assessment is not of itself to withdraw*
>
> *commitment, or to enter into a state of doubt for any purpose other than that*
>
> *of critical review'.*

(Hirst,P H 1985:13)

Similar points are made by other philosophers, for example, Roger Trigg. (Trigg,R 1973:esp Ch3) (26) Given this conception of 'open-mindedness' it does not seem that, in principle, parents who follow my guidelines are encouraging their children to enter into an irrational state of mind. And therefore nor is it the case, as Gardner wants to suggest, that - '...the parents we are considering, in so far as they are committed to rationality, will *not* want their children to be open minded about alternative beliefs'. (G:92. My emphasis)

Although Gardner does not give a clear account of his own concept of 'open-mindedness', it seems to be a particularly narrow one. A clue to this is given in his speculations on how I might characterise the intentions of parents seeking open-mindedness for their children - '...the parents...will want their children to be temporarily open minded about alternative beliefs, temporarily open minded in the sense of not thinking the alternatives true or false at the moment, but being prepared to take an autonomous decision about them later.' (G:92) The clue is given here in the word 'temporarily'. Gardner seems to be employing a definition of open-mindedness as 'being aware of a given proposition but neither believing nor disbelieving it', and this is certainly the way in which he uses the term in the paper on multicultural education referred to above. But this is a very specific and limited conception of open-

mindedness. Do we not speak coherently of being open-minded in relation to our existing beliefs and commitments? And if we cannot, how can we explain the process of our developing and changing our rationally held beliefs in the light of our consideration of alternatives? Open-mindedness as I understand it would seem to be a crucial part of an ethics of belief. Quinton argues that - '... open-minded readiness to consider beliefs that are inconsistent with or count against one's own' (Quinton,A 1985:51) is constitutive of the virtue of intellectual justice or fairness.

But even if the fuller sense of 'open-mindedness' is accepted, Gardner may still ask how it is possible to reconcile a concern for open-mindedness as I understand it with a form of upbringing which seeks the development of initial determinate beliefs in the 'controversial' domain. He may insist that an important distinction be made between open-mindedness as an *achieved* state of mind (albeit never a wholly achieved one) and the activities that are proper to its *promotion*, particularly in a child. Gardner may concede that 'open-mindedness' in my sense is compatible (in principle) with (rationally held) determinate beliefs. But this, he may caution, should not lead us to be blind to crucial difficulties arising in relation to the development of determinate beliefs in the *promotion* of open-mindedness.

Exploration of this issue requires more to be said about (ii), parents making their children aware of alternative, conflicting beliefs which ought to be evaluated in due course, and (i), parents bringing their children up to share their own religious beliefs. Does not (ii) conflict with (i), and does not this conflict have implications for the coherence of both the intentions of the parents and the experience of the children?

With regard to the intentions here, it might be asked: How can a parent coherently want their child to both believe x and to see (conflicting) y as a genuinely open alternative? What sense can be made of this?

One aspect of this problem of coherence concerns the fundamental question of whether religious parents must, in virtue of their being religious, favour the development of faith rather than autonomy in their children. I say something about this briefly at the beginning of the next section and in section 5(a) of Chapter 3. My own

characterisation of the intentions of the parents in my argument is that they are aiming at autonomy via faith. The conflict between (ii) and (i) seems a sharp one if both are seen as being pursued too crudely in practice *at one and the same time*, and is eased if a developmental and temporal perspective is adopted in relation to the upbringing, and if it is seen as a whole. Roughly speaking, the approach of 'autonomy via faith' demands that an initial faith be developed, sustained by the principle of 'tenacity of engagement' outlined above. At a later point (27), the child is encouraged to put his or her faith into critical perspective, which involves (among other things) exposure to alternatives in a gradual and co-ordinated way. Over a period of time, the parents encourage the child to reflect upon the initial beliefs and to put them into critical perspective. What place does the parents' presenting alternative beliefs as false/mistaken occupy on my view? Clearly, in the light of my earlier comments, I do not consider that it has the very general salience given it by Gardner. But it nevertheless must play a part in my overall view, not least because of my acknowledgement that concepts of truth, consistency, falsity and mistakenness must be brought to bear on the child's reflective formation of beliefs. So for that reason (iv) will always be part of the picture. But it will be sensitively invoked according to circumstances, and not in the rather sweeping way that Gardner suggests. It may well be that at the earlier stage, for example, the development of the initial distinctive beliefs involves the parent at least implying that alternatives are false, so that the child has a clear sense of the distinctiveness of the initial beliefs being introduced. Further, it is part of a regulative ideal which governs the whole process in that the teacher ought to be prepared to bring out the implications of a child's beliefs. But here (iv) is conducted in a sensitive relationship with the wide range of other measures being conducted to ensure the child's development of rationality in the fuller sense.

Why is it thought necessary for children to be encouraged to develop initial determinate religious beliefs at all? Exploration of this issue requires more to be said about (i), parents bringing their children up to share their own religious beliefs. Gardner ignores the fuller context that I supply to (i) and the implications arising from

it. This context is one of religious parents who are also committed to liberal values. They are faced by something of a dilemma in the upbringing of their children. No one, unproblematic course of action is open to them in relation to this. They have to achieve a balance between two sets of considerations. On one side of the balance are their own religious beliefs and their implications in terms of commitments, practices, lifestyle etc., together with (for example) the need for the family to constitute an organic unity. On the other side is their concern for their children to become autonomous. How is the balance between these sets of considerations to be struck? Gardner indicates that his objection to strong religious upbringing is *prima facie* in character, and that there is need for a debate about whether there are good enough reasons for parents to override liberal concerns (as he characterises them), and to follow my guidelines for religious upbringing.(G:93) Gardner states that - '...this is a debate I do not want to enter'. (G:93-94) It is important to note that Gardner characterises the necessary debate as one about a justification for liberal demands being overridden. My own view, of course, is that the form of religious upbringing I discuss does not override liberal demands but seeks to fulfil them in a distinctive way. But there is still a need for a more nuanced debate about why parents would seek this option, granted its coherence. This debate centres upon the need for parents to establish the balance which I have characterised, and to make the complex judgements that are involved in this. Gardner's advice to parents is given in something of a vacuum, and without sufficient acknowledgement of the context of my argument.

Gardner considers that another danger of the kind of upbringing I discuss is that children will slide, as a result of their exposure to alternative beliefs, into a form of relativism, coming to think that all beliefs are a matter of (mere) personal or social preference. Gardner identifies a 'fallacy of tolerance' here - '...the fallacy of refraining from concluding that beliefs held by others are wrong or that certain people are mistaken when such conclusions are a logical consequence of one's position'. (G:93) I offer two responses to this suggestion. The first is that the danger which Gardner identifies is, on his own admission, only a *danger*. Some of the features of my

argument (for example, the insistence on the importance of rational assessment, and on not merely following convention etc.) might be thought to mitigate against it. My second response concerns the alleged 'fallacy of tolerance'. There is a need here to distinguish between what might be described as *epistemological* and *practical* tolerance. I take Brenda Almond to be making a distinction of this sort in her paper 'Positive Values'. She criticises - '...an extension of the notion of tolerance from the sphere of action where it properly belongs, to the sphere of thought and belief where it is essentially incoherent....'. (Almond,B 1983:143) She claims that the notion of tolerance in relation to (for example) a person holding beliefs about matters of fact known to be false is 'specific' and 'limited', extending only to matters such as not taking steps to get the person to change his or her beliefs. She claims also that there is a clear limit beyond which tolerance cannot go - '...it cannot extend to an acceptance or endorsement of the beliefs themselves. For that would be to contradict my own thought and belief'. (ibid:143) I contend that my recommended form of upbringing would in fact help to make this distinction clear in the minds of children (without falling into the trap I identified earlier of giving an undue status to the existing beliefs of the child). It should be noted, however, that this does not require that children be brought up to think that alternative beliefs are mistaken. Such a judgement should be the conclusion of their own reflections, and not pre-empted by a pedagogical dictum derived from one abstract consideration relating to the logic of belief.

My conclusion at the end of this section, then, is that Gardner has failed to show that a necessary consequence of the form of upbringing I discuss (arising out of considerations relating to rationality) is the illiberal one that the children involved will (in fact) be brought up to believe that beliefs alternative to their own are false and that those who hold them are mistaken. If this is so then the strategies I outline in relation to the kind of upbringing I discuss, unencumbered by worries about this alleged consequence, can be brought to bear to avoid the dangers of 'persistence of beliefs'.

(4) Understanding and Involvement

Gardner begins the final section of his critique by posing the question - 'Will McLaughlin's prescriptions attract any followers?' (G:98) This question arises from the perception that religious parents are likely to be more interested in developing *faith* rather than *autonomy* in their children. Obviously parents giving a clear priority to faith would be unattracted to my position, and I have never claimed that it has application to all cases of religious belief and the concepts of religious upbringing to which they give rise. Gardner notes that my characterisation of the faith/autonomy intention in my original article refers to religious positions - '...in which autonomy has the kind of status and significance it enjoys within a liberal system of values'. (G:98) (28) Gardner does not challenge my claim that there are such faiths (29) but argues that even parents subscribing to them would find unattractive the form of religious upbringing I discuss because of the danger it poses to autonomy. This conclusion, of course, depends on the adequacy of Gardner's arguments to substantiate his claims about these dangers, and I have called these into question.(30)

Why might liberal religious parents be attracted to this form of upbringing? Gardner speculates that one answer to this question concerns the claim that - '... a strong religious upbringing is necessary for a certain kind of religious understanding' (G:99), and, therefore, for - '...the kind of informed assessment that is part of the liberal goal'. (G:107) He refers to this claim as 'the argument for understanding', and concludes (after some reflection) that I am committed to it. (G:99)

Gardner offers several versions of the argument (G:100-101), but common to all of them is the claim that a strong religious upbringing is *necessary* for the achievement of understanding and autonomous reflection. He then subjects this general claim to a range of effective criticisms.

These criticisms do not damage my argument, however, because I am not in fact committed to any form of the 'argument for understanding' which involves claims of a strong sort about necessity. I outline a crucial aspect of the version to which I *am*

committed in part of my reply to Callan which Gardner appears to have overlooked. Callan argued that I had based an argument which is 'clearly fallacious' on the claim that religious understanding may be impossible without religious practice. (C:118) (31) In reply, I rejected Callan's accusation on the grounds that I had made the more modest claim that practice may be *significant* or important in relation to religious understanding (McLaughlin,T H 1985:126-127) rather than *necessary*. (My more nuanced claim is evident too elsewhere in my reply to Callan). (McLaughlin, T H 1985:122;126)

What exactly does this claim about 'significance' or 'importance' amount to? In exploring this, I hope to outline the weaker version of the argument for understanding to which I am in fact committed, and which is not vulnerable to Gardner's criticisms.

It may be helpful in exploring this if I approach it by way of a central misunderstanding of my argument by Gardner which is implicit in his characterisations above. Gardner interprets me as holding that, in the light of the 'argument for understanding' - '...all who are concerned about informed and autonomous assessment of a religion or religious matters will want their children to be subject to a strong religious upbringing...'. (G:99) But I do not in fact hold this. In reply to Callan I acknowledged that his 'weak' religious upbringing is an alternative to mine which liberal religious parents might adopt. Both forms of upbringing have their advantages and disadvantages. The decision confronting parents regarding choice of upbringing is a complex one in which there are risks of many different kinds to be weighed against each other. Philosophical considerations cannot have a exclusive or final say in the overall adjudication of these. My argument is designed to show that my notion of 'strong' religious upbringing is a legitimate and coherent possibility, not a necessity. (McLaughlin,T H 1985:122-126)

This illuminates my claim about 'significance'. One of the advantages of the 'strong' form of religious upbringing is that it enables children to gain an understanding of religion 'from the inside', and the points I made about the rights of the parents and the coherence of the family life of the child are important here too. What is needed to license my argument is merely *doubt* about the adequacy of 'weak'

religious upbringing to provide sufficient understanding for these purposes. (McLaughlin,T H 1985:122) My argument needs to depend only upon that doubt, and not upon some more questionable general thesis about the *necessity* of the relationship between religious understanding and a 'strong' religious upbringing.

Gardner concludes by observing that the form of religious upbringing I discuss - '...need not be successful...'(G:101) in achieving the liberal goal that the parents in my argument are aiming at. This conclusion is something of an anti-climax to Gardner's argument, not least because it states something with which I do not disagree. The qualification 'need not' is significant here, for nothing in Gardner's argument shows that my position is philosophically incoherent.(32) His concerns about the effects of such an upbringing are essentially empirical in character, and this is true of Callan's concerns also. I hope to have shown that Callan has failed to substantiate his concerns, and that Gardner's attempt to substantiate his (similar) ones either by appeal to the notion of 'persistence of beliefs' or to the alleged constraints on parents' capacity to develop 'open-mindedness' arising from what is involved in introducing a child to alternative, conflicting beliefs fails also. I therefore conclude that neither Callan nor Gardner has established his contention that the parents described in my argument are misguided, and that the guidelines I recommend will not help them to achieve the autonomy of their children.

This conclusion might, however, be regarded as over-hasty in advance of a fuller specification of what actually is involved in the form of religious upbringing which I discuss. In the next chapter, I offer such a specification together with a discussion of further critical challenges to my position.

CHAPTER THREE

Religious Upbringing and the Development of Autonomy

My claim that there is an acceptable form of substantive religious upbringing which liberal parents can in good conscience offer to their children is one which requires further elaboration and defence. As I pointed out in Chapter One, in my original article, 'Parental Rights and the Religious Upbringing of Children', I argued that the aim of liberal parents to ensure autonomy for their children in the long run is compatible with the presentation to, and development in, the child of a particular set of religious beliefs provided that the resultant beliefs are 'fixed' in the weak sense (ie., stable but open to subsequent challenge and development) but not in the strong sense (ie., unshakable or unchangeable). I also acknowledged the important point that the explicit intentions of the parents are not the only factor bearing upon the nature of the beliefs and states of mind developed by the child. Therefore, I argued that -

'parents ... have the responsibility not merely to formulate their intentions accurately, but also to monitor both the methods, content and consequences of their upbringing - and to avoid and remedy anything likely to produce 'fixed beliefs' in (the) strong sense.' (McLaughlin,T H 1984:80)

In the light of the criticisms of Callan, (Callan,E 1985a:esp 114-116), I think, as indicated in Chapter Two, that it is better for reasons of clarity to speak of 'open-mindedness' as the goal that such parents are aiming at, rather than the avoidance of fixed/ unshakable beliefs.

This clarification still leaves us, however, with the problem of how the parent is to exercise the responsibility of helping the child to achieve this state of mind. What must a parent actually *do* (and *not do*) in order to 'avoid and remedy' the development of religious beliefs, which if not literally unshakable, are nevertheless inimical to the achievement of 'open-mindedness'? It is of course not only *beliefs* that are at issue

here, but other important ingredients of mind, such as attitudes, character, dispositions and virtues, all of which are clearly shaped in any adequate upbringing. It is only in the light of an elaboration of how in concrete terms I envisage parents exercising their responsibilities for the development of 'open-mindedness' that my central claim about the possibility of reconciling a religious upbringing with a concern for autonomy has any force.

This chapter, therefore, attempts to explore in more detail the nature of a religious upbringing that is concerned with the development of the autonomy of the child.

A full treatment of this matter would, of course, involve detailed consideration of empirical (in particular, psychological) issues as well as philosophical ones. I shall here confine myself to philosophical considerations, though not, I trust, without sensitivity to the complex relationship between the various kinds of reflection. This study cannot hope, however, to provide a detailed programme of guidance for parents, but merely seeks, in much the same way as R.S. Peters' philosophical work on early moral upbringing, to address certain central theoretical problems arising in the area. As Peters has argued, while the contribution of philosophy is not to be neglected, it cannot by itself develop a complex and detailed account of how children are to be helped in the direction of autonomy. (1)

As before, the term 'upbringing' as used in this chapter refers to the home aspects of the child's life - and makes no reference to schooling, which raises a set of further questions which will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

(1) The Notion of a Religious Upbringing: Preliminary Remarks

What is involved in the notion of a 'religious upbringing'? Just as philosophers have tended to neglect the issue of parental rights in respect to the provision of such an upbringing, so the nature of a religious upbringing itself has been neglected as a subject for philosophical analysis and discussion. (This would seem to be part -until recently-

of a general lack of philosophical interest in families - see O'Neill,O & Ruddick,W (eds.) 1979:3-5).

The notion of a 'religious upbringing' is open to several different interpretations, and it is important at the outset that I clarify the sense in which I am using the term. The first point to note is that the term 'religious upbringing' can be used in a *general* or in a more *specific* sense. In the general sense, a 'religious upbringing' could refer to a process of child-rearing based on a very broad construal of 'religious'. Such a process might involve, for example, sensitising a child to the essential mysteriousness of human existence in the world, or to the potentially 'numinous' quality of aspects of human experience in the area of aesthetics or personal relationships. And such a child might also be encouraged to adopt a sympathetic and open-minded attitude to 'spiritual matters' broadly conceived. But no attempt would be made to introduce the child to the belief and practice of a particular, developed, religion. The term 'religious upbringing' in the more specific sense refers precisely to this process of bringing up a child in a particular faith. Throughout this work I shall use the term 'religious upbringing' in this specific sense. I am not of course claiming that this is the only coherent way in which the term can be used. My reason for focusing upon the 'specific' interpretation of the term is that, whilst a general form of religious upbringing might be open to the danger of a child being the subject of a kind of 'metaphysical indoctrination', it is, I think, in relation to a determinate, particular form of religious upbringing that critical questions about the development of the autonomy of the child crucially arise.

A second point is that, within the 'specific' sense of 'religious upbringing', a further distinction needs to be made, following Callan (Callan,E 1985a:111-113), between a 'weak' and a 'strong' form of it. As indicated in the last chapter, in Callan's 'weak' form, the parents merely live their own, particular, faith in the family context, and do not go beyond the provision of explanations of that faith to their children. There is no attempt to actually shape the child's own religious commitment in any way. In contrast, in the 'strong' form, the parents bring up their child to share their commitment. In what follows, I shall be looking at a specific religious upbringing in

the 'strong', and not in the 'weak' sense. I do not deny that the 'weak' form of

religious upbringing is a coherent option for liberal parents. But it is in relation to the

'strong' form that the questions I am interested in arise most sharply.

In referring to a 'strong' form of religious upbringing I am, of course, invoking

the particular form of it outlined in the last two chapters, with its provisions for the

development of the autonomy of the child. What are the logical elements of such an

upbringing, and under what sort of conditions might it actually be compatible with the

development of autonomy?

(2) Fundamental Issues of Compatibility Relating to the Character of Religion

Before proceeding to these questions, however, it is necessary to address the

important question of the *fundamental* compatibility of the notion of autonomy with a

religious upbringing in the specific sense I discuss. This issue of fundamental

compatibility might be thought to arise in two ways. There is first of all the problem of

the coherence of the *intentions* of the parents and how they might be thought to be

aiming at *both* autonomy *and* faith in their children. I have already said something

about this problem and I shall return to it later in this chapter. But a more basic

underlying question, as Gardner notes (Gardner,P 1988:98-99; 1990:sec3), concerns

the compatibility of the notion of autonomy with particular religious faiths themselves.

Unless a given faith has a logical space within it for the principle of autonomy to

function, then parents who are adherents of that faith cannot, without abandoning it,

adopt the intention of aiming at autonomy for their children. (2) It would, of course, be

possible for some parents to experience conflict, perhaps of the tragic sort to which

Bernard Williams draws attention in his paper 'Conflicts of values' (Williams,B

1981:Ch5), between their religious faith and their concern for the autonomy of their

children. There are also other considerations, such as the notion of degrees of belief,

bearing upon the coherence of the intentions of parents. I shall, however, restrict myself for the moment to the straightforward case of a person having faith in a given religion and the compatibility of that faith with a concern for autonomy.

It would, of course, be a task of considerable complexity to engage in an extensive review of the full range of religions with a view to analysing the extent to which they can and do accommodate the notion of autonomy. The task is further complicated by the fact that there are considerable differences in this respect *within* as well as *between* religions. Such a task cannot be attempted here. It could not be avoided if I were to seek to establish a bold (and unrealistic) claim of the form that *all* religions are compatible with autonomy as I understand it. But the claim that I make is in fact much more modest. It is that at least *some* (developed) religions, or traditions within religions, are so compatible. My discussion of religious upbringing is not intended, therefore, to make claims about universal validity or applicability across all religions, but is focused upon a particular problem situated within a set of particular assumptions. There may well be forms of religion with which my position is incompatible. My claim is the restricted one that there are some forms with which it *is* compatible.

It is easy, of course, to provide illustrations from literature, and other sources, of dogmatic or indoctrinatory forms of religious belief and upbringing which, whilst their subjects have been able in some degree to achieve a critical perspective on them, are nevertheless unacceptable within the terms of reference of my argument. (3) John Anderson seems to hold that dogmatism is a necessary feature of *all* religious upbringings. In his paper 'Religion in Education', he argues that the notion of 'limits to enquiry' are involved in the very notion of the sacred: - '...to call anything sacred is to say: 'Here inquiry must stop; this is not to be examined". (Anderson,J 1980:203) Of the child subjected to religious training, he writes - '...since his natural inquiries are thus impeded, since he is frustrated in his endeavours to bring religious dogma within the scope of his understanding, his educable capacity is necessarily lowered'. (Anderson,J 1980:204) (4)

Anderson does not make good, however, his claim that there is anything *necessary* about these conclusions. He operates with a rather narrow conception of religion, and there is an air of stipulative definition to some of his points, as is seen, for example, in his insistence that - '...to say that any subject-matter is open to investigation is to say that it is secular; to say that it is not secular is to say that it is not open to investigation and hence to understanding'. (Anderson,J 1980:205)

Anderson views the development of religious beliefs in children with hostility. It is worth noting briefly, however, that not all those who hold that religious belief is essentially non-rational are opposed to the inculcation of such beliefs in children. For example, in their document 'Education and Indoctrination', which will be considered later in this work, Scruton *et al* hold not only that this is justifiable, but that it should be conducted in *state schools*. (Scruton,R *et al* 1985:Ch4)

A good illustration of the possibility of rendering compatible a concern for autonomy with a religious upbringing is to be found in the form of religious upbringing contained within the recommendations of two relatively recent reports published by the British Council of Churches, 'The Child in the Church' (1976) and 'Understanding Christian Nurture'. (1981) The reports were re-issued in a revised and combined edition in 1984 under the general title 'The Child in the Church' (British Council of Churches Consultative Group on Ministry Among Children 1984 - Hereinafter BCC) and it is to this latest combined edition that I shall be referring in writing of 'the report'. The report has been clearly influenced by the work of John Hull, who was not only a member of the working party for both original reports, but also Drafting Secretary and Editor.

In Appendix A, I offer a detailed critical analysis of the claim in the report that the notion of autonomy is compatible with, and is indeed demanded by, Christian faith. I also offer in the Appendix another example of the role of the concept of autonomy in Christianity; that of the Roman Catholic Church. These examples illustrate that the form of religious upbringing I discuss is not a wholly fanciful or unreal one, but one which is not only compatible with central tenets of at least one developed religion but is

actually being recommended as a coherent and realistic option for religious parents in our society. This may help to provide an answer to the question posed by Gardner - 'Will McLaughlin's prescriptions attract any followers?' (Gardner,P 1988:98) Whilst Christianity is, of course, only one religion, and the interpretation of it contained in the Appendix is not universally agreed among Christian believers, the examples may serve as an illustration of an approach which might have a broader application to other faiths.

It may well be objected at this point that, whilst the BCC report might well incorporate satisfactorily respect for the principle of autonomy, the report insufficiently represents the actual state of affairs with regard to belief and practice in particular Christian traditions themselves. (For an interesting account of differing views of childhood traditionally held by various Christian churches see BCC:Ch12). With regard to practice, I do not wish to deny that many examples can be furnished (as noted above) of religious upbringings which contain little evidence of a concern for autonomy. For example, in his book 'Growing up Catholic', John Walsh illustrates how a traditional Catholic upbringing - '...engaged all the senses. Its frightening intensity, its promise of damnation or bliss for ever, its requirement of eternal vigilance...woven into the usual sense-data of childhood'. (Walsh,J 1989:8)

Further, at the theoretical level, the report might be criticised for failing to deal adequately with the far more nuanced treatment given by philosophers and theologians of the status and significance of autonomy in religious belief. (For further discussion of the relationship between Christian faith and autonomy see, for example, Bockle,F 1980:esp Pt1 Ch2 Sec5 'The Theological justification of moral autonomy'; Mahoney,J 1987:Ch5; Groome,T H 1980:Ch5; Hauerwas,S 1983:Ch3; Dykstra,C 1981:Ch1-4. Also relevant is Herbert McCabe's essay 'Freedom' (McCabe,H 1987) and Robert Merrihew Adam's piece 'Autonomy and Theological Ethics'. (Adams,R M 1987:Ch8) See also Thiessen,E J 1990a. For a controversial account of the need for religion in general to be open to the demands of critical openness see Cupitt,D 1983a;1983b. See also footnote 5 Appendix A).

This complexity need not be denied. All my argument requires is acceptance of the point that certain religious faiths, including a significant proportion of the Christian tradition, can, at least in principle, accept a concern for autonomy in a significant sense as compatible with, and even demanded by, its central tenets.

A recent challenge, not directly aimed at my argument but having a clear bearing on it, consists of the claim that the kind of religious faith which is compatible with the critical-rational principle, a kind of 'revisable commitment' proportioned to evidence and argument, is insufficient to sustain recognisable forms of religious practice, including (crucially) worship.(5) As Callan puts it in the article in which he develops this challenge, 'Faith, Worship and Reason in Religious Upbringing' (Callan,E 1988b - Hereinafter FWR), worship requires of its nature an assuredness of faith which is not only unlicensed by, but which is continuously undermined by, the exercise of critical rationality.

He writes -

...whole-hearted acts of religious worship cease to be possible when serious doubts are harboured about whatever beliefs are explicitly affirmed or presupposed by the acts; and since no plausible view of the epistemological roots of any substantive set of religious beliefs can be so favourable that all serious doubts are dispelled, it follows that conformity to the rational-critical principle must impede personal engagement in worship.

(FWR:184-185. Emphasis in original)

Among the beliefs which Callan sees as implied in worship here are beliefs about the object of worship (as having, say, supreme value or worthiness) and about the relationship between the worshipper and that object (as involving inequality of merit). Any erosion of the beliefs, he claims, has a non-contingent 'intimate' connection with an erosion in the capacity to worship. (6)

According to Callan, the grounds acceptable under the critical-rational principle could never be sufficient - '...to secure the degree of assurance which whole-hearted worship demands'. (FWR:186) Instead the kind of religious beliefs compatible with the principle are 'attenuated' and, in virtue of their fragility and hesitancy, likely to leave the person - '...at best an emotional outsider vis-a-vis Christian worship'. (FWR:186) (7)

Callan therefore insists that the development of faith of a very strong kind, involving - '...a tenacious assent to dogma which is resistant to the persuasive force of counter-evidence and argument...is virtually a necessary goal of religious upbringing because otherwise lives which revolve around worship will tend to succumb to the depredation of doubt.' (FWR:188)

The implications which Callan draws from his conclusion that there can be no 'painless reconciliation of Athens or Jerusalem' either in our own lives or in upbringing (FWR:191) are interesting in that they represent a relaxation of his earlier outright hostility to substantial religious upbringing. I have outlined these implications in footnote 7 of the last chapter. At this point I shall confine myself to some very brief comments on Callan's argument.

Callan's position here seems to involve two claims; (a) that religious worship, rational commitment and doubt are incompatible and (b) that worship must give positive emotional experiences to the worshipper. Both claims are open to question.

With regard to (a) Callan claims - '...it is not at all obvious that attempts to worship which are beset by substantial doubts can conceivably succeed so long as the doubts persist'. (FWR:187) We can scarcely glorify God, he points out, if we have serious doubts about either his existence or the propriety of worshipping him. (8)

However, Callan seriously underplays the role that doubt and exploration play in religious faith and worship. (On this see, for example, Ferreira,M 1980, BCC:paras 175-179;Ch15).

With regard to (b) Callan holds that worship of the kind compatible with the critical-rational principle would be 'emotionally empty' for those who engage in it.

Callan sees worship as providing solace for the believer in the face of temptation and despair; 'emotional uplift' and 'peace'. (FWR:187) Callan admits that worship might have a point beyond the achievement of these states of mind (a point which he characterises vaguely as 'fulfilling our supernatural destiny') but argues that this will be unlikely to motivate believers or their children. (FWR:187) Callan here seems to have a rather crude conception of worship as rewarding in emotional terms. However, this neglects phenomena such as 'the dark night of the soul' which have traditionally been seen as an important part of worship, fully understood.

Although I have no more space to discuss Callan's arguments here in more detail, it is by no means clear that they demonstrate that the kind of religious upbringing I discuss is necessarily opposed to the development of such crucial features of religious practice such as worship.

A substantial and detailed discussion of the role of the principle of autonomy in particular religious faiths and their related practices would involve a considerable digression. On the assumption that I have succeeded in establishing the modest point that at least some faiths and practices are in principle compatible with the notion of autonomy (9), it is appropriate for me at this juncture to turn to an analysis of the various logical elements of a religious upbringing with the aim of exploring in more detail how they can be rendered compatible with this notion.

(3) Elements of Religious Upbringing

A number of preliminary points are in order here. First, it is clear that a religious upbringing cannot be separated from upbringing in general; indeed it is widely argued that an upbringing which satisfies the basic needs of the child for love, physical and psychological security is a necessary pre-condition for a satisfactory religious upbringing. (10) Some of these basic *desiderata* for general upbringing are outlined by the child psychologist Michael Rutter in his book about Quaker upbringing 'A Measure

of Our Values: goals and dilemmas in the upbringing of children'. (Rutter,M

1983:Ch3) (11) It would be tempting to see a religious upbringing as one which

(merely) *goes beyond* a basic general upbringing. (See BCC:paras 288-291) But there

are problems in seeing a religious dimension to upbringing too crudely as an *addition* to

a separately characterisable base. The religious dimension is bound, to some extent, to

affect and impinge upon, that base. Rutter's examples of Quaker attitudes to

competition and corporal punishment are cases in point here. (Rutter,M 1983:34-

37;88-93)

A second preliminary point is that, as will be obvious, the various logically

different elements of a religious upbringing identified cannot be seen as wholly separate

from each other. They are interrelated in complex ways.

I suggest that parents attempting to provide their children with a religious

upbringing are involved in the following kinds of logically identifiable activities: (Here

I shall employ an approach similar to that used by Roger Straughan (Straughan,R

1982:Ch5) in his attempt to analyse what is involved in giving a child a moral

upbringing, and shall illustrate the points made by reference to texts discussing

religious upbringing drawn from several Christian traditions). (12)

(a) **Teaching That**   Teaching that certain things are and are not the case

seems to be a crucial element in a religious upbringing. Thus the child is brought up to

believe that God exists, that He has certain properties and characteristics, that human

existence has a certain meaning and purpose, that the child has certain religious

obligations, and so on. This is what one might refer to as the intellectual or belief

content of religious faith. Although parents are encouraged to transmit this set of

beliefs in a wide range of ways (and rarely by means of direct instruction), the belief

component would seem to be an indispensable element in a religious upbringing and to

be present in all its other elements. (13)

Although the development of religious beliefs is necessary to a religious upbringing it is by no means sufficient for it. A religious upbringing aims not only to develop knowledge, understanding and belief but also in some sense to encourage the child to *be* religious - to begin to actually *practise* his or her faith. Thus it is claimed - 'The aim of Christian Educators (parents as well as teachers) is to bring the child into a genuine dialogue with God' (Bullen,A 1972:61) and that catechesis - 'should not be satisfied with external expressions only, however useful they may be, but ... should strive to bring forth a response from the heart and a taste for prayer'. (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1971:79,69)

Thus the activity of 'Teaching That' has to be accompanied in the provision of a religious upbringing by further elements:-

(b) **Teaching How**   Since a religious upbringing is concerned with the *involvement* of the child in their faith, the child will need to be 'taught how' to engage in religious activities such as prayer and liturgical worship - and, in the case of many Christian churches, eventually how to participate in a full sacramental life (in the Catholic case, Confession and Communion are introduced to the child at around the age of seven). This 'teaching how' will involve not merely a set of basic instructions for the external performance of the various activities but also guidance on how the child can engage in them genuinely and with real involvement. (14) (On the involvement of the child in religious practice see, for example, BCC:paras 96-100; 304-315; Ch 15). A religious upbringing would be incomplete, however, if it conveyed a knowledge of how to engage in religious practices without a desire to actually take part in them. Therefore, as in the case of moral upbringing, there is an important dispositional element to be taken into account.

(c) **Teaching To**   Ultimately teaching children to engage in religious life must become a matter of teaching them to *want* to be religious, and this in turn must involve the feelings, emotions and motivation of the child. Thus - crucially - there is a

stress on such notions as 'developing a love for God and His will', a 'hatred of sin', feelings of thanksgiving, repentance and so on.

It is hoped that this admittedly brief analysis of the elements of religious upbringing will be useful in addressing the crucial question of how such an upbringing can be open to the development of the autonomy of the child.

(4) The Elements of Religious Upbringing and the Development of Autonomy

An initial point, arising from the relatedness of religious and general upbringing which was noted earlier, is that the task of developing the child's autonomy in the religious domain must depend upon, and launch itself from, the broader task of developing the child's autonomy in general. There are a number of considerations and principles relevant to this latter task. (For a sketch of these see, for example, BCC:Ch 13 esp. paras 280-285).

What considerations and principles are relevant to the specifically religious elements of 'upbringing for autonomy'?

(a) **Teaching That**   The ultimate aim of this part of children's religious formation as far as autonomy is concerned is surely that they achieve as full an understanding as possible of their faith in all its (significant) aspects. For example, at the conceptual level, they need to be made aware of the status and character of the different elements of the belief system, and the relationships that hold between them. In this way they will come to discriminate between elements which have a basic function in terms of the grounding and justification of the faith (e.g., the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth in the case of Christianity) and elements which presuppose, and are in some sense based upon, these foundations. In this way the

child will progressively acquire a sense of the meaning, status, significance and implications of the belief elements of their faith, which is clearly an important aspect of the capacity critically to evaluate it. (For a lively evocation of the role of the catechism in traditional Catholic upbringing, and a contrast with what is recommended here, see Walsh,J 1989:Ch4).

However, some psychological research has suggested that, due to the nature of cognitive development, young children are incapable of a level of thinking that would permit much genuine religious understanding. (See Goldman,R 1964;1965). If this judgement is correct (and it has been challenged) (15), it would seem severely to restrict the ability of the parent of the young child to do much about the development of the child's autonomy in the area of religious beliefs, where 'autonomy' here implies the possession of a more than minimal understanding of the nature, grounds etc., of the beliefs. Is a religious upbringing at this stage necessarily preoccupied with gradually introducing the child to, or laying the groundwork for, a fairly basic understanding of the beliefs themselves, in effect a kind of minimal understanding, which excludes the possibility of the development of a really autonomous grasp of the matters at issue?

The BCC report underlines the difficulty here by drawing attention to a number of problems which arise in relation to the teaching of religious concepts and religious language to young children. (BCC:paras 322-333) These include difficulties in conveying the precise analogical import of concepts such as the 'fatherhood' and 'personhood' of God, (On this see BCC:paras 322-325) and, more generally, - ...the ways in which religious language is *related* to normal language at the same time as being *different from* normal language'. (BCC:para 331. Emphasis in original) But an unduly pessimistic conclusion should not be accepted too quickly about the necessary opposition of early religious upbringing to the provision of foundations for autonomy.

There are perhaps two areas of parental involvement which require attention in developing a more optimistic conclusion about this matter, and I shall address each of them in turn. They are (i) the way in which the beliefs are presented and explained to

the child and (ii) the way in which the parent handles the reactions of the child to these beliefs.

With regard to (i), the parent must satisfy a number of conditions which do indeed seem to presuppose a fairly sophisticated understanding on the part of the child. I indicated some of these in my original article and in Chapter One e.g., that the child must be made aware that religious beliefs have a distinctive, and controversial, status and that, in virtue of the role of faith, it cannot be claimed that there exists in this area universal publicly agreed belief. The child must therefore be made aware of the fact of disagreement about religious matters, and be encouraged to exercise tolerance (and sensitivity) in relation to it. This in turn clearly presupposes that the child is aware of the complexity of religious concepts, and of the fact that they seek to represent (never wholly adequately) the realities to which they seek to refer. But if the facts about the cognitive capacities of children are as I report them above, is not this aim unattainable? Two points should be made here.

First, these 'facts' are themselves disputed. For example, in his article, 'Children's Grasp of Controversial Issues', Geoffrey Short argues against Piagetian notions of developmentalism and 'readiness', in favour of the claim that young children are indeed capable of understanding issues of complexity and controversiality. (Short,G 1988) Second, it is important to take note of important *temporal* considerations here. The kind of (rather sophisticated) understanding that is being sought ultimately for the child cannot be achieved *all at once*, and certainly not *at the beginning* of the process of upbringing. It is the outcome of that process (or at least something which emerges in the later stages of it). It cannot figure other than embryonically in its starting point. What does this 'embryonic figuring' involve? It must surely include the provision in some form of a 'foundation' for the later development. What does this in turn involve?

It is clear that the parent cannot provide detailed explanations, discussions etc. in the early stages of upbringing. This is ruled out by the 'facts of cognitive development' outlined above, even if, following writers such as Short, these 'facts' were construed

more generously. What must be provided are certain preconditions which will favour, or at least not hinder, the subsequent development. What are these?

One interpretation of what is required here is that, in order to lay the foundations for autonomy, a certain thoroughgoing *tentativeness* must characterise the initial presentation of the religious beliefs and practices to the child by the parent. A concern for the ultimate autonomy of the child is inconsistent, it might be claimed, with any literal, straightforward and firm presentation of the religious beliefs and practices. Certain kinds of 'literal presentation' are indeed dubious from the point of view of the perspective I am adopting. For example, the Bible should not be presented as if it is immune to critical challenge. (On this, see BCC:paras 84-87). But does the requirement of 'tentativeness' mean not only that aspects of a religious faith be presented in a nuanced way to facilitate later critical assessment, but also that *no* firm norm of belief and practice in the religious domain can be presented as an initial starting point? What are the implications of this 'necessity of tentativeness' thesis understood in this way? The difficulty to which it gives rise can perhaps be illustrated by caricaturing what is envisaged as the parent saying to the child - 'God is Love...maybe', or in teaching the child to pray, saying- 'Address God as a loving Father...but remember that He might not exist, and that talk of God at all might be a gigantic illusion'. It is not hard to see that the child is likely to be thoroughly confused by such an upbringing, which would scarcely constitute a religious upbringing at all in any significant sense. Michael Rutter advises parents -

> *...we should not be afraid to express our views in a clear and unambiguous fashion. Children welcome firm guidance;...they tend to feel insecure and unsettled in an atmosphere of uncertainty and indecision. It is distinctly unhelpful to leave children in a confused state in which our own views are left unclear, ambiguous or so hesitatingly expressed that they lack conviction.*

> (Rutter,M 1983:100)

Rutter is here writing of upbringing in general, although he seems to hold that the point holds true for religious upbringing also. (Rutter,M 1983:esp Ch4,6) It is perfectly coherent, of course, to conceive of a *general* upbringing which has a certain determinacy to it, but which has a religious dimension to it which lacks this quality. Such an upbringing may be a coherent option for an agnostic parent maybe, or for one concerned with the provision of a religious upbringing in a 'weak' sense. An insistence on throughgoing 'tentativeness' as a condition precludes 'strong' religious upbringing at all. So if it is to be acceptable, it will be so in virtue of other kinds of conditions.

I consider that these conditions can be found by exploring the point that, although the initial framework of beliefs and practices presented to the child must be simple and determinate, what is crucial is that the child be subsequently able to challenge and question it. This now focuses attention upon (ii) (the way in which the parent handles the reactions of the child to beliefs).

One important aspect of (ii) is the *questioning* that children engage in. Throughout their upbringing (including its religious elements) children are constantly asking questions (16), and the way in which the questions are handled by the parent has implications for the provision of a foundation for the child's eventual autonomy.

How should the parent handle such questioning? One rather quick response to this is that the parent can adopt two fairly straightforward strategies here. First, parents should encourage the child to ask questions and should avoid giving the impression that in the area of religion questioning is inappropriate. Second, the parent should take the child's questioning seriously and should answer honestly and in a way which respects the child's developing cognitive maturity. (On this general matter, see, for example BCC:paras 113; 320-321; 333-335).

Although I consider that such strategies are in fact appropriate, I do not think that they are particularly *straightforward* in the context of the sort of religious upbringing

that I am describing. The reasons for this will hopefully emerge from a consideration in more detail of the nature of children's questions.

One account of an aspect of this questioning seems to some extent to allay the fears about the child's limited intellectual ability effectively precluding any parental attempt to develop autonomy. Gareth Matthews in his book 'Philosophy and the Young Child' (Matthews,G 1980a) (17) has argued, contrary to Piaget, that young children raise and think through questions which are essentially philosophical in character. Thus he claims -

such evidence as I have been able to assemble suggests that, for many

young members of the human race, philosophical thinking - including, on

occasion, subtle and ingenious reasoning - is as natural as making music

and playing games, and quite as much a part of being human.

(Matthews,G 1980a:36)

Matthews cites a range of examples to show that apparently naive questions raised by children such as 'How can we be sure that everything is not a dream?', 'Where does pain go when it goes away?', 'Do people have two names because they might lose one of them?' and 'Which part of me is really me?' are in fact the expressions of genuine puzzles which adults - except philosophers - are 'socialised away' from pursuing. Matthews claims that, since a kind of naiveté is a feature of many philosophical questions - and since philosophy is in a sense a kind of 'conceptual play' - young children are in fact more likely than adults - and older children - to raise philosophical puzzles. And if the children are allowed to continue with their embryonic reflections, continues Matthews, their remarks will parallel to some extent sophisticated professional philosophical discussions of the matters at issue. Matthews argues that Piaget seriously underestimated the ability of the young child to handle philosophical questions for a range of reasons, including the fact that the nature of philosophy is

unsuited to investigation in terms of a theory of stages of human cognitive

development. (Matthews,G 1980:Ch4)

Matthews claims, then, that it is important for teachers and parents to take the

questioning of their young children seriously in the sense of being alert to, and actively

participating in and encouraging, what is in effect embryonic philosophical questioning

and discussion. Thus he writes -

it can be fun to play the philosophical game of trying to say what one meant,

might have meant, or should have meant when one said something

unthinkingly. It can also be enlightening.... Parents and teachers who

always refuse to play this game ... discourage in the children the spirit of

independent intellectual enquiry.

(Matthews,G 1980a:21)

If Matthews' thesis is correct, it has considerable significance for the attempt to

develop this spirit in young children receiving a religious upbringing. For, although

Matthews does not address himself to this issue specifically, several of the examples he

uses are of children raising and thinking through philosophical questions which are

closely linked to religion; the notion of 'the beginning of the world' (Matthews,G

1980a:22), the question of God's existence (Matthews,G 1980a:30), 'the end of the

world' (Matthews,G 1980a:34-36), and so on. It would seem, therefore, that the

activity of responding to questions that young children raise about their religion in the

way recommended by Matthews (the avoidance of the giving of simplified fixed

answers, the willingness to engage with the child in a dialogue about the question

which does not seek to suppress its philosophical character by reinterpreting it or

ridiculing it from an 'adult' perspective etc.) is a very real step that parents can take

even with their very young children to develop their capacity for autonomy.

Many examples of young children's religious questions given by Brusselmans are

ones which would lend themselves to the approach described by Matthews *viz*: 'Can I

see God?', 'Does God live in a House?', 'Where is heaven?', 'How can God make something from nothing?', and so on. (Brusselmans,C 1977:Appendix II. See also BCC:para 113)

It is perhaps in response to questioning such as this that the parent can enable the child to come to an awareness of a number of other points which play a significant part in their achievement of autonomy in the area of religion. These include the phenomenon of doubt; the existence of disagreement and dispute in this area and appropriate attitudes towards it; the subtlety of the relationship between religion and morality (including the point that it is possible to be 'good' without being 'religious'), and so on.

Matthews position is, of course, open to challenge. Michael Rutter, for example, raises the point that some questioning by children is *merely* a game, with no search for understanding involved. (Rutter,M 1983:100-101) And one might question the extent to which a certain amount of philosophical sophistication is being *read into* the words of the child by Matthews.

Even accepting Matthews' position, however, several critical questions need to be raised about the suggestion that his approach to the questioning of children can be unproblematically used to develop autonomy in the context of religious upbringing. The first point is that philosophical questions have an open-ended character in that they lack a definitive answer. Indeed the gradual search for acceptable answers to such questions constitutes a key element of the philosophical enterprise. Somebody giving a child a 'philosophical upbringing' (and ultimately a form of philosophical education) need not be concerned to introduce the child to any *particular* set of answers in the form of determinate philosophical beliefs. Indeed a preoccupation with orthodoxy has often been seen as the death of philosophy. Whilst many religious questions have an open-ended character and texture to them also, the task of bringing up children within a particular religion involves the inculcation of a norm of belief and practice which is absent from the philosophical case. Perhaps this partly explains the oddness of talking at all about a 'philosophical upbringing'. In addition, there are difficulties in bringing

about an understanding of religious beliefs and practices *in the abstract* and without reference to particularity. These considerations do not *rule out* the significance of Matthews' approach for religious upbringing, however. It can still be profitably used to encourage the child to explore the complexities of the particular beliefs to which he or she is being introduced. And this could be a powerful factor in enabling children to gain the kind of understanding necessary for religious autonomy.

A second difference between the case of religious and philosophical matters from the point of view of upbringing is that religious questions - unlike philosophical ones - have a clear connection in the context of a religious upbringing with the development of skills and dispositions to *participate in* religious practices - and to *'become'* in some sense religious. The encouragement of philosophical questioning is, of course, also an invitation in a sense for the child to *'become'* philosophical. But this is not as all-embracing and determinate a thing as 'becoming religious', at least in the context of a 'strong' religious upbringing. One aspect of this, to which I shall return below, is that children's questioning on religious matters is unlikely to be as disinterested and speculative as on philosophical ones. It is likely to have immediate implications, for example, for the child's behaviour in the religious sphere. Nevertheless, parents concerned to develop the autonomy of their child in relation to religious faith should be concerned to encourage the child (even from an early age) to engage in thought about the fundamental philosophical assumptions on which the religious form of life is based. I shall return below to the tensions to which this gives rise.

A third - and related - point is that religious questions (especially when raised in the context of a religious upbringing) tend to be more closely linked than philosophical ones to matters which have a bearing on the child's emotional and psychological security, either directly in terms of the religious issues themselves or because of the identification of the family and loved ones with them. Thus Matthews acknowledges that not all questions of the sort he identifies come from children who are emotionally healthy and secure and that the parent should be aware of this -

Even a child who is usually confident and secure may have anxious

moments and express these anxieties in a philosophical comment or

question ... comments should not be responded to as if they had appeared

in a vacuum. Sometimes assurances of loving concern should be included

in the adult's response; and sometimes the adult should forget about the

philosophy and concentrate on the child's emotional problems.

(Matthews,G 1980a:85-86. See also BCC:para 113)

Matthews therefore suggests that an anxious child raising questions about matters such as death, survival and individual identity might not be secure enough to undertake a disinterested enquiry into these issues. (18) To the extent that religious questions are often linked with matters of such fundamental concern to the child, there is a need for a parent to use the method recommended by Matthews cautiously in relation to such questions. There is, of course, once again, a crucial notion of tension here to which I shall return below.

Before leaving this notion of questioning, it is important to acknowledge that a mere *response* by parents to the questioning of their children may be insufficient to accomplish the liberal ideal to which we have been referring. This is because some children may not in fact question at all, or may not question sufficiently deeply. In these cases, the parent has the responsibility from the liberal point of view of *stimulating* such questioning. In these cases, a merely *reactive* strategy is not enough. As I show in Appendix B, it is neglect of this point which leads to an inadequacy in Bruce Ackerman's concept of Liberal Education in his book 'Social Justice in the Liberal State'. (Ackerman,B 1980:Ch5)

I shall deal in a later section with the question of the coherence of the intentions of parents adopting such strategies, and also with the *temporal* dimension to the encouraging of questioning by the child. The extent and profundity of this questioning must obviously increase as the child gets older; parents cannot hope for, or aim at,

questioning of an extensive or profound sort in the early stages of their child's upbringing. But now I turn to the remaining elements of the religious aspects of that upbringing.

(b) **Teaching How**   The kind of strategies outlined in 'Teaching That ...' have wide implications for the initiation of children into religious practices. Perhaps the most important of these is the avoidance of unreflective methods and the willingness to encourage appropriate understanding as a central part of the initiation.

It is perhaps particularly in relation to this 'Teaching How' element of religious upbringing that the unacceptability of the 'necessity of tentativeness' thesis can be seen, although this unacceptability is compatible with the insistence that the parent adopt strategies such as those outlined above, for example in relation to the encouragement of questioning.

In her paper 'On Transubstantiation', Anscombe illustrates how a child's understanding of the Mass is best brought about in relation to involvement with *actions*. (Anscombe,G E M 1981:Ch 11:esp 107-108) Her account of the sort of description that a parent might give to their child of the Consecration is interesting. She writes -

> *...a child can be taught then by whispering to it such things as: 'Look! Look*
>
> *what the priest is doing...He is saying Jesus' words that change the bread*
>
> *into Jesus' body. Now he's lifting it up. Look! Now bow your head and*
>
> *say 'My Lord and my God' and then 'Look, now he's taken hold of the*
>
> *cup. He's saying the words that change the wine into Jesus' blood. Look*
>
> *up at the cup. Now bow your head and say ...*
>
> (Anscombe,G E M 1981:107)

It is clear that this might be regarded as an unduly determinate explanation of a controversial ritual (even within Christianity) and open to the objection that it is moulding the child illicitly.

If, however, the child is to be introduced to such rituals at all, determinate 'realist' explanations of them of a fairly concrete kind are inevitable, certainly in the early stages. Otherwise, what sense would children make of them? (Compare Wittgenstein's arguments in 'On Certainty': Wittgenstein,L 1969). This would seem to apply whether the children are merely spectators of the rituals or participants in them.

But in view of this, should a concern for the subsequent autonomy of the child imply that children should not be brought up to *participate* in such rituals, as distinct from observing them ? There are perhaps two major lines of argument against this conclusion. First, participation is important in bringing about a significant religious understanding on the part of children of the sort discussed in Chapter Two. (On this see Dykstra,C 1981:Ch4),(19) Second, it is also important in the achievement of a sense of family unity and solidarity. There is a risk that non-participation in rituals would be a threat to this, especially when it is borne in mind that such rituals can be quite pervasive in a religious family, and at many different levels, including, for example, prayer itself and grace at meals etc. (For discussion of the issue of whether children should be admitted to Holy Communion see BCC:paras 388-391; On other aspects of the involvement of children with religious practices see BCC:paras 96-100; 304-315; Ch15).

(c) **Teaching To**   A full exploration of this area involves a vast range of issues. An indication of these can be seen by a study of David Isaacs book - 'Character Building: a guide for parents and teachers'. (Isaacs,D 1984) Isaacs outlines 24 virtues which ought to be developed in children. His characterisation of these virtues, and of how they are related to each other to form a coherent 'package' in a person, is drawn from a Catholic perspective. (Compare Dent,N 1984), What he offers is, in effect, (one version of) a programme of what is involved in the formation of a Catholic person. To assess in detail how such a proposed upbringing might be conducted in such a way as to facilitate autonomy would involve a detailed and painstaking examination of the details of Isaacs' thesis. It is complicated also by the fact that the thesis brings out the

point that the distinction between the formation of a religious person and a person more generally is blurred. A religious formation has a holistic dimension to it. (On this see, for example Dykstra,C 1981 and Hauerwas,S 1980 who emphasise the significance of vision, character and the virtues in such a formation - and the difficulty in separating out moral from religious elements in it. MacIntyre,A 1981;1988 gives support for this general line of argument).

Can anything general be said about these matters from my perspective? A number of reasonably clear implications would seem to follow. It follows from my earlier points, for example, that the parent should ensure that there is no use of even subtle forms of psychological or emotional blackmail/manipulation of guilt etc., in the development of religious feelings and dispositions in the child, that worship should be open to the possibility of criticism, learning and breadth of perspective (See BCC:paras 349; 354-363; 368), and so on. Further, the freedom of the child at an appropriate point to refuse to participate in the religious form of life should be fully respected. (For the underlying principle here see BCC:para 391). The notion of an 'appropriate point' is a crucial one, and I shall be offering a clarification of it in subsequent discussion.

It might be claimed, however, that such conditions are most easily met in relation to the various *constituent elements* of a religious upbringing. But what of the 'holistic' dimension? If one is seeking, as Isaacs is (and Dykstra and Hauerwas are), to develop a whole ensemble of interrelated and interlocking virtues and dispositions in a person, in effect to form that person *as a whole*, how can such conditions be fulfilled?

But how serious is this difficulty? After all, the formation of a person is, notoriously, not a phenomenon which matches up neatly to some abstract taxonomy of the virtues. As long as the parent is aware of the need to ensure that their child is not trapped in a restrictive overall identity as well as in particular beliefs, practices and dispositions, I feel that this problem can be overcome.

Before proceeding, I ought to make clear that, in order to carry out the form of religious upbringing under discussion, I presuppose that parents have certain capacities and qualities. They must possess, after all, not only certain intentions , but also the

(arguably complex) ability to carry them into effect. I do not enter here in any depth into this matter (but see BCC:para 200 for some brief relevant remarks).

(5) Some Further Critical Challenges

My outline of the possibility of a form of substantive religious upbringing acceptable within liberal values is open to further challenge on several grounds. It is appropriate at this point to consider several such challenges, and to indicate the kinds of arguments that can be used to defend my position against them.

(a) The challenge of incoherent intentions

This first challenge concerns an alleged incoherence in the intentions of the parents in seeking to develop *both* a determinate belief and commitment on the part of their children *and* open-mindedness. I hope that my earlier discussion has dealt with one source of possible incoherence; that arising from the logic of the religious faith of the parents.

One important question might be raised about this here. Will not parents who are religious believers *favour* certain kinds of outcomes as far as the eventual beliefs of their children are concerned? If the parents themselves believe that God exists, how can they happily accept that their children (however conscientiously and sincerely) come to reject this? Are not the parents blithely accepting that, as they (must) see it, their children are embracing error? I repeat here the answer I gave to this question in my original article. -

> *...the conflict between faith and autonomy in the religious faith of a liberal*
> *is a false one. From such a position, what is demanded is autonomous*
> *religious faith based on appropriate reasoning and evaluation, not mere lip*

service or conditioning. The essential freedom of the act of faith must be

preserved. Religious liberal parents may well hope that their child's

eventual autonomy will be exercised in favour of faith; but in the logic of

their own religious - as well as liberal - position, this must remain a hope

rather than a requirement.

(McLaughlin,T H 1984:79)

Such parents must indeed see their children's (autonomous) rejection of their

religious faith as in a sense a matter of their children choosing error as the parents see

it. If this were not so, it is difficult to see what substantive content and force the

parents' own beliefs would have. But granted that autonomous choice (including the

possibility of the rejection of a religious framework) is *part* of their religious beliefs, the

parents must accept the outcome of their children's deliberations. One way of perhaps

putting this is that *built into* the parents' faith are conditions requiring the toleration of

error freely embraced by their offspring. (20)

To refer in this way to the 'religious faith of the parents' is not to overlook the

point that this is never, of course, a static, fully achieved thing (See Hull,J M 1985:esp

Ch3) but rather one which is in a constant state of development.

However, if the parents' faith is such that it *can* be reconciled with, or even seen

to require, the development of autonomy, there remains a rather different issue of

incompatibility arising from what might be regarded as *strategic* considerations. How

can parents be coherently seeking the development of faith and autonomy *at one and the*

same time? This problem surfaces in my earlier discussion of tensions in the logic of

questioning, and in the formation of the specific dispositions of the children.

The underlying difficulty here can be eased by making a distinction, as I did in

my original article, between the long-term and the short-term aims of the parents. Of

such parents I wrote -

Their long-term, or ultimate, aim is to place their children in a position

where they can autonomously choose to accept or reject their religious faith

- or religious faith in general. Since, however, these parents have decided

to approach the development of their child's autonomy in religion through

exposing them to their own particular religious faith, their short-term aim is

the development of faith; albeit a faith which is not closed off from future

revision or rejection. So a coherent way of characterising the intention of

the parents is that they are aiming at **autonomy via faith***.*

(McLaughlin.T H 1984:79)

One ingredient in this is the notion, which I introduced in my reply to Callan and discussed in the last chapter, of parents invoking a principle of 'tenacity of engagement' in relation to the religious upbringing of their children. In describing this principle, I wrote -

...in seeking to provide their child with a stable set of initial beliefs, parents

may well have to urge their children to engage significantly with practices

and ideas which are not immediately or continuously congenial to them, and

which may go against their current inclinations or beliefs....this is with the

aim of ensuring for the child a **significant engagement** *with the beliefs,*

so that their subsequent assessment - and perhaps rejection - of them will be

based on appropriate understanding and acquaintance.

(McLaughlin,T H 1985:121)

Interestingly, this notion of 'tenacity of engagement' finds an echo, albeit not a very precise one, in the BCC report. In paragraph 185 the report claims that 'a form of dogmatism' is a necessary requirement for critical openness -

Without dogmatism there could be no critical openness, for rigorous and searching enquiry would be impossible if beliefs were abandoned at the first breath of doubt. It is only the beliefs which are cared about enough to struggle over, to commit oneself to, to defend to the end, which can receive the deepest criticism......This element of dogmatism is important because it creates the conditions for critical openness, not because it limits its scope. Dogmatism without criticism is sterile, and criticism without dogmatism is empty.

(BCC:para 185)

This notion, which the report describes as 'methodological dogmatism' has some affinities to my notion of 'tenacity of engagement'. There are perhaps two major differences. The first is a terminological one. It is unfortunate that the report uses the term 'dogmatism' to characterise the notion. For the connotations of the term are opposed to rationality, and give the *impression* that a non-rational stubbornness or fideism is being recommended. But this would be inconsistent with the rest of the report, and indeed with the very notion which the report is trying to capture here. The other difference is fairly straightforward, in that the report is referring to an attitude of mind being recommended to adults, whilst my principle refers to the upbringing of children.

The BCC report presents 'methodological dogmatism' as of very general importance and significance, and invokes the example of Popperian principles in scientific research to illustrate this. However, one needs to be cautious of making too sweeping a claim about the necessity of this principle to critical openness. One can conceive of certain matters about which judgements can be made fairly straightforwardly and quickly, without the need for sustained engagement. There is also clearly a (variable) psychological element to the achievement of a mental state, such as 'critical openness' by any person. However, in relation to matters which are

complex, and which are also the subject of disagreement and dispute, it is appropriate to regard a process of sustained involvement with, and immersion in, the matters at issue, where one is hesitant in moving too quickly to criticism, as likely to enhance both understanding and the cogency of the subsequent critical assessment. (Compare my discussion of this matter in relation to Gardner's views in Chapter Two Section 3).

I am reluctant to claim, however, that such a principle is *necessary* to critical openness. In particular, I am not claiming, in the case of religion, that 'tenacity of engagement' with a particular faith is necessary to 'religious autonomy'. One can conceive of a person adopting a rather different strategy in achieving this. They might, for example, start their quest from a significant engagement with atheism or some other position along the spectrum of belief and unbelief. Although one might conceive of a person developing their autonomy in this sphere by a process of general broad review, it would seem that something more than superficial acquaintance with aspects of the spectrum would seem to be highly desirable, if not strictly necessary, for the achievement of autonomy of some significance. My more limited claim is that 'tenacity of engagement' with their own faith is *one way* in which parents might coherently launch their children on the road to religious autonomy.

But what does this principle of 'tenacity of engagement' really involve in this context? It is concerned with an important tension which arises in relation to the form of upbringing which I discuss, between, on the one hand, the parents' presentation and inculcation of their own faith, and their concern, on the other hand, for the autonomy of their children. Both elements contained within the principle are necessary for religious upbringing as I understand it. Without the notion of *engagement* of a significant kind then this kind of upbringing could scarcely be regarded as religious at all; there would be no norm of belief and practice that was being presented; the child would have no determinate norms in the religious domain presented to him or her. But, on the other hand, if the thrust to autonomy were missing from the upbringing, then it would just become a kind of unreflective socialisation or even indoctrination. So captured within the principle of 'tenacity of engagement' is a *tension*.

What can be said about the application of this principle? As I acknowledged in Chapter One, judgements about this matter can never be made in an ideal or abstract way. Sensitive judgements need to be made in the necessarily complex context of family life about the kinds of sensitive balances that need to be struck. A couple of important general points however, can be made.

First, on the 'engagement' side. The notion of engagement needs to be read as having supplied to it all the safeguards about autonomy which I have written of above; so it is in no sense a kind of unreflective matter. There is scope for criticism and critical appraisal, even though at the early stage there is more emphasis on laying the foundations for this rather than in actively encouraging it.

Second, as I wrote in my reply to Callan, the principle is compatible with recognising at a certain point that the child's critical rejection of the beliefs is so significant that it be fully respected and its expression permitted. It is perhaps in relation to this matter than the complexity of the application of the principle can be seen. For example, at what age should parents abandon efforts to insist, in the face of objections from a child, that they should accompany them to church and participate in services? At eight, twelve, sixteen? As I indicated in my earlier comments, I do not think that a full answer *in general* can be given to this question. (For difficulties in specifying a general concept of 'maturity' see Schrag,F 1978. On complexities concerning the issue of whether children have capacities for 'rational choice' see Houlgate,L 1979. For a discussion of differences between teenagers and other children that is relevant to my argument see Lindley,R 1989). Hopefully, the principle itself is clear here, however complex and contextually specific its application might be. (For a related discussion see Crittenden,B 1988:117-119).

(b)   A challenge concerning the general shaping of the person

Does a particular problem arise for this principle from the 'Teaching To' aspect of religious upbringing? It might be thought that in developing in the child a positive set

of religious attitudes, feelings and emotions such as 'a love for God and His will', 'a

hatred of sin', 'feelings of thanksgiving, repentance', and so on, one is encouraging

qualities which have a strongly intransitive aspect to them. The developments

envisaged in the 'Teaching That' and 'Teaching How' aspects of religious upbringing

might be thought to be ones which the child can more more easily escape from in later

stages of self-determination, should they seek to do this. But how is this so readily

possible in the case of the 'Teaching To' element, since this is precisely concerned with

getting children to engage in the religious life and to *want* to be religious?

In my view, the challenge can be met by emphasising the point that religious

dispositions / feelings / emotions etc. have - or should have - a cognitive base to them.

A person has certain religious emotions, for example, because they hold certain

religious beliefs, say about the character and nature of God or about the 'narrative

character' of their life, to borrow a term from Alasdair MacIntyre. It follows,

therefore, at least in principle, that if a person's religious beliefs change, than their

religious emotions will change also. A person holding a 'realist' conception of

Christianity, for example, is committed to a range of particular beliefs. Don Cupitt

characterises (in the past tense) such a believer as one who -

> *...experienced Christ as a real invisible person with whom he (sic) was*
>
> *acquainted and whose influence he experienced. This invisible person he*
>
> *identified with the Jesus of the Gospels ... Thus the unifying principle of*
>
> *Christology, the Christ of faith, was a real supernatural person who was*
>
> *personally identical with Jesus of Nazareth, who was active in the rites of*
>
> *the church and who was identifiable in religious experience.*

<div align="right">(Cupitt,D 1982:74)</div>

It is not difficult to see how such a set of beliefs can generate a range of

characteristic religious emotions centred on the figure of Christ. Suppose, however,

that such a person comes to adopt a 'non-realist' conception of Christianity of the sort

favoured by Cupitt himself. Cupitt characterises the 'realist' believer in the past tense because he claims that such a view of Christianity is no longer defensible. Thus he asks -

> *...What can it mean to claim that an invisible person walks with me, that I*
>
> *know him, that he accompanies me, that he exercises a transforming*
>
> *influence upon me, and that he indwells me? In secular contexts such*
>
> *claims are nowadays taken as evidence of insanity ... our continuing*
>
> *tolerance of such language in religious contexts must be due partly to our*
>
> *regarding it as a hallowed survival of earlier ways of thinking, and partly to*
>
> *the fact that in practice we nowadays interpret it metaphorically.*
>
> (Cupitt,D 1982:73-74)

And it is precisely this 'non-realist' interpretation of Christianity which Cupitt claims is the only one available to us today. Thus he claims - 'From a philosophical point of view we must conclude that if someone claims that a dead person lives in his heart and wields influence over him, then the life must be metaphorical and the influence moral.' (Cupitt,D 1982:74) Now whilst Cupitt claims that such a non-realist conception of religious faith can still sustain a form of worship and spirituality (On this point see particularly Cupitt,D 1980:Ch5), it is clearly a form which involves very different emotions from those experienced by the 'realist' believer - and this in virtue of the different beliefs involved. For Cupitt -

> *...in religion there is no independent being whose existence validates the*
>
> *practice of worship, just as in morality there is no independent being whose*
>
> *will validates the principles of morality . There does not need to be such an*
>
> *independent being, for the aim of worship is to declare one's complete and*
>
> *disinterested commitment to religious values. Belief in the God of*
>
> *Christian faith is an expression of allegiance to a particular set of values,*

and experience of the God of Christian faith is experience of the impact of

those values on one's life.

(Cupitt,D 1980:69 Emphasis in original)

In contrast, 'realist' believers, as Keith Ward characterises them, conceive of worship as communication with and trust in - ' *God*; in a real, objective, existent being, who loves and judges and will save us ... faith is not just some self-commitment without possible issue. It is a relationship of trust and love with the real God ...'. (Ward,K 1982:135. Emphasis in original) (21) In the light of the differences of belief involved, it is clear that the 'realist' and 'non-realist' are likely to have significantly different religious attitudes, feeling and emotions.

It follows therefore, that to the extent that a parent can ensure that a child's religious beliefs are developed in such a way that the possibility of eventual autonomy is preserved, then the child's religious attitudes, feelings and emotions will be similarly open to autonomy, since the latter is in an important sense *based on* and *linked to* the former. Thus in adopting the kind of approach to the development of religious beliefs outlined above, the parent will be laying the foundations for the child's affective and emotional - as well as cognitive - independence in religion.

As it stands, however, this is an incomplete answer to the challenge under discussion. More is required of the parent in ensuring their child's affective and emotional independence in religion than merely taking steps to ensure that inappropriately persistent religious beliefs are not formed. For what I have suggested so far may give the impression that a person's attitudes, feelings, emotions etc. change *automatically* as a consequence of a change of belief. But in the case of religion, there is the well known phenomenon of forms of guilt persisting even when the underlying substantive religious beliefs have been rejected, at least at the conscious level. (On this see, for example, Walsh,J 1989:162). It seems, therefore, that parents concerned to provide a religious upbringing aiming at personal autonomy should do all in their power to prevent the development of phenomena such as residual guilt. (For a related

discussion of the persistence of a similar phenomenon- illusions of authority- see Slote,M 1979).

How might such phenomena be avoided? Much that has been said so far in relation to the 'Teaching That', 'Teaching How' and 'Teaching To' elements of religious upbringing has a bearing on this issue, but I propose several additional strategies for tentative exploration here:

(i) Religious upbringing should be associated only with *positive* emotions and feelings. In this way the possibility of the emergence of a negative emotional residue would be substantially reduced. The sort of thing I have in mind in referring to 'positive emotions' can be illustrated by Michael Rutter's guidance to Quaker parents for them to avoid the creation in their children of joylessness, an unnecessary sense of guilt, mental conflict, an undue seriousness and so on.(Rutter,M 1983:94-103) On the contrary, claims Rutter - '...we should focus on the positive so far as we can'. (Rutter,M 1983:99) For Rutter, this includes promoting warmth, spontaneity, liveliness, enjoyment, self-respect, self-esteem, self-efficacy, optimism and so on. (Rutter,M 1983:96-97) There are surely few worries about the persistence of *these* kinds of attitudes and qualities in children.

The use of the concept 'positive' requires comment. How, precisely, is this to be understood? One must acknowledge the value-ladenness of the concept, and the scope, therefore, that arises for controversy and disagreement about its interpretation and application in particular cases. In general terms, however, one can appeal here to a broad notion of 'what is likely to be conducive to human flourishing'. I shall try to bring out below the consequences for my argument of the imprecision of this notion.

For the moment, however, it is not difficult to outline in general terms the implications of this approach for religious upbringing. Sin, for example, would be presented to the child not as a matter leading to a form of uncleanness or punishment, but more positively as, say, the failure of human potential. That this more positive approach is now widely recommended can be illustrated by reference to some of the

suggested replies offered by Brusselmans to parents facing questioning by their

children on religious matters. Thus she suggests as a reply to a question about whether

God punishes children who are bad, the following -

> *God never punishes naughty children. Children punish themselves when*
>
> *they are naughty. When children are naughty, they choose to separate*
>
> *themselves from those who love them; they choose to ... turn away from*
>
> *others ... to turn away from God. When people turn away from those who*
>
> *love them, they hurt themselves. They feel lonesome and sad. God never*
>
> *wants us to punish his children, because He loves us always, even when*
>
> *we do wrong.*

<div align="right">(Brusselmans,C 1977:165)</div>

With regard to the concept of Hell, Brusselmans writes - ' ... it is important to

answer children's questions and to re-assure the anxious child who worries about

going to Hell. Instead of accentuating the imagery of fire and brimstone stories we

must try to remove them from the child's imagination.' (Brusselmans,C 1977:181)

There is much to commend strategies such as these. (Compare Walsh,J 1989:Ch1,2).

(22)

Perhaps an appropriate element of this general strategy is for the parent to seek

out positive secular analogues for the religious concepts being presented, so that if the

religious beliefs are subsequently lost or abandoned, what remains is fully acceptable

and understandable in secular terms. There is a considerable overlap in content and

approach, for example, between morality viewed from a religious perspective on the

one hand, and in secular terms on the other. Caring for others has a very general value

whether or not is is connected up with a religious world view. Presenting sin in terms

of a failure of human potential in the way suggested above is an example of the sort of

analogising I have in mind here.

Does this strategy imply that parents should present to their children *only* those elements of their religious faith which have a clear, positive, secular analogue? I think that a negative answer should be given to this for two reasons. First, the very notion of religious concepts having secular analogues is itself a very rough one. For example, any suggestion that religious views of morality involve merely adding another dimension to independently existing secular values must be rejected as obviously crude. In many cases the value itself is significantly shaped by the religious or secular aspect under which it is viewed. Often the value does not have an independent character and life of its own, even where there is considerable overlap between religious and secular invocations of it. There are also complexities in the notion of a *positive* secular analogue, which re-introduces worries about the notion of 'positiveness' to which I have drawn attention above. The roughness and imprecision of the relevant notions here mean that, at best, the strategy under discussion should be seen as something that parents might adopt as a broad 'rule of thumb', one that indicates considerations which need to be borne in mind as possibilities likely to facilitate the achievement of autonomy rather than as rigidly specifiable guidelines which have a binding character. A second reason supporting this interpretation of the status of the strategy is that an insistence that parents confine the presentation of their religious faith to elements compatible with its underlying assumptions is to impose too restricting a condition upon them. There are clearly elements of religious values and duties which do not have precise secular analogues, and parents may claim that it is precisely these elements which constitute the distinctiveness and power of their faith. (On this see, for example, Dykstra,C 1981; Hauerwas,S 1980;1983). To insist that such elements be avoided altogether, or to be significantly downplayed, is to run the risk of inviting parents to present a bloodless, unrecognisable version of their faith to their children, and perhaps to underemphasise the (distinctive) *challenge* that it presents to them. In my view, such elements of the parents' faith can be presented to children, provided that there are other ways in which they can be presented that are compatible with a concern for autonomy.

For all the qualifications that are necessary regarding the characterisation and status of this strategy, I consider that it can be seen as one that can be used with judgement and sensitivity. It constitutes one way in which parents can seek to ensure that the initial religious faith of the child is not associated with the beliefs and emotions likely to inhibit personal autonomy later by being transformed into phenomena such as residual guilt.

(ii) Parents should also ensure that the affective and emotional aspects of their child's religious development take place in an appropriate relationship with the cognitive aspects of that development. Thus irrational, compulsive or neurotic forms of religious behaviour or response should be guarded against.

(c) A challenge concerning the danger of causing confusion to children

Will all this be *confusing* to children? If my earlier arguments are sound, the intentions of the parents can be accepted as coherent, but will not the children inevitably see the parents as trying to do two (different) things - on the one hand, instilling and nourishing a particular faith, and on the other hand constantly trying to undermine it? Such a conclusion would be damaging to my argument, since it is precisely the need to avoid confusion which underpins my rejection of the claim, by Callan and others, that religious parents have no right to give their children any determinate religious formation at all. (23)

How can such confusion be avoided? The first thing to note is that the parents' own beliefs are made clear, and they do not change, even if they are rather sophisticated. So there is no confusion arising from a constant state of flux here. But what about the perspective of the child? A fluctuation, and apparent inconsistency, might be perceived by children at a point before they are able to grasp that critical questioning is part of the content of their parents' beliefs, i.e., before they are able to comprehend some of the points about the logic of their parents' beliefs which were

outlined earlier. I envisage parents engaged in my form of upbringing eventually

saying to their children such things as - 'We have led you to believe in God. But part

of what is involved in this is to explore seriously the reality of God, and indeed to call it

into question. To merely believe on our authority does justice neither to your own

dignity, nor to what is demanded by faith in God. We believe that God exists, but we

also believe that you ultimately must come to your own decision.' This is a coherent

position for a child to grasp, even though, particularly in the early stages, there is the

danger of confusion if, for example, the child is presented with conflicting beliefs in

too clumsy a way. It is, therefore, true that the upbringing *could* be conducted in such

a way that children would be confused. The issue here, however, is whether such

upbringings must necessarily have this effect. If my arguments are correct, it is

possible to conceive of the upbringing avoiding confusion by being conducted with

skill and judgement. For example, the child's questioning needs to be encouraged in

such a way that it increases in extent and profundity over time, and in tune with the

child's developing cognitive capacity. It would obviously be confusing for a child of,

say, seven years of age to be encouraged to say prayers before going to bed on one

evening, and on the very next evening to be asked in a very radical way to consider

whether such a practice has any point.

There might be thought to be a difficulty about the child's conception of the

parents' *real* or *fundamental* desire with regard to their eventual decision with regard to

matters of faith. If the parents regard their faith as *true*, will they not want their child to

come (albeit autonomously) to the same decision? And will not this wish be conveyed

to the child and inevitably influence and confuse him or her? What the child has to

grasp is the distinction between (i) the fundamental desire of the parents that their child

should come to an autonomous decision, and (ii) the parents own view about where the

truth lies with regard to the matters at issue which inevitably leads the parents to have

preferences (arising from part of the logic of their beliefs) about the conclusions that

their children should come to. But (i) has priority, as outlined above. The perception

of the difference between (i) and (ii) calls for a degree of sophistication (and emotional

maturity) on the part of the child. But given a developmental perspective on the matter, and parental skill and judgement, there seems no reason to suppose that the child will not achieve the necessary understanding.

Before turning to the next challenge, I should make it clear that my argument deals with cases where *both* parents share the same religious faith. The situation where parents have differing, and perhaps conflicting, religious beliefs gives rise to additional complexities which I have no space to enter into here (For some discussion of this and related matters see, for example, BCC:paras 253-265; 297-299).

(d) A challenge concerning individualism

This challenge claims that I have presented families and parents as existing in a social vacuum; as disconnected from the wider faith - and general- community in which they live. Once this is taken into account, it might be argued, the task I have assigned to parents is revealed as a much more difficult one than I have acknowledged.

It must be conceded that the role of the wider 'faith community' is a significant one. (On this issue, see for example, BCC:paras 11-16;46; 70;90-91;93-94;Ch 7-esp 116-126;293-296;364-368). But why should this constitute a difficulty for my argument? As long as two conditions are met, I see no reason why my argument cannot incorporate this community dimension. The first of these conditions is that the parents must maintain, and encourage, an appropriately critical attitude to the faith community. (See, for example, BCC:para 296). This is facilitated by the fact that the parents in my argument are envisaged as living in a pluralistic society, where a range of communities or sub-cultures can be presumed to exist. The second (related) condition is that the faith community itself must not exert undue control or influence over the family. There must be enough scope for the family to achieve the kind of critical perspective that is mentioned in the first condition. (24)

My position is open to other challenges. One such, as pointed out by Laura and Leahy (Laura,R S & Leahy,M 1989:255) is that my view presupposes and requires an epistemology of religious claims. There are also other lines of enquiry and criticism which have emerged. (Gardner,P 1990) I have no space to explore these matters further at this point. However, I remain convinced that there is no necessary incompatibility or contradiction between the intention to develop and protect the autonomy of the child and the intention to develop in the child a determinate set of religious attitudes, feelings and emotions, since it is possible to outline - at least in theory - how these can be developed in a way that preserves the child's eventual autonomy. The notion of such a religious upbringing is one that can be coherently characterised, even though wide-ranging empirical and psychological research would be necessary to establish exactly how in detail such an upbringing should be provided. However, I have outlined a series of principles yielding guidelines of concrete significance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Parents' Rights in General Concerning the Education of their Children

So far in my argument I have sought to establish the claim that parents have a right to give their children an initial upbringing - a 'primary culture' - which can include amongst its substantive elements a form of religious upbringing which is compatible with concern for the development of the child's autonomy. Liberals, in other words, need not find a religious upbringing *in principle* unacceptable. There are forms of it which are harmonious with their ideals.

I now turn to the question of the rights that parents can be said to have over the more formal and extended education of their children. In this chapter, I shall take 'education' to be synonymous with 'schooling', and shall leave to one side consideration of the rights and duties that parents might have concerning the non-schooling elements of the education of their children.

It is clear that the rights given to parents in relation to 'initial upbringing' cannot be extended unproblematically to cover formal education. Ackerman, for example, claims that parents have no 'basic right' to determine the education of their children. What is basic here is the right of the *child* to a liberal and liberating education which will provide him or her with the tools for autonomy and self-definition; (1) the opportunity to assess (and perhaps deviate from) parental norms. For Ackerman, such a 'liberal education' is one of the conditions for a liberal political community.

Ackerman thus rejects Friedmanite suggestions that schools compete for pupils in the marketplace, with parents having complete freedom of choice of schools via a 'voucher' system. He claims that since parents are likely to spend their vouchers on schools which reinforce their existing values, the plan -

...legitimises a series of petty tyrannies in which like-minded parents club

together to force-feed their children without restraint. Such an education is

a mockery of the liberal ideal.

(Ackerman, B A 1980:160)

Ackerman accuses Friedman of being blind to the moral indoctrination of children undertaken by parents - a process which infringes 'the dialogic rights of the powerless'.

The conclusion of this kind of argument is not of course that parents have no rights over the education of their children. Ackerman acknowledges that the child's family typically will exercise continuing powers of 'legitimate control and guidance' over their children and that this will have implications for the rights of professional educators. Thus, claims Ackerman, -

... a liberal school cannot ride roughshod over parental sensibilities, but

must give family heads the right to press a panic button if a particular form

of schooling threatens to overwhelm the family's efforts at control and

guidance.

(Ackerman, B A 1980:156)

Putting too much emphasis on 'control and guidance' as a criterion for conceding a 'parental veto' has its dangers of course, and Ackerman does not deal in detail with these. For could not *any* dispute within a family be represented by the parent as a problem of 'control and guidance'? What, for example, of a case such as that of Asian parents who object to their daughter's secondary education on the grounds that she is unwilling as a result to conform to parental norms concerning career, marriage, dress and social behaviour? Could such parents, within the terms of Ackerman's argument,

develop a case for interfering in their daughter's education on the grounds of their right to 'control' and 'guide' her?

Ackerman aims, of course, to restrict such moves by building in 'respect for the autonomy of the child' to his account of legitimate parental control and guidance. With regard to 'control', for example, parents' rights are seen as extending only to the establishment of that amount of control required to develop in the child the degree of self-discipline necessary to function as an autonomous adult, and to avoid falling foul of the criminal law. Thus Ackerman writes - 'Junior cannot protest special restrictions in childhood that free him from greater restrictions imposed in later life ... such limitations are necessary conditions for the maximum recognition of his dialogic rights over his lifetime.' (Ackerman, B A 1980:148) But clearly the kind of parental control licensed on this view does not extend to the form of control sought by the Asian parents in our example.

A similar point can be made regarding guidance. For Ackerman this crucially involves the parent respecting the *ends* chosen by the child (particular projects, activities etc.). The function of parental guidance is to provide help and advice concerning the *means* necessary to the child's realisation of those ends and to illuminate the implications and significance of choosing the ends in question. As a result, the child may re-assess choices and commitments, but this is seen as a process the outcome of which cannot be directly coerced by parents. Their role is to facilitate the autonomous choice of ends by their children by providing, on the basis of their intimate knowledge of the individuals in question, an appropriate background of knowledge and understanding. Thus, to expand a case cited by Ackerman, a child may decide to become a good baseball player. A great deal of empirical knowledge is needed about how such an aim can be realised (eg. about the kind of batting practice required). In addition, the child needs to know whether his aim fits in with his character, personality and other interests and projects. The child also needs to consider his decision in the light of his eventual membership of adult society, with its pressures of various kinds. In the light of all this necessary background of knowledge and

understanding, Ackerman considers it legitimate that a parent might, in view of his

intimate knowledge of his particular child - '...find ways of suggesting to the child that,

even when taken in his own terms, he has misestimated the costs or benefits involved

in the activity in which he has become interested'. (Ackerman, B A 1980:150.

Emphasis in original) A crucial phrase for Ackerman here is 'even when taken in his

own terms', which emphasises the role of the parent in facilitating - and not

manipulating - the child's autonomous determination of ends. This remains the aim of

parental guidance on Ackerman's view, even if, in a given case, the immaturity of the

child calls for more direct parental intervention.

Applied to the case of the Asian parents outlined above, it is possible to see that,

in Ackerman's terms, no *unrestricted* claim for parental control over the daughter's

education could be made by appealing to the right to provide 'guidance'. The parent,

therefore, must acknowledge, at least to some degree, the right of professional

educators to introduce their daughter to alternative 'life-ideals' - and the right of the

daughter to dissent from those espoused by the family.

It is worth noting the complexities which arise, however, once one moves from

discussion of this case at the level of *principle* to that of more detailed practice. As

Ackerman himself observes - 'It is ... one thing to state a principle, quite another to

work out the particular shape of parental control that is justified within a particular

institutional setting'. (Ackerman, B A 1980:148) (For an illustration of this general

point see Gutmann,A 1987:Ch 3,5). (2) Agreement at the level of basic principle

(concerning the primacy of securing the autonomy of the child) is compatible with quite

wide-ranging dispute about the scope of parental rights thereby licensed.

Ackerman does little more than indicate in very general terms a *tension* in the

determination of schooling between 'rights of parents' and 'rights of children to liberal

education'. He outlines this tension in the following way -

On the one hand, school curriculum (sic) must be respectful of the parents'

legitimate - if declining - authority over their children. On the other hand,

> *parents have an obligation to refrain from using that residual authority in*
>
> *ways that sabotage the child's right to a liberal education.*

(Ackerman, B A 1980:156)

This tension seems central to the liberal understanding of parents' rights here (with the proviso that 'authority' needs to be understood not merely in relation to 'control' but more generously as embodying features of distinctive parental knowledge, concern and 'role in relation to education'). This tension can be regarded as functioning as a *principle* for liberal thought on this issue, and it is one which is, in various forms, present in the writings of a number of philosophers of a liberal persuasion who have addressed themselves to the topic of parental rights. (See, for example, Bishop,S 1980; Bigelow,J *et al* 1988; Callan,E 1985b; Chamberlin,R 1989; Crittenden,B 1988; Feinberg,J 1980b; Fisher,D 1982; Gutmann,A 1987; Hamm,C 1982; Henley,K 1979; Hobson,P 1984; Walzer,M 1983; White,P 1983; Young,R 1980).

One question which can be raised about this 'tension' is whether it is a tension between conflicting *rights*. I have no space here to enter into an extensive discussion of the many complex issues concerning 'rights'. (3) On the question at issue here, it has been argued that the parent has no educational rights which are independent of the child's right to liberal education. (See, for example, White,P 1983:Ch5). If all parental rights are seen as subserving the educational rights of children in this way, then no real tension between rights can arise; the tension is one between conflicting *duties*. This is an issue which I shall take up again later in this chapter. Whatever the precise details of its formulation, however, it seems clear that this tension is a highly significant feature of any account of parents' educational rights seeking to do justice to the full range of liberal values (including those concerning the autonomy of the child). Ackerman does little more than establish the tension as a central point of reference. But what actually follows from it, or can be derived from it and its background of liberal assumptions, as far as the specific educational rights of parents are concerned?

In this chapter, I shall seek to examine a range of views which are relevant to the determination of parental educational rights from a liberal point of view. I intend to examine a number of positions which can be located on a continuum according to the degree to which they acknowledge, and provide for, the development of the autonomy of the child. Although there are considerable differences of detail between the various positions, I have divided them roughly into two categories. The first category consists of positions which *do not* incorporate such autonomy into their analysis, or which do so inadequately. They fail, therefore to embody this side of the 'tension' identified earlier. Views in the second category *do* allot a central role and status to the autonomy of the child. I shall seek to establish the claim that, even granted a fairly strict 'Category Two' position, it is possible to locate some significant parental educational rights which are often overlooked by liberal philosophers of education sympathetic to such positions.

(1) Views giving Inadequate Significance to the Development of the Autonomy of the Child

We have already seen that the Friedmanite suggestion of parental educational vouchers is rejected by Ackerman on the grounds of inadequate respect for the developing autonomy of the child, and it seems clear that this would be true also of an associated family of positions which place great emphasis on the rights of parents, and which have been much discussed recently. (4) This family is well illustrated by the manifesto of the Hillgate Group 'Whose Schools?'. (Cox,C et al. 1986) The basic claim of the group is that schools should be owned not by Local Education Authorities but by individual trusts, and that the survival of the schools should be determined in the marketplace by their ability to satisfy their 'customers', seen principally as *parents* - '...who should therefore be free to place their custom where they wish, in order that educational institutions should be shaped, controlled and nourished by their demand'.

(Cox,C et al. 1986:7) Included among the rights parents are seen as having on this view, apart from choice of school (5), is the right to remove their children from lessons which they find offensive on religious and moral grounds (Cox,C et al. 1986:16) and to determine the religious education which their children receive. (Cox,C et al. 1986:18) A similar general view is to be found developed at greater length by Anthony Flew in his book - 'Power to the Parents'. (Flew,A 1987:esp Ch 1,4)

However, Hillgate nowhere *defends* its commitment to parental rights, and nor does it discuss or acknowledge the character and significance of the concept of the autonomy of the child. 'Whose Schools?' is heavy on (mere) assertion, as seen for example in its statement that - 'Children *need* to be instructed in religious doctrine, in accordance with the wishes and the faith of their parents'. (Cox,C et al.:2 My emphasis) What is the justification for this need claim?

An attempt by Anthony O'Hear to provide a philosophical justification for the Hillgate proposals in an article in 'The Times Educational Supplement' (O'Hear,A 1987) is seriously deficient. O'Hear claims that the proposals - ...allow just the sort of genuine flexibility and diversity in education that true liberals ought to cherish', and he supports this view by invoking J.S. Mill's strictures in 'On Liberty' against the necessarily despotic and homogenising character of a general system of state education. But Mill himself inadequately considers both the significance of the autonomy of the child and the possibility that a certain form of general, common, educational provision might promote it. This inadequacy is inherent therefore in O'Hear's Millian defence of Hillgate. (6)

The absence of a convincing justification for parental rights is also a feature of Flew's discussion. Flew claims that his view of education - '...follows as a corollary from a recognition of the most fundamental and universal human rights' (Flew,A 1987:14), but the rights in question are never analysed, and there is no indication, much less treatment, of the conflict and tension between the rights of parents and of children which are the concern of my argument. Flew's search for a justification for his view is quickly switched from the question of rights to arguments relating to -

'...concrete and practical considerations of educational improvement'. (Flew,A 1987:15) (7)

In this part of his argument, however, there is a telling sentence which Flew places, almost as an afterthought, in brackets. With regard to his stylistic practice in the book, he writes - 'By the way, the point of sometimes writing not 'parents' but 'families' is to remind ourselves that, as children grow up, they should play a steadily increasing part in making the decisions about their futures'. (Flew,A 1987:15) Flew does not pursue the major implications for his overall argument arising from this remark. For example, how is the balance to be struck between the rights of parents and children here? How broadly is 'decision-making about the future' being conceived, and what do children need in educational terms (against if necessary the wishes of parents?) in order to be equipped for it?

Both Flew and Hillgate see a national curriculum as compatible with their plans. Indeed, Hillgate sees such a curriculum as 'essential'. However, this is conceived very sketchily in terms of a core of 'reading, writing and arithmetic' and - '...a settled range of proven subjects', constituting '...a testable and coveted body of knowledge which it is the duty of any educational system to pass on from generation to generation'. (Cox,C et al 1986:7) (8)

Neither Hillgate nor Flew address the point that what might be required in terms of a core or entitlement curriculum for all young people is a richer diet such as that outlined by Patricia White (White,P 1988a) as necessary for preparing students for life in a pluralistic democracy and which aims at such things as them developing - '...an understanding of and commitment to democratic values...and having the democratic qualities of character...'. (White,P 1988a:197) (For more on the essential features of such a curriculum required by a liberal democracy see White,J 1973; 1988a; Crittenden,B 1988:Ch 5,7). The implications of such aims are complex, but their significance to the notion of the autonomy of the child and the need to recognise a tension between this notion and the rights of parents is clear.

The failure of Hillgate and Flew to acknowledge the tension identified earlier has a bearing on the rather thin notion of 'guidance for parents' that they employ. (9)

Such views seem to invoke a conception of society such as that described by Amy Gutmann in 'Democratic Education' as 'the state of families'. (Gutmann,A 1987:28-33) In this conception, educational authority is placed - '...exclusively in the hands of parents, thereby permitting parents to predispose their children, through education, to choose a way of life consistent with their familial heritage'. (Gutmann,A 1987:28) Gutmann mounts a series of arguments against this conception, and in favour of the claim that neither parents nor the state have a right to complete authority over the education of children. (Gutmann,A 1987:29-33) The essence of the arguments echo the position of Ackerman in that they stress the crucial importance of the autonomy of the child. As Gutmann puts it -

The same principle that requires a state to grant adults personal and political freedom also commits it to assuring children an education that makes those freedoms both possible and meaningful in the future. A state makes choice possible by teaching its future citizens respect for opposing points of view and ways of life. It makes choice meaningful by equipping children with the intellectual skills necessary to evaluate ways of life different from that of their parents.

(Gutmann,A 1987:30)

This important point is captured by Gutmann in her principle of 'non-repression', which she takes to be one of the two principled limits to parental and political authority over education. (10) Gutmann therefore denies that parents have a right to determine exclusively the educational experience of their children. Like Ackerman, she acknowledges the force of a 'tension' within which (in an admittedly difficult way) the respective rights of parents and the community must be worked out.

The Hillgate/Flew position seems to fall foul of such arguments, the force of which I have acknowledged. But can their general position be given a more effective expression? A candidate here is the more fully worked out argument of Brenda Cohen (later Brenda Almond) in her book 'Education and the Individual' (Cohen,B 1981), which claims to be within the liberal tradition. However, on examination this argument can be seen to invoke liberal values selectively, and it inadequately accommodates the principle of developing the autonomy of the child. (11)

(a) The argument of Coons and Sugarman

Can a further source for a more adequate statement of this general perspective be found? Another candidate worthy of examination in this connection is the argument of John Coons and Stephen Sugarman in 'Education by Choice:The case for family control'. (Coons,J E and Sugarman,S D 1978 - Hereinafter EFC) The starting point for this argument seems to be similar to that of Ackerman: the legitimate diversity of views concerning the good life prevalent in a pluralist society. Thus, Coons and Sugarman acknowledge that, beyond certain common values which bind such a society together (for example the desire to live in harmony, to co-operate in production and defence etc.), there is a - 'virtual menagerie' (EFC:1) as far as more detailed conceptions of the good life are concerned.

In determining where rights should lie concerning the control of the education of children in this context, Coons and Sugarman share several common assumptions with Ackerman's perspective. First, they accept that the crucial issue at stake is what is in the interests of the *child* - ' ... we view parents primarily as potential instruments of the child's welfare; the chief issue is whether family choice would be a blessing for children, not whether it is a right of the parents.' (EFC:23) Second, on the question of what actually *is* in the interests of the child, they place great emphasis on developing the child's moral autonomy. For them, a crucial criterion in assessing the adequacy of a child's upbringing is whether it helps him or her to 'accumulate the stuff of self-

determination', (EFC:2) and they describe this goal as their 'primary objective'. (EFC:71) For Coons and Sugarman, - 'The concept of autonomy ... suggests an indispensable intellectual and ethical ideal - to achieve the highest degree of mental and moral self-determination and sensitivity which circumstance permits.' (EFC:72) Unlike Cohen, Hillgate and Flew, therefore, Coons and Sugarman give explicit acknowledgement to the centrality of the principle of developing the autonomy of the child. Although, as we shall see, the precise status of this principle in Coons and Sugarman's thesis turns out to be rather unclear on closer examination, it is important to note their awareness of its importance and their attempt to show that it is compatible with their proposals for family control of education. It is this awareness which enables us to consider the possibility that it genuinely seeks to accept the force of Ackerman's 'tension'. No adequate criticism of Coons and Sugarman's position can fail therefore, to engage with their treatment of autonomy and it is in this respect that Cornel Hamm's discussion of their view is incomplete. (Hamm,C 1982)

Despite apparent agreement on these fundamental principles, however, the substance of Coons and Sugarman's position stands in marked contrast to views in the second category we shall be considering, in virtue of its strong emphasis on the parental element of the 'tension'. They argue for - ' ... the strengthening of the family's role in education and the growth of a teaching fraternity which is related to the family as professional to client rather that as master to servant'. (EFC:2) They also claim that it is inconsistent for a democratic society to allow parents freedom of choice concerning the material aspects of their child's upbringing (food, clothes etc.) but not in regard to the much more fundamental matter of education, where, granted the controversial character of the evaluative issues involved, choice is more significant and necessary.

Coons and Sugarman are alert, however, to the dangers of giving parents *complete* powers of control over the education of their children, and they are opposed to - 'outright parentocracy'. (EFC:13) They therefore construct a range of controls over complete parental freedom. Thus, on grounds of justice, they guarantee to

children a basic right of 'reasonable access' to education in cases of clear parental neglect, apathy or unreasonable opposition. Further, they provide that the public and private schools created under a system of family choice must meet a 'fair minimum standard' and that - 'The state would mandate that all children receive whatever elements of education command a public consensus.' (EFC:13) Amongst other things, these provisions rule out the possibility of a parent selecting - '...the scholastic equivalent of booze.' (EFC:13) (12)

Despite this range of controls imposed on unlimited parental power it is nevertheless clear that parental rights of quite an extensive kind emerge on Coons and Sugarman's account. Chief amongst these is the right to choose a distinctive form of schooling promoting a particular 'world view' or 'conception of the good'. Perhaps this is most clearly illustrated in a passage where Coons and Sugarman discuss different interpretations of the notion of the 'marketplace' in relation to schooling. Their own conception of this is - '...an educational system comprising a wide variety of schools each promoting an idea.' (EFC:102-103) Within the kinds of limit outlined above, families would be free to choose their own schools. There is nothing in these limits, however, to insist that each child's education must include a systematic exposure to a variety of world views or conceptions of the good. This is not seen as one of the 'politically determined essentials' that must be satisfied in a 'basic minimum'. There is therefore no limit on a parent's right to choose a school providing a particular form of religious or political education (indoctrination?) or programmes - '...emphasising science, the classics, McGuffey's reader, music, the Baltimore Catechism, of the sayings of Chairman Mao.' (EFC:10)

Coons and Sugarman contrast their own view of an educational marketplace with another view - one which is much more central to the 'liberal education' tradition. On this second view, as described by Coons and Sugarman, the marketplace is defined as - '...a plurality of ideologies inside the same schoolroom and all experienced by the individual child; each school ... (has) ... to satisfy the marketplace metaphor within its own walls.' (EFC:102-103) Coons and Sugarman are aware of the criticisms that can

be made of their conception of a legitimate 'marketplace' from this point of view. Thus they write - 'From this perspective, family choice systems could be thought pernicious on the ground that they tend to promote not schools which are marketplaces but merely a marketplace of schools, each of which is to its own students an isolated ideological enclave.' (EFC:103)

Do the resources of Coons and Sugarman's position enable them to meet this criticism better than Hillgate and Flew, and in a way which strikes an acceptable balance within Ackerman's 'tension'? Specifically, can they reconcile such an extensive parental right with the need to protect and develop the autonomy of the child? In an attempt to answer these questions, I shall look critically at three key elements of Coons and Sugarman's argument in turn :- The status of the principle of autonomy, educational conditions for the development of autonomy and the basis for maximal parental educational rights.

(i)   The status of the principle of autonomy

Coons and Sugarman's characterisation of autonomy in Chapter 5 of their book is in no way idiosyncratic and represents an account which would be largely acceptable to philosophers in the liberal tradition such as Ackerman and White. Thus an autonomous person is seen as one who is intellectually and morally independent to the extent that his or her commitment to particular beliefs and values is the fruit of - 'continually examined assent.' (EFC:72) This is seen as an achievement which is always a matter of degree and which cannot be given an exclusively instrumental justification either at the personal or societal level. An autonomous person is not necessarily one who suffers from rootless non-commitment or egoism - and so on. All this is quite familiar.

A difficulty arises, however, once one begins to probe the *status* given to the value of autonomy by Coons and Sugarman. As we noted earlier, they seem to emphasise this value in the strongest possible terms. Thus, they refer to autonomy as - '...an indispensable intellectual and ethical ideal' (EFC:72) and claim that - '...we

know no worthier objective.' (EFC:72) Yet on the other hand, they claim that this is merely a - '...personal view' (EFC:71), as if to suggest that other values or principles could be substituted for autonomy - or balanced with it in such a way that it ceases to be of prime importance. Yet Coons and Sugarman do not engage in any argument about how autonomy might be challenged in this way. Presumably they consider that such challenges fail and it is on the basis of this failure that they defend their own view that autonomy is indeed of fundamental importance. But if this is so, why are they so tolerant of these challenges, describing their own view merely as a 'personal' one? The precise status claimed for the principle of autonomy is clearly of crucial significance in any argument designed to defend parental rights of a substantial kind. The failure of Coons and Sugarman to give an explicit account of the status of this principle has implications for the cogency of their entire position. (13)

(ii)   Educational conditions for the development of autonomy

Coons and Sugarman's account of the educational conditions necessary for the development of autonomy is similar in certain respects, as we shall see, to that offered by Patricia White. They explicitly reject, for example, the suggestion that autonomy might be developed merely through a process of self-expression, and see it rather as the product of a certain kind of upbringing and education. Thus they write - '...we are convinced that the hope of autonomy for most children lies not in the elimination of coercion - at best a romantic sentiment - but in a guarantee that society will provide whatever temporary and diminishing subordination is most likely to yield autonomy as its ultimate product.' (EFC:76)

They commit themselves to the view that crucially involved in the development of autonomy are certain planned learning experiences and claim that - '...there are at least some common elements of a formal education that can be identified as conducive to autonomy.' (EFC:76) These they partly identify with the basic 'societally agreed minimum' which was referred to earlier (verbal and mathematical language, history,

philosophy, culture and science). But they also make the crucial point, ignored by Hillgate and Flew, that -

> *... autonomy requires more than minimums; we believe it demands the child's exposure to and dialogue with issues of justice and personal morality. His education should draw him into that human exchange about the nature of the good life which in large measure is the central subject of the permanent debate among a democratic people.*

<div align="right">(EFC:76)</div>

Coons and Sugarman call this experience *engagement.*

There are clear general similarities here with the kind of liberal education advocated by Ackerman and White, with its stress on the need for children to be introduced to, and to be helped to think for themselves in relation to, fundamental issues arising for autonomous agency in a democratic context. (The use by Coons and Sugarman of the term 'dialogue' as an alternative to 'engagement' on some occasions, brings out particularly the similarity to Ackerman's thesis). There are similarities too to Gutmann's account of what is required in order to bring about the formation of 'deliberative character', which she sees as the core political purpose of education for students of school age in a democracy. (Gutmann A, 1987:50-52)

Especially striking in terms of points of similarity is Coons and Sugarman's apparent acknowledgement (strongly paralleled in Ackerman and White) of the *necessity* of liberal education. This passage from Coons and Sugarman brings out the implications for aspects of personhood of a lack of an appropriate intellectual formation: - '... ignorance limits the capacity of humans to see moral questions in full context. Indeed ignorance puts some issues of distributive justice quite beyond the effective reach of persons who would consider them seriously and contribute to their solution if it were intellectually feasible for them to do so.' (EFC:77)

Despite these similarities, however, there are crucial points of difference between Coons and Sugarman's view of educational conditions for the development of autonomy, and the views of Ackerman and White.

The first point of difference arises directly from their equivocal handling of the status of the principle of autonomy, and concerns the *compulsoriness* of liberal education for all children. As noted above, Coons and Sugarman fail to state 'development of the autonomy of the child' as the end of education in an unambiguous way. They claim that it is their 'personal' conception of the end of education but seem inconsistently reluctant to propose it as a conception that should be binding upon all citizens in a democracy. They thus seem curiously content merely to report the following description of the variety of ends proposed by American educators -

> *...one finds that some would teach children to work, others to loaf. Many exalt education for 'life', others for the after-life; some for responsibility or self-control, others for fun ... Some would loose the children; some would bind. Some propose career education, others classical.*
>
> (EFC:37)

The failure of Coons and Sugarman to propose a coherent, generally applicable end, in the face of this diversity has implications for their characterisation of the 'basic minimum' to which they refer - the 'politically determined essentials' that every child's education must include. Thus they write - ' ... some positive needs of children can be identified. Few doubt the advantage of mastering minimal physical co-ordination, fundamental academic skills, basic information about society, and those elementary forms of behaviour necessary to deal with other people.' (EFC:37) But on Coons and Sugarman's own admission, this 'basic minimum' does not include that which is necessary to involve the child in the process of 'engagement' or 'dialogue' which they see as crucial to his development into moral autonomy. They say little about how such an omission can be justified.

A second point of difference arises in relation not to the compulsoriness of liberal education but to the *variety of forms* it might legitimately take, granted its commitment to the development of autonomy. For Patricia White, liberal education would seem primarily to have only one legitimate form; the publicly provided school with its common and nationally regulated curriculum and other educational experiences - and its corollary; 'minimal' parental educational rights. Coons and Sugarman dissent from this view on two main grounds, proposing instead the possibility of a variety of equally valid forms of liberal education, in relation to which parents have 'maximal' rights of educational choice even granted the aim of education of children for autonomy.

I shall look on this argument without raising at the moment questions about whether 'private', or 'independent' education should be an acceptable way of making choice available. Clearly the objections of Coons and Sugarman might be satisfied by a greater variety in public provision of schooling. The central issue, however, is whether parents can be said to have the right to choose a determinate form of schooling for their children, and I will focus on that issue here rather than the public/private question, which raises further problems.

The first ground on which Coons and Sugarman base their opposition to the 'one legitimate form of liberal education' thesis, is that the 'public school' does not - and cannot - live up to its claim to be neutral and objective. It conveys, despite its protestations to the contrary, a determinate conception of the good. Therefore parents concerned to develop the autonomy of their children cannot be *compelled* to educate them in the 'public school' (or a particular public school). Parents must be free to choose an alternative educational environment which, whilst still committed to the principle of autonomy, approaches its development in a different, but equally acceptable, way. This argument of Coons and Sugarman has been pre-figured in some of the claims made earlier by our fictional Asian parents. The substantiation of claims of this sort would have major implications for the tenability of theses such as those of Patricia White.

To what grounds do Coons and Sugarman appeal in their attempt to provide this substantiation? Unfortunately, their conception of what is involved in 'neutrality and objectivity' is a very restricted one. Indeed, the use of the term 'objectivity' here is mine. Coons and Sugarman tend to speak of 'neutrality' in a very loose way when they address issues which are better considered in terms of 'objectivity'. Lack of clarity on issues such as these weakens the plausibility of their attempted substantiation.

Coons and Sugarman interpret the claim that the public school can be neutral as having two meanings:

(i) Institutional neutrality - '...a commitment of the institution, the curriculum and the teacher to accord all ideas an equal respect and to avoid indoctrinating children with the values of *any* adult authority, professional or parent.' (EFC:78. Emphasis in original)

(ii) Neutrality through opposites. This is a strategy involving the exposure of children to *conflicting* points of view and conceptions of the good. Thus - '...children receive one message, candidly delivered, one year (or hour) and another the next. Thus, even if systematic institutional neutrality is a mirage, perhaps a kind of unplanned but functional neutrality operates through the reciprocally offsetting views of the teachers.' (EFC:80) Thus the suggestion is that - 'Such an institutional clustering of opposites might embody the very neutral and healthy moral dialogue essential for autonomy.' (EFC:80)

We need not deal in detail with Coons and Sugarman's claim that the American public schools fail, as a matter of empirical fact, to live up to these ideals. What is more interesting is the inadequate handling of the ideals themselves. This can be brought out in two ways. First, both (i) and (ii) require further elaboration and clarification. In (i), for example, are *all* ideas to be accorded an equal respect in the school and is it to be neutral concerning *all* 'adult values'? Or does the school have a

positive commitment to the development of understanding and autonomous personhood in all its forms, favouring 'neutrality' only as a strategy in clearly delineated areas - and when 'objectivity' demands it? And in (ii) why is it assumed that exposure to conflicting views will *in itself* promote participation in the dialogue essential for autonomy? Does not more need to be said here about the need to develop an understanding of criteria for evaluating different points of view, skill in weighing arguments etc.?

Second, why is it assumed that (i) and (ii) exhaust what is meant by the notions of neutrality and objectivity in liberal education? Coons and Sugarman fail to consider much more substantial and plausible accounts which are constructed by appeal to concepts such as objective tests for truth, the distinction between form and content in morality, private versus public values and so on. None of these accounts are unproblematic, of course, and they are open to searching lines of criticism. (14) But Coons and Sugarman's rejection of the possibility of neutrality and objectivity in liberal education fails to carry conviction because it does not grapple with the defence of this possibility in its sophisticated forms, aiming criticisms instead at a crude and unanalysed notion of 'neutrality'.

Thus Coons and Sugarman offer in defence of their position, the observation that - '...the idea that education can be neutral is a fantasy.' (EFC:81) But they make no detailed examination of the complex issues here, moving straight into an unqualified approval of G.K.Chesterton's claim that 'dogma cannot be separated from education'. To be in any sense plausible, such a claim needs much fuller analysis and defence. This is true too of another argument used by Coons and Sugarman - that the neutral teacher is likely to convey - '...the emptiness of all values. Within this moral vacuum the pupil attitude effectively encouraged is one of riskless noncommitment ... neutrality too commonly comes across as a flaccid legitimation of ethical detachment.' (EFC:82) This is an interesting argument of a kind similar to that used against the neutral teacher by Mary Warnock (Warnock M, 1975:See esp 165-171), but it needs to be developed much more fully by Coons and Sugarman.

They seem to acknowledge in places that liberal education need not take the form of a crude neutrality, as in their praise of the American liberal arts tradition (EFC:81), but this acknowledgement is never integrated into their overall argument.

The result is that Coons and Sugarman, in their criticisms of the objectivity of liberal education, merely indicate starting points for necessary further discussion and analysis rather than establish a convincing case for their conclusions.

The second ground on which Coons and Sugarman base their opposition to the 'one legitimate form of liberal education' thesis, is that there are good reasons for accepting an alternative and equally valid account of how autonomy can be developed from *within* a context determined essentially by the family. Thus, in contrast to Patricia White, Coons and Sugarman claim that child autonomy might be fostered equally, and in some cases better, by - '...a curriculum and milieu sympathetic to the particular values preferred by the family'. (EFC:82) They thus envisage in their family choice system a range of kinds of school, some closely corresponding to, and working in harmony with, the values of the families choosing them and others offering a 'market place within the walls' approach.

Coons and Sugarman offer several arguments for their claim that 'family determined' schools can constitute an alternative way of developing the autonomy of the child. First, they point to the benefits for emotional security in binding the younger child's home values to their formal education. Thus they claim - 'A curriculum and style that looks ideal to the sophisticated adult may simply perplex and terrorize the younger child who has yet to achieve a stable self-image; this may be particularly true of children from minority homes'. (EFC:84)

A second argument is that a 'family determined' school will assist the child to appreciate the significance of personal values. Thus Coons and Sugarman claim that - 'The most important experience within schools of choice may be the child's observation of trusted adults gripped by a moral concern which is shared and endorsed by his own family.' (EFC:83) This experience - conveyed as much by the ethos of the school as

by any formal teaching - will, it is claimed, develop a much fuller appreciation of the character of commitment than any neutral approach.

Third, Coons and Sugarman argue that 'empathy' and moral 'engagement' and 'dialogue' will be greatly assisted in a context where there is a compatibility of outlook on the part of the children. Thus they argue - '...interchange implying a common and familiar set of values may be the most complex kind of moral engagement possible for younger children ... family choice may produce that minimal degree of commonality among students which invites easy participation in such a dialogue.' (EFC:84)

Thus, Coons and Sugarman argue that, in a situation where there are alternative ways of developing the autonomy of the child - 'The prudent approach is to let families and their educational counsellors determine together which children will be served best by the homelike atmosphere and which will profit by some form of severance from home values.' (EFC:85)

Coons and Sugarman themselves anticipate the major disquiet raised by their arguments here; the possibility that such a proposal - '...would threaten the desired confrontation of the child with conflicting views and represent a kind of unintended school for producing the conditioned man.' (EFC:86) It is not difficult to see how such a concern could be elaborated in relation to each of the three arguments outlined above. To ease this general disquiet, Coons and Sugarman develop some further arguments which I shall outline and criticise briefly:

(i) The first argument concerns the potentiality for autonomy implicit in the 'family determined school'. Thus it is claimed that - 'Even where particular values seem narrow and one-sided, a child's engagement with them at a crucial stage of his development might secure his allegiance to that ideal of human reciprocity which is indispensable to ... autonomy.' (EFC:83) And they continue, - 'The most partisan of moralities in the end rest on universals; indeed the universality is often at its plainest in the rhetoric of minority sects and peoples.' (EFC:84) The crucial point here, however, is that although a basis for the development of autonomy might well be found in

determinate belief and value systems (and indeed it is a central aspect of my argument that this is indeed so), this basis needs to be deliberately sought out and worked upon if autonomy is to result. The 'family determined' school, therefore, needs an explicit commitment to, and a systematic policy for, the development of autonomy if it is to avoid accusations of conditioning its pupils. Coons and Sugarman seem to suggest that *mere engagement* with determinate belief and value systems will sow the seed for autonomy. But this is scarcely the case. For although engagement with a particular value system *might* promote 'reciprocity', it might not. And 'partisan moralities' exhibit exclusivity, prejudice and idiosyncrasy as well as universalistic elements. At best, Coons and Sugarman's argument shows that education in a determinate belief/value system need not necessarily be inimical to the development of autonomy *in principle*. All depends on the explicit commitment and policy of the school. If this is so, then surely parents who value autonomy cannot choose *any* school offering a 'determinate' educational experience, as Coons and Sugarman seem to suggest, but only those explicitly seeking to use that determinate educational experience as a basis for the development of autonomy.

(ii) The second argument is that the danger of conditioning is avoided because children are seen as having progressively increasing rights of control over their own education as they grow older. The parental right of exclusive choice is limited to the elementary level of schooling. Thus it is claimed that - 'Increasing the child's own choice with age facilitates his engagement with a mix of views but it does so within self-regulated frontiers of interpupil dissonance. If conflict reaches the threshold beyond which fruitful communication diminishes, the child controls the exit.' (EFC:86) It is not clear that this provision really eases to any great extent the worries about conditioning to which it is a response. For does not 'pupil choice' require a broad background of knowledge and understanding - an opening up of the range of possibilities available if it is to be informed, coherent and in the child's best interests? Coons and Sugarman seem alert to the difficulties here, acknowledging the

'clannishness' and peer-group conformity of teenagers and also the danger that twelve-year-olds might be so conditioned in family values that they would be - '...unable to take an independent step towards autonomy even if the choice of schools becomes formally theirs.' (EFC:87) But the responses made to these difficulties are inadequate. Conceding formal rights of choice to pupils does not, therefore, serve as a sufficient safeguard against the indoctrinatory potential of a 'family choice' system.

Coons and Sugarman's account of the educational conditions for the development of autonomy is therefore inadequate in two main ways: (a) It fails to insist that all educational experience should aim at autonomy; that liberal education should be compulsory for all children. This follows on from their equivocal commitment to the status of the principle of autonomy itself. (b) It fails to incorporate in its account of 'a variety of legitimate forms of liberal education each compatible with the development of autonomy', a convincing defence against accusations that the proposed system with its maximal family educational rights of choice will be open to the danger of indoctrination. (Compare the conditions which Crittenden insists that all schools in a liberal democracy should satisfy). (15)

Gutmann accuses Coons and Sugarman, despite the nuances of their position when compared to that of Friedman, of seeing education ultimately as a private and not as a public matter. Thus she claims that their 'constrained voucher system' is inadequate to develop 'deliberative character'. (Gutmann A, 1987:64-70) (16)

However, in their critique of the possibility of neutrality and objectivity in liberal education, Coons and Sugarman raise points which, whilst inadequately developed in their own account, call for further elaboration and consideration at a later stage of my own argument.

(iii)   The basis for maximal parental educational rights

As we have seen, Coons and Sugarman base their claim for maximal parental educational rights on several arguments.

(i)   A claim that what is in the child's general interest is in some sense

indeterminate. If this is so, Coons and Sugarman seem to claim, the family is

better placed than any other agency or body to make decisions on behalf on the

child. This is because, in the final analysis, knowledge of the particular child is

crucial, since little can be said in a general sense about what is in his or her

interests. The difficulty with this claim is that it does seem possible to establish

that there are quite a wide range of things that are in the general interests of

children - most notably the development of their moral autonomy. Coons and

Sugarman seem to concede this, and to commit themselves to the value of the

child's autonomy. Why then do they not follow through the implications of this

commitment by arguing that the indeterminacy of the child's interest refers to

the *details* of what is in his or her interest, not the general character of it? The

position of parents, whilst important, is not therefore ultimately decisive. The

principle of subsidiarity may need to be overridden if the child's autonomy is at

stake. Coons and Sugarman's failure to advance the moral autonomy of the

child quite unambiguously as in the general interests of all children leads to a

vital gap in their account of 'checks and balances' on parental authority.

(ii)   A claim that what is in the child's general educational interest is in some sense

indeterminate. But if it can be shown, as in (i), that moral autonomy is in the

general interest of all children - and further as Coons and Sugarman seem to

admit, that a form of education is necessary to the development of that

autonomy, then it is possible to claim that parents' maximal educational rights

cannot extend to the right to choose an education for their child which does not

aim at, or which frustrates, the development of that autonomy. What is in the

general educational interest of the child *can* therefore be specified. It is true that

parents constitute a decision-making community which is knowledgeable about

the child and caring about him or her and in which the child's point of view can

be heard. (EFC:48) But the specific features of this community would seem to license only the sort of monitoring/co-ordinatory duties and rights to which Patricia White refers, and not rights which can be exercised against the fundamental general educational interest of the child: the development of autonomy. Thus there must be controls of various sorts at the community level to ensure that parents do not exceed their legitimate rights in this way.

(iii) A claim that, even if a parent seeks the autonomy of their child, there are many different forms of education which can lead to its development. Parents have maximal rights of choice concerning the precise form of education towards autonomy that they think appropriate for their child - and these rights include the possibility of choosing a school which approaches the development of autonomy via an introduction to a determinate belief and value system harmonious with the ideals of the family. This claim depends on a substantiation of many of the arguments examined concerning objectivity and neutrality in liberal education and the coherence of the alternative model of 'education-towards-autonomy' discussed. Although Coons and Sugarman fail to provide this substantiation, the possibility of developing a stronger form of their arguments remains open.

It seems to me, therefore, that Coons and Sugarman fail in their attempt adequately to ground maximal parental educational rights - and therefore their claim that the family should be the 'senior partner' in the educational decision making-team. (EFC:52-53) One of the key reasons for this is that, unlike White, Coons and Sugarman do not offer a clear account of the kind of *society* they seek to develop. At times, they seem to favour the kind of 'minimal state' of the sort defended by Nozick, or the 'state of families' described by Gutmann. An outline - and justification - of their view of the societal context of their arguments would help to clarify some of the

obscurities in their thesis - particularly concerning the status of the principle of autonomy - and the character of 'basic educational minimums'.

Despite their failure, however, Coons and Sugarman draw attention to certain lines of argument (in (iii) above) which need to be examined further in an attempt to assess whether some *maximal* parental rights are capable of justification. It is not clear at the moment that a liberal *must* oppose these rights.

(2) Views giving Weight to the Development of the Autonomy of the Child

The sets of views considered in the last section cannot be seen as giving a satisfactory account of parents' educational rights because of their failure to give sufficient weight to the principle of the development of the autonomy of the child, even though, as in the case of Coons and Sugarman, it would appear at first sight that such weight was indeed being acknowledged. In the 'second category' of views along our continuum, such weight is explicitly given.

One example of a view in this category is that of Ackerman, which has already been mentioned. Another is that of Brian Crittenden, although his commitment to autonomy is somewhat nuanced. (17) I shall however concentrate on a further example; the argument of Patricia White in 'Beyond Domination'. (White,P 1983 - Hereinafter referred to as BD)

(a) The argument of Patricia White

The aim of the eventual moral autonomy of the child is central to this argument. This is derived from a range of liberal democratic commitments and arguments which resemble in character but not in detail those developed by Ackerman. (BD:Ch1,2) There is stress on 'agnosticism concerning the good life' and the view that - 'The only

authority on the good life is ... the individual himself or herself who has had the chance

to reflect on possible lives.' (BD:10) A central aim of the book is to outline the social

and educational conditions for the development and exercise of this autonomous form

of life by individuals living in a 'participatory democracy'. (For an account of this

conception of democracy see BD:Ch1,2). As one would expect, an appropriate form of

liberal education is seen by White as a central condition here. Such an education is

argued to be a Rawlsian-style 'primary good' for the child and one of his or her

constitutional rights. (On this see BD:11;38-39;Ch3). Again, as one would expect,

parental rights concerning education are seen on this view not as 'basic' or unlimited,

but as subject to the 'tension' outlined earlier. Unlike in arguments in the first

category, there is here an *explicit* affirmation of the importance of developing the

autonomy of the child. Thus the child is seen as having a basic right to -

...an education which encourages her to develop autonomously, to be able

to distinguish what is in her real interests from what she may currently

want, of have been brought to want and enables her to understand and

participate in the exercise and control of power.

(BD:82)

Because of its crucial significance in the achievement of autonomy, such an

education is seen as justifiably subject to 'considerable control' by democratically

determined national guidelines to ensure its adequacy and its just availability to all

children.

What of the other side of the tension - the educational rights of parents? White

holds that parents have no *independent* rights here, but only rights derived from *duties*.

The principal duty of parents is seen as one of contributing to and facilitating their

child's education and development into autonomy. Parents' educational rights are

therefore essentially rights enabling parents to perform educational duties, the duties

constituting the only legitimate ground for parental rights in this area.

What specific parental rights and duties emerge, therefore, on White's account? Certain rights are clearly ruled out since they are underivable from, and incompatible with, important duties. Thus, parents are clearly not seen as having a right to give their child an upbringing which involves the imposition of unjustifiably determinate beliefs, attitudes, dispositions and so on. In the case of religion, therefore, White denies the right of parents to - '...bring their child up in such a way that the child sees herself unquestionably as a religious person.' (BD:146) (As noted previously, however, a good deal hangs on the weight placed on 'unquestioningly' in arguments such as these). Nor do parents have the right to choose a particular *school* which will reinforce their efforts in providing such a determinate upbringing. Thus - 'Parents ... have no right to send their child to a school ... permeated with the values, attitudes and doctrines of a particular religion ... and where children (are) expected and encouraged to become believing members of the faith.' (BD:146) No such schools would exist in the kind of ideal participatory democracy envisaged by White, although adults would have the freedom to establish and belong to religious establishments such as churches. (An interesting question here is whether White would regard children's membership of these bodies as legitimate. Her general view on these matters is that religion is for 'consenting adults'. Presumably the key issue here is what is implied in 'membership' and the extent to which this infringes the child's capacity for independent self-determination). For White, this outlawing of religious schools, and parental rights asserted in relation to them, is not based on an *a priori* hostility to religion - and nor can it be criticised on the grounds that it infringes a basic liberal principle: tolerance of legitimate differences of opinion in belief and value. On the contrary, claims White, an ideal participatory democracy is -

> *... simply concerned to safeguard the moral autonomy of its members. That concern demands special care over educational provision so that the child's development is not predetermined in some arbitrary way by an influence which manages to capture him at an early stage.*

(BD:146)

(White accepts, of course, that an appropriate form of education in religion is a necessary part of liberal education). (18)

What educational rights *do* parents have, therefore, in the light of their legitimate duties? As outlined above, the basic duty of the parent, as seen by White, is one of contributing to, and facilitating, the development of their child as a morally autonomous person. In relation to the knowledge necessary in the development of this autonomy, White makes an avowedly rough - but important - distinction between:

(i) '...those things which can only be taught if one has a detailed, intimate knowledge of the educand, her state of mind, motives and feelings and a close personal relationship with her.' (BD:141)

and

(ii) '...those things which can be taught without having this knowledge and standing in this relationship.' (BD:141)

(ii) can be left, claims White, in the hands of professional teachers, whilst (i) can be seen to generate a range of distinctive *parental* duties. (White discusses the recipient of these duties, but the details of her argument that, for various reasons, parents are best seen as the appropriate *prima facie* duty-holders need not concern us here). What are these duties? They are outlined as follows:

(a) Duties arising from - ' ... responsibility for that part of the child's education which depends on intimate personal knowledge of her and a personal relationship with her.' (BD:142) White does not say very much in detail about what is involved in this responsibility, although she cites 'early learning of the mother tongue' and 'early moral education' as examples. From this I assume that what is intended here is something

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similar to the provision of an initial 'coherent primary culture' of the sort outlined by Ackerman. It does seem that White intends this duty to be a rather basic one in character, concerned with providing very *fundamental* elements of the child's education :- elements which are in some sense *necessary* preconditions for any more complex educational endeavour with the child. I imagine, therefore, that White would resist a more broad interpretation of what constitutes 'that part of a child's education which depends on intimate personal knowledge of her and a personal relationship with her'. Our fictional Asian parents, for example, might interpret this as meaning that *whole areas* of a child's education (for example those involving religion, certain aspects of morality etc.) are *personal* to the child and the family. For this reason, the argument might continue, parents rather that professional educators have the crucial rights here - since they have access to the necessary personal knowledge of the child - and also the necessary personal relationship with her. White, I am sure, would want to challenge this kind of argument, focusing attention on exactly *why* parental 'personal knowledge and relationship' is of prime significance in these cases. It is clearly essential in the case of early moral upbringing, for example (19), but on what grounds could parents claim a favoured place for their knowledge of, and perspective on, the child as she grows up? For this reason White seems to confine (a) to very basic elements of the child's education. The Asian parents cannot make much headway with his argument, therefore under (a). We shall see, however, that it can re-emerge with greater success under White's category (b).

Before proceeding to (b), it is worth noting that, to the extent that earlier arguments have been successful, liberal parents who are religious believers might claim in the context of (a): the provision of 'initial cultural coherence', a right to provide their child with a specific - but non-indoctrinatory - form of religious upbringing. Indeed, granted the adequacy of (nuanced) arguments about the inaccessibility of religious beliefs to 'external' evaluation, they might advance their claim to such a right precisely on the basis that they have a *duty* to provide such an upbringing if their child is to be in a position really to understand - and eventually to function autonomously in relation to -

religious faith. If (a) is expanded in this way to include a form of liberal religious upbringing, it has implications, as I shall hope to show, for the kinds of duties identifiable under (b).

(b) Duties of a *co-ordinatory* or *monitoring* kind. These duties arise because educational experiences for the child come from many sources, including society itself. There is therefore a need for some sort of co-ordinator/monitor who has the responsibility for making the educational experience - '...a coherent whole for the pupil and, very important, to help her assume the responsibility for this   co-ordination and monitoring for herself.' (BD:142) These duties should be given on a *prima-facie* basis to parents since they demand - '...a person with an intimate knowledge of the educand.' (BD:142) (See also BD:143-144;158 for discussion of whether *parents* specifically should undertake these duties). According to White, the duties arising here fall into two types:- The first type are duties of an intermediary kind between formal educational agencies and the individual child. These basically involve ensuring that the child is progressing at school and so on. (BD:158-159) (See BD:162-164 for implications for the role of the community and the school in relation to these duties). These duties are fairly straightforward in character, and clearly necessary if the benefits of a formal liberal education are to be actualised for a *particular individual*. Although there is room for disagreement about some of the precise rights that these duties are thought to generate (concerning access to information, for example), their character is in general clear - although, as we shall see, there is a lack of clarity concerning a key element in White's notion of parental co-ordination and monitoring which has particular implications for crucial parental rights in relation to formal educational agencies.

The second type of co-ordinatory / monitoring duties and rights envisaged by White are those concerned with the introduction of the child to - '...the myriad activities and perspectives on the good life which go beyond basic education.' (BD:143) This is necessary because formal education can only be a kind of 'opening up', something requiring supplementation and extension by parental effort. Thus parents are seen as

liberal educators in their own right, responsible for - '...widening the child's awareness and appreciation of the activities one can indulge in and all the stances one can take to life.' (BD:159) White sees this duty as generating a range of parental rights to certain kinds of support by the community. (See BD:164-166)

It is necessary to probe in more detail exactly what is involved in this general duty of 'co-ordination' and 'monitoring' ascribed to parents by White. As with our earlier examination of Ackerman's position, it will appear that within the terms of an argument designed to restrict parental rights, there is in fact scope for parents to claim rights of greater range than is at first apparent.

A crucial notion for White here is that of making the child's educational experience into a 'coherent whole'. But in what sense is 'coherence' being used here? And what is meant by 'whole'? This is not spelt out in any detail by White.

The concept of 'coherence' is illuminated by some remarks of Dearden. (Dearden,R F 1984:Ch5 esp 63-65) For him, the general meaning of 'coherence' is of 'various elements fitting together according to some principle'. But it is only when the elements and principle(s) at issue are unambiguously explained that the term has any clear application.

This notion of making a child's educational experience into a 'coherent whole' seems to have two aspects; an 'objective' and a 'subjective' one. The 'objective' aspect refers to the planned educational programmes and experiences determined in the light of what is judged necessary to develop the child into the morally autonomous person and citizen demanded by participatory democracy. Here it is possible to plan education as a 'coherent whole' by analysing in some detail what is involved in the notion of moral autonomy and citizenship and what is required for its development. (See BD:Ch3 and also, for example, White,J P 1982:esp Ch6,7). The 'coherent whole' exists 'objectively' in the sense that it is embodied in a planned educational programme in a particular institutional context. The 'subjective' aspect refers to the need for each individual to make their educational experience into a coherent whole *for themselves* in the sense that they must actually, in the light of that experience, begin to form their own

beliefs, life-ideals, plans and so on. What is required here is an 'integrative' task in relation to the educational experience in the sense that the child must relate the various elements of her education together, and with her own developing wants, motives, etc. so that her moral autonomy is constructed. (On this see, for example, White,J P 1973:Ch4; White,J P 1982:Ch6,7).

In the light of this distinction, it is now possible to return to look at what is involved in parental monitoring / co-ordination duties in relation to the 'overall coherence' of their child's education.

In the 'objective' sense, that relating to the child's formal educational programme, White gives the impression that the parental role does not extend to determining the programme itself, but is confined to mediating it to the child and supplementing it. But if it is conceded that parents have a right to give their child a kind of liberal religious upbringing, this gives rise to the question of whether the option emerges of parents having a legitimate right to choose an alternative starting point for their child's liberal education - one which is planned to co-ordinate with the initial religious formation which the parents have provided, and which undertakes the educative task *from* that formation. (I have in mind here the possibility - developed in more detail in Chapters Seven and Eight - of a 'liberal religious school') Here, a particular knowledge of, and relationship with, the individual child (or, more accurately, the particular child's initial religious faith) is needed for the programme to be planned, because the programme is precisely seen as co-ordinated with that child's initial formation. In this way the distinction drawn above by White between (i) - (those things which can be taught only if one has detailed knowledge of the child) and (ii) - (those things which can be taught without this detailed knowledge) is thrown into question.

On what grounds might such a distinctive form of schooling be thought necessary for a child, rather than a common school supplemented by parental activity of one sort or another? It is perhaps here that some of the limitations of the common school discussed by Coons and Sugarman can be given a more adequate statement and a place in a more nuanced overall argument. For example, it may well be that credence can be

given to the claim that the common school is not neutral. However, this is not for the reasons given by Coons and Sugarman, with their use of a rather crude concept of neutrality, but in the sense that an alternative context for the liberal educative task can be specified. Again, this context needs a fuller and more adequate expression than Coons and Sugarman have given it. In particular, it needs to be made clear exactly what provisions are necessary to ensure that autonomy is safeguarded.

In the 'subjective' sense of making the child's educational experience into a coherent whole, the role of parents is more complex and White says little about it. Clearly excluded here by the principle of respect for the autonomy of the child is any suggestion that the parents *impose* in any unduly determinate way a particular view of what coherence consists in - which would amount to the imposition of a particular life-ideal - a particular conception of what the child should make of herself in the light of her educational experiences. What is involved is something similar to the duty of 'guidance' specified by Ackerman, and which was noted earlier, a process of respecting the ends formulated by the developing child but offering positive help in assisting the child to make fully autonomous decisions by providing a background of relevant knowledge, understanding etc. This clearly involves intimate knowledge of the particular individual in question and can therefore be seen as a particularly appropriate *parental* duty - and one which is of crucial educational significance.

Ackerman's notion of 'guidance' does not quite seem to capture the duty which White lays upon parents here. For 'guidance' is seen by Ackerman as something which is provided in relation to particular questions and issues raised by the child; he ascribes to parents no duty of directly seeking to achieve 'wholeness' in the 'subjective' sense to which we have been referring. He tends to place this duty in the hands of 'liberal educators'. (The rather passive character of Ackerman's thesis in these respects is illustrated in Appendix B).

But if it is agreed that the parent has a right to shape both the initial religious formation of the child and the kind of formal educational experience offered to him or her, then the guidance offered by parents here includes the rather complex activity of

the parents gradually seeking to expand the child's horizons from the initial faith which they have developed. This gives rise to duties related to ensuring that the child's exposure to other influences is co-ordinated and not disorientating, and this may underscore the right to choose a particular form of liberal education which has been mentioned. Such parents will acknowledge, of course, that they have a duty as part of their co-ordinatory/monitoring role to encourage the child to extend and challenge his or her existing beliefs etc., but will claim that this duty has to be undertaken in harmony with related duties of guidance and control, and in a way which does not damage the child's capacity for self-control, his or her emotional and psychological security and so on. And so, along the lines explored earlier in relation to Ackerman's argument, it is possible for such parents - particularly if they are the liberal Asians of our earlier example - to argue that they must retain the right to determine the *extent* to which they are prepared to allow their daughter's beliefs to be challenged *at this particular time*, and *in this particular way*. This judgement, he might argue, is essentially one that has to be made in the light of intimate knowledge of the child in question. This kind of argument might provide a foundation for liberal parents to assert not only the right to a final say in determining the timing , and perhaps the manner, of handling certain topics, questions etc. with their children, but also the right to choose a *distinctive* form of schooling of a certain sort - one which has the development of autonomy as an aim but which approaches this an a distinctive way.

What I hope to have shown at the moment is that, there is scope within White's account of the co-ordinatory/monitoring duties of parents for an argument which seeks to ground, within the terms of her own argument, a range of parents' educational rights which exceed the *minimum* ones conceded by her.

It is worth noting my claim that my points have force *within* the terms of White's argument and do not depend on a rejection of her fundamental position about the character of parental rights, such as that developed by Crittenden. (20) Part of those terms is that the argument is to be construed as referring to an *ideal* participatory

democracy. It seems to me that this does not remove the *force* of my points, since the conflicts of duty referred to seem to be part of the child/parent relationship, granted certain features of human nature.

White acknowledges, of course, that we live in an *imperfect* democracy and admits that, in that context, it might be appropriate practically to recognise certain parental rights additional to those specified in an 'ideal' situation. Thus she admits that the state schools available in an imperfect democracy might not in fact be committed to the development of the moral autonomy of its students - and might be inadequate in other ways. Further, parents might be powerless to make their protest felt and to change things. Liberal parents are therefore faced with a (practical) *dilemma* in the fulfilment of their co-ordinatory/monitoring duties with regard to the education of their children. Should they send them to a state school and tolerate the damage to their educational - and general - development? Or should they purchase a private education for the child guaranteeing an appropriate form of liberal education, but creating a situation of injustice? There is a clear conflict of principles here. White claims that it is impossible in the context of an imperfect democracy to provide a *general principle* which can resolve dilemmas such as these. What is needed is a form of *contextual judgement*- ' ... it is a matter of individual choice in many different kinds of imperfect situations which can only be individually assessed bearing in mind certain general considerations.' (BD:157) Although such contextual judgement can be *criticised* and deemed more or less adequate - ' ... one cannot say, in general, that in an imperfect democracy it is never, or always, a parent's duty to use private schools when faced with inadequacies in the state educational system.' (BD:157) And, since rights are derived from duties on White's view, it follows that parents can be said to have legitimate rights in some cases over choice of school in this context.

It is worth noting that liberal religious believers could well qualify for such rights in this context also. Like the liberal parents mentioned above, they too seek for their child a form of liberal education which aims at the development of moral autonomy. But they might object to what in an imperfect democracy the state schools are providing

for their children *as a matter of fact*. This would be a form of education which turns out to be heavily indoctrinatory *against* religion by accident or design (as in some of the arguments of the fictional Asian parents). In addition, such parents might point to the nature of society at large, and to an ethos (sustained by certain attitudes in the media, the 'capitalist ethic' etc.) which actively promotes values in conflict with those enshrined in their religion - resulting sometimes in the very destruction of the cherished values. The parent might acknowledge as White does that in an ideal democracy the media would not be allowed to escape scrutiny with respect to their influence on education (BD:108) but would point to what is actually happening to us *now*. Such parents might well argue that, as part of their legitimate co-ordinatory and monitoring role, they have a duty to provide a *counterbalance* to the influence of society in general on their children by equipping them with a form of religious schooling which, without infringing their autonomy, gives them a substantial introduction to a perspective on life that otherwise would be inadequately available to them. Here the parents are appealing to a notion similar to that of 'repressive tolerance' in claiming that bias results as much from advocating toleration and open discussion of issues within a context which effectively prevents a genuine engagement with alternatives, as from a direct attempt to influence people's minds. (21) In this case, then, the parents see their right to choose a religious school of a certain kind as following from their duty as a co-ordinator/ monitor of their child's educational experience: those whose task it is in the context of an imperfect democracy to give their child as *balanced* a view of alternatives as possible - a balance which, in their judgement, requires a form of *positive* action to counteract the *de facto* influences of inadequate schooling and an imperfect society.

I would argue, however, that these rights can be justified not simply in relation to an imperfect democratic society, but also in relation to its 'ideal'. This is because the issues at stake about alternative methods of developing autonomy are concerned with a plurality of starting points which remain given any account of prevailing empirical conditions.

My argument in this chapter depends upon claims about the coherence and justifiability of the notion of 'alternative forms of liberal education' and, in particular of the notion of a 'liberal religious school'. It is with the elaboration and defence of these claims that the following chapters will be concerned.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Concept of Liberal Education

One clear need that has emerged from the preceding chapters, especially the last

one, is for the notion of 'Liberal Education' to be examined more closely and critically.

Central to the view within the liberal perspective that parents have only

'minimum' rights over their children's education is the claim that their children's

autonomy is best facilitated by a form of education ('Liberal Education') which

systematically and objectively exposes the children in an appropriate way to the range

of values, beliefs, ways of life and life ideals which ought to be considered by them,

and in relation to which their autonomy can be developed and exercised. Such a

conception of education, implicit in the positions of Ackerman and White (amongst

others) which we have examined, is not only complex but, of course, value-laden. (On

this see, for example, Hirst,P H 1986:17-18). But within the liberal point of view and

its values, the claim is made that this conception of education is *significantly*

'objective'. Whilst full 'objectivity' is unattainable in practice - and maybe theoretically

too - this form of education is seen as one which approaches most closely to the ideal.

This claim licenses the conclusions that (a) it should be made available to, and

compulsory for, all children - in the face, if necessary, of parental objections; and that

(b) such a requirement gives rise to no substantial worries about indoctrination or illicit

'moulding'. Liberal education is clearly based upon, and therefore must transmit,

certain values. Indeed, in one sense, it must shape a certain sort of person. (See

Pring,R 1984:Ch2). But, claim its defenders, Liberal education does not aim to

implant *unjustifiably determinate* beliefs, values and personal identity. Nor, they claim,

does it seek necessarily directly to undermine the formation given by parents. Its aim

rather is to provide the child with the perspective necessary for the development of his

or her own values, beliefs and identity on the basis of appropriate reasoning and evaluation.

This conception of education gives rise to a whole range of complex questions. For example, how is the 'unjustifiable determinacy' referred to above to be characterised and identified? What exactly are the values - and other presuppositions (for example, those of an epistemological kind) on which the conception is based?

A full evaluation of the notion of Liberal education would require detailed attention to a range of questions such as these.

In this chapter, however, I shall seek to lay the foundations for a more focused enquiry into the notion. I shall not, for example, examine the grounds upon which a radical rejection of the concept of Liberal education might be based. One kind of challenge would be to reject the importance, coherence, desirability or possibility of the aim of developing the autonomy of children at all. Such a challenge, calling into question key elements in the liberal position, could be based on various grounds, for example religious ones (See Halstead,M 1986 and Ashraf,S 1988 for a discussion of Muslim perspectives), or on economic, ideological or political ones (See, for example, Bailey,C 1984:Ch 9,10 for an outline of critiques based on such considerations, and O'Hear,A 1981 Ch1). But since my argument has been developed *within* a framework of liberal assumptions, I am more concerned to draw attention to those critical questions which a parent *accepting* such assumptions might coherently raise.

The central question I am interested in, and which has emerged from the last chapter, is this: Granted a defensible 'core' concept of 'Liberal Education', can there be a variety of legitimate forms of it, each compatible with the development of autonomy, but approaching that development in different ways? More specifically, can a liberal parent claim the right, on various grounds, to choose between different kinds of liberal school; say between one school which approaches the development of autonomy through a 'marketplace of ideas' approach (though the notion of a 'marketplace' cannot be construed too crudely) and one which approaches that development *from the basis of* a particular 'world view' or substantiality of belief, practice and value? Such a

challenge opens up the possibility that, in the case of education in religion, parents might be said, on liberal grounds, to have the right to send their children to what might be described as a 'liberal religious school'.

These possibilities, which involve complex conceptual as well as practical questions, have not been seriously considered, much less examined in any detail, by philosophers of education. Discussions of liberal education, and its associated ideas and difficulties, have tended to assume, or at least have given the impression of assuming, both that the concept of liberal education is monolithic in character and that it should be institutionalised in one basic form: in common 'pluralist' schools. This has provided the context for discussions of concepts such as objectivity, neutrality, bias and so on. Even when the issue of church schools is raised - as in Paul Hirst's rather neglected 1978 Wiseman Lecture - 'Education, Catechesis and the Church School' (Hirst,P H 1981), there is little attempt to *relate* in any detail the distinctive religious elements of the church school to liberal educational ends or to explore the rationale for the existence of such schools and for the parental rights of choice claimed in relation to them. Where philosophers have discussed the implementation of liberal education, their focus has tended not to be on questions relating to school context. It is only recently that philosophers have begun to devote attention to both religious schools (See Aspin,D 1983; McLaughlin,T H 1987) and to school-level issues generally, such as those of ethos and school organisation. (See, for example, White,J 1982:147-149; White,P 1983:92-96).

This account of the focus of current philosophical enquiry into liberal education can be illustrated by reference to Charles Bailey's book: 'Beyond the Present and the Particular : A Theory of Liberal Education'. (Bailey,C 1984 - Hereinafter CB) Despite an otherwise comprehensive and wide-ranging approach to the subject, Bailey seems to assume throughout that the 'common school' is the only context in which liberal education can take place, and religious schooling is characterised in a rather crude way and ruled out. (1)

A necessary preliminary to an outline and defence of the notion of a legitimate plurality of forms of liberal education is the achievement of a fuller understanding of the concept of liberal education itself. This will be the task of this chapter although I have space to offer only a relatively brief treatment of the issues. One reason for fuller understanding of 'Liberal Education' is that the term is itself somewhat ambiguous, and is used in several different senses.

(1) Liberal Education

In his paper 'Ambiguities in liberal education and the problem of its content' (Peters,R S 1977 Ch3), Peters has argued that there is an - 'endemic ambiguity' (Peters,R S 1977:46) in the phrase 'liberal education'. The ambiguity is endemic because - ' ... 'liberal' functions like 'free' in that it suggests the removal of constraints, and there are different types of constraint. There is also the necessity ... of stating precisely what it is of value that is being constrained.' (Peters,R S 1977:46)

Although in a sense the decision to assign one meaning rather than another to the phrase 'liberal education' is a terminological matter, something for decision and stipulation in the light of distinctions needed for particular purposes rather than a matter of discovering the one 'correct' usage, it is important to be clear about how the term is being used. As Paul Hirst points out, it is only when the term is given 'explicit positive content' that it can be used effectively in educational planning. (Hirst,P H 1974a:30)

In his paper, Peters outlines three interpretations of liberal education, each of which stresses the value placed on knowledge and understanding and on the removal of constraints on the free development of the mind.

(i)   Knowledge for its own sake - 'Education ... conceived of as a process in which the mind's development towards knowledge and understanding (is) not to be inhibited by being harnessed to vocational or utilitarian ends. Knowledge must

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be pursued 'for its own sake', not viewed as instrumental to some other end.' (Peters,R S 1977:47) Peters traces out the Greek antecedents of this view. (Peters,R S 1977:48-49) (2)

(ii)   General as distinct from specialised education - '...a plea against the mind being confined to one discipline or form of understanding.' (Peters,R S 1977:47) (3)

(iii) A commitment to avoid - '...constrictions on the mind imposed by dogmatic methods of teaching' (Peters,R S 1977:47-48) such as indoctrination or authoritarianism. Although Peters approaches the definition of this interpretation of liberal education via an emphasis on methods of teaching, the interpretation is more directly stated as involving a commitment to the development of the child's rational autonomy. (For an outline of Peters' emphasis on autonomy in his subsequent account of this interpretation see Peters,R S 1977:62-66).

This three-fold classification by Peters seems to emphasise different *aspects* of liberal education rather than different distinct conceptions of it. (i), for example, emphasises motivational and justificatory aspects (the attitudes to learning to be developed and the rationale to be provided for the learning); (ii) concerns the scope and content of learning and (iii) emphasises its fundamental aim. The three identified aspects are neither mutually exclusive nor, - as Peters himself notes (Peters,R S 1977:48) mutually entailed. A given liberal educator may emphasise one (or more) of the aspects to the exclusion of one (or more) or the others. For example, (i) has tended to be called into question in recent years by those seeking to achieve a reconciliation of liberal and vocational aims. (See, for example, Pring,R 1985; Wallace,R 1986).

There are different overall conceptions of liberal education which incorporate aspects such as these in different ways. I shall look here at two specific categories of overall conceptions, which I shall call the 'narrow' and 'broad' conceptions

respectively. (The use of these labels is not intended to carry any evaluative significance; 'narrow' is not intended pejoratively, for example.)

(a) 'Narrow' conceptions

The most obvious example of a 'narrow' conception of liberal education is that offered by Paul Hirst, whose well known and influential view needs no detailed recapitulation here. (Hirst,P H 1974a:esp Ch3)

For Hirst, liberal education is - '...in a very real sense the ultimate form of education' (Hirst,P H 1974a:42-43) since its - '...definition and justification are based on the nature and significance of knowledge itself, and not on the predilections of pupils, the demands of society, or the whims of politicians.' (Hirst,P H 1974a:32) The role given to knowledge here arises from what Hirst takes to be its necessary and crucial role in the achievement of what for him is the major aim of liberal education: the unconstrained development of mind. For Hirst, then, liberal education is - ' ... an education concerned directly with the development of the mind in rational knowledge, whatever form that freely takes.' (Hirst,P H 1974a:43) One way of expressing Hirst's view of liberal education is that it provides a *disinterested cognitive basis* to mind and to all the other distinctively human achievements (all of which he sees as importantly linked to mind). The basis is *cognitive*, since it stresses the centrality of the role of knowledge, and it is *disinterested* in that it stresses the development of knowledge *for its own sake*, rather than for any given set of (contingent and variable) human purposes.

As is well known, Hirst sees liberal education as providing only a *part* (albeit for him a fundamental part) of the total educational experience of the child. He claims that in addition to liberal education, but distinct from it, are aspects of education such as specialist education, physical education and (crucially) the development (training?) of moral character. (Hirst,P H 1974a:See, for example,51) Hirst has written little about these 'non-liberal education' elements of the curriculum and gives no indication of how

they are *related* to the liberal education elements or how they are to be independently justified. This stems from the fact that he has not outlined, at least in writing, a view of what the curriculum *as a whole* should look like.

Hirst's omission of the 'training of moral character' from his account of liberal education illustrates the way in which he sees liberal education as confined to the provision of a kind of disinterested cognitive basis. For Hirst, 'the development of moral understanding for its own sake' forms part of liberal education, but not the development of those qualities necessary for the child's development into actual moral agency.

In my view, there are good reasons for rejecting this kind of 'narrow' conception of liberal education in favour of broader ones. (4)

If one is to use a 'broad' definition of liberal education, might one just as well simply use the term 'education'? However, I consider that it is unwise to make this move for two reasons: (a) Even an expanded concept of liberal education will not be the *whole* of education. Directly instrumental education remains outside it, for example. (b) The name 'liberal' is valuable as a reminder of the essential character and orientation of the education which it labels. (On the distinction between 'Education' and 'Liberal Education' see Dearden,R.F. 1986).

Having established that the term 'Liberal education' ought to be used in a broad sense, it is appropriate to look in more detail at what such a broad conception might comprise.

(b) 'Broad' conceptions

Such a conception is offered by Charles Bailey in his book - 'Beyond the Present and the Particular : a Theory of Liberal Education'. (Bailey,C 1984 - hereinafter CB) To emphasise the inclusiveness of his concept, Bailey calls it 'general liberal education'. (hereinafter GLE) For Bailey, a GLE is - ' ... a special kind of education

having characteristics and justifications of its own which distinguish it from all other kinds of education.' (CB:17)

In Bailey's account, a GLE is characterised by four main features:

(i) Most importantly, it aims at *liberating* those who receive it. Bailey expresses this in the terms of the classic distinction between freedom *from* and freedom *to* . What a liberally educated person is freed *from*, according to Bailey, are the limitations of the 'present and the particular' - '...specific and limited circumstances of geography, economy, social class and personal encounter and relationship.' (CB:21) Their education has not sought to 'entrap or confirm' them in these circumstances but to - '...widen...horizons, increase...awareness of choice, reveal...prejudices and superstitions as such and multiply...points of reference and comparison.' (CB:21) What a liberally educated person is freed *for*, on Bailey's view, is -

...a kind of intellectual and moral autonomy, the capacity to become a free

chooser of what is to be believed and what is to be done ... a free chooser

of beliefs and actions...a free moral agent, the kind of entity a fully-fledged

human being is supposed to be.

(CB:21)

Unlike Hirst, Bailey places this aim at the heart of liberal education as its 'integrating idea', holding all the elements of the concept together. (On the need for caution in accepting autonomy as the aim of liberal education see, for example, Crittenden,B 1978). Bailey's stress here is somewhat similar to that of John White, although, unlike White, he does not explore many of the complexities which are involved in the nuanced characterisation and justification of the aim.

(ii) A commitment in teaching and learning to what is *fundamental* and *general*. A key idea for Bailey here is that - '...the more fundamental is an aspect of knowledge

and understanding I have, the more general are its applications and the more liberated I

am in terms of choices I can make and perspectives I can bring to bear.' (CB:20) For

Bailey, it is important to recognise that: -

> *Principles are more fundamental than the particulars subsumed under them,*
>
> *though the principles may, in some cases, have to be arrived at by a study*
>
> *of particular cases; and those general clusters of rules and principles which*
>
> *we refer to as disciplines are more fundamental than any isolated facts or*
>
> *items of knowledge unrelated to anything else.*
>
> (CB:23)

Such considerations are important for Bailey in determining the *curriculum* that is

appropriate for liberal education.

(iii) A concern to 'locate' - ' ... activities in ... aspects of knowledge and

understanding which can become ends in themselves; activities and aspects of

knowledge and understanding ... likely to have intrinsic value rather than *only* capable

of serving as means to other ends.' (CB:20 Emphasis in original) (5)

(iv) A concern with involvement in the life of reason, since this is a necessary

rather than contingent condition for the individual achieving anything in (i)-(iii) above.

For Bailey - 'A general liberal education is necessarily ... the development of the

rational mind...simply because nothing else could be so liberating, fundamental or

general.' (CB:20) Bailey here agrees with the general Hirstian thesis about the

character and significance of the rational mind (though not the details of it). He shares

with Hirst (and Peters), for example, a view of reason as bringing feelings and

emotions under appropriate control. Thus, for Bailey, -

To act on feeling alone is to react: to be trapped in a particular response

immediately following a particular feeling. The intuitive ideas that we are

swept by emotion, that we lose our temper, are overcome by feeling,

and so on are all indications of the idea that it is only reason that can free us

from the compulsion of immediate reaction if it is sufficiently developed.

(CB:25 Emphases in original)

Bailey draws attention to the neglected 'private' side of the life of reason; the

point that, although to be rational is to be initiated into public bodies of knowledge and

meanings and their associated methods of truth testing, it is also to make the reasons

one's own (hence the link with autonomy) - 'For me to act on reason or to hold a belief

on reason ... to act or believe rationally, the reason must be my own. I must come to

see for myself *why* it is right to believe this or do that.' (CB:25 Emphasis in original)

The breadth which Bailey imports into his concept of GLE, and which is evident

in features (i) - (iv) is reflected in the greater richness of both justification and content

which he provides for it.

With regard to justification, Bailey curtails the scope of Hirst's 'transcendental or

presuppositional' argument, which he sees as inadequate to carry the weight of the

justificatory burden imposed by liberal education (CB:35-40), and he provides, in his

'general utility' (CB:29-35) and 'ethical' (CB:40-46) justifications (particularly the

latter) a far richer and more elaborate justificatory foundation for GLE.

With regard to content, breadth is also discernible as a result of the fuller end that

Bailey's GLE is aimed at; the development of personal autonomy. It also results from

Bailey's disagreement with Hirst about the role of (merely) epistemological

considerations in the determination of curriculum content. Two major examples of this

are as follows. Bailey holds that the curriculum of GLE should be concerned with -

'...the actions, makings, doings, dispositions, expressions and interactions which give meaning, point and significance to propositions, and not only with the truth and falsity of propositions' (CB:105) and also with - '...a 'rich' sense of 'meaning' rather than a solely propositional sense.' (CB:105) This leads Bailey to adopt as criteria for inclusion of activities in GLE - '...historical and anthropological judgements on the part they have played in the developing understanding of their situation by human beings.' (CB:116) Thus, for Bailey, the importance of religion in GLE - '...does not lie in judgments about the truth and falsity of supposed bodies of propositions constituting these understandings. It lies rather in judgments about the significance of these understandings in human history and development.' (CB:116) Bailey therefore is in agreement with the need to avoid what Roland Martin calls the 'epistemological fallacy', that of - '...arguing from a theory of knowledge to conclusions about the full range of what ought or ought not to be taught and studied.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:47) For both Bailey and Roland Martin - '...neither curriculum content nor curriculum objectives are determined by the structure we attribute to knowledge. In choosing them we make value judgements about our educational purposes and we set these, in turn, in relation to the moral, social and political order we believe to be desirable.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:51) (For Bailey's recent thoughts on Liberal Education see Bailey,C 1988a; 1988b; 1988c).

If one adopts a 'broad' sense of the term, then Hirst's wider account of moral education (Hirst,P H 1974b) falls under it too. (For a discussion of whether Hirst and Peters can properly be seen as *Liberal* educators see Enslin,P 1985). Philosophers such as John White can also be seen as advancing theories of Liberal Education. White has no doubt avoided the term in his writings in order to prevent confusion with the narrow conception of Liberal Education developed by Hirst.

Bailey's version of Liberal Education, with its clear Kantian influences, is, of course, only one of the 'broad' conceptions of Liberal Education that can be pointed to. (For comment upon, and criticism of, Bailey's view, see, for example, Gibson,R (Ed.) 1986; O'Hear,A 1985). Yet the general features which are part of his view - (i) the aim

of developing autonomy, (ii) an emphasis on fundamental and general knowledge, (iii) an aversion to mere instrumentality in determining what is to be learnt, and (iv) a concern for the development of critical reason, can be seen, notwithstanding the complex issues to which they give rise, as fundamental elements in the basic concept of Liberal Education.

Theorists of Liberal Education differ quite widely in the interpretation and emphasis that they give to these elements. For example, Bruce Ackerman significantly plays down (ii) and (iii) in his account. (Ackerman,B A 1980:Ch5. See below and Appendix B). John White's view of Liberal Education is in conflict with Bailey's interpretation of (iii) and (iv). With regard to (iv), White's later writings have tended, without denying the significance of the development of critical reason, to place far more emphasis on the shaping of dispositions, virtues and qualities of personhood more generally. (See, for example, White,J 1982:Ch6;1986;1989a). Relevant here also is Patricia White's work on self-esteem, courage and hope as educational aims. (White,P 1987a;1989b;1990) Philosophers of Education of a more existentialist persuasion such as Michael Bonnett, whom Bailey considers to be a Liberal Educator (Bailey,C 1988c:125) offer a distinctive interpretation of both (i) and (iv). (See, for example, Bonnett,M 1986). In relation to (iii) we have already noted the attempts by some thinkers concerned with liberal education to achieve a reconciliation of liberal and vocational aims. (Pring,R 1985; Wallace,R 1986)

I have no space to undertake a detailed mapping of the precise positions of the range of philosophers committed to liberal education. However, for my purposes in seeking a basic account of liberal education to inform subsequent discussion, it is sufficient to draw attention to a recognisable family of conceptions of the notion located under the 'broad' heading, which include the features (i) - (iv) above expressed in some form, but with varying characterisations and degrees of emphasis. Perhaps the most fundamental notion which holds the family together is (i), a commitment to the centrality of the aim of developing the autonomy of the child, however this may be spelt out in detail. (For further discussion of the concept of liberal education see, for

example, Crittenden,B 1982;1988; Gardner,P 1983; Gutmann,A 1987; O'Hear,A 1981:Ch1; Strike,K 1982a;1982b;1989; Walzer,M 1983:Ch8).

Bruce Ackerman's account of liberal education is of interest not only because the views of Ackerman have had some salience in earlier chapters, but also because some of the features of his account illustrate in an interesting way the problems concerning objectivity and neutrality which confront the liberal educator. I offer a detailed critique of Ackerman's concept of liberal education in Appendix B.

Much can be written not only about the interpretation of the features of liberal education but also about the presuppositions of an ethical, epistemological and political sort on which they depend. I shall address these matters in more detail subsequently.

I turn now to an outline of the implications of this general conception of education for education in religion.

(2) Liberal Education and Religion

It is not difficult to bring out the implications of this view of education for education in religion. They are contained in many recent and influential discussions of the subject, which whilst offering different emphases, share a common viewpoint. (See, for example, Cox,E & Cairns,J M 1989; Hirst,P H 1972;1974a:esp Ch3,12; 1974b;1981;1984; 1985; Hull,J M 1984; Schools Council, 1971; Sealey,J 1982;1985, Smart,N 1968; Swann Report,1985:Ch8).

The central implication of this view is, of course, arising from (i) above, that children must not have their religious commitment determined in any way, but must be allowed to make their own judgements on the basis of appropriate reasoning and evaluation. Arising from (ii) is a notion that a broad introduction to the religious domain is required, not merely the teaching of one religion, and certainly not as if it were true. (iv) gives rise to the claim that it is not only possible but also necessary to engage in reasoning in some form in the religious domain, and that the concept of reasoning has

some applicability and significance in this area. Associated with the liberal view of education in religion are a number of related claims about the character and status of religious claims (for example, that no one set of religious claims can be *shown* to be objectively true, that there is controversiality about their status, that important distinctions between the religious and moral domains need to be acknowledged, and so on.) In addition, the view is developed in, and linked to, the context of a pluralist democratic society.

Some of the fuller details of the liberal view on education in religion will emerge in discussions in Chapter Seven (where the view of the Swann Report will be taken as a paradigm of it) and in Chapter Eight (where the position of Hirst will be examined in more detail). I shall accordingly not enter into further discussion of this view at this point.

It is appropriate, nevertheless, to contrast the view with two recent and prominent discussions of religious education which seem at odds with it.

In their document 'Education and Indoctrination', (Scruton,R *et al* 1985 - Hereinafter EI), Scruton, Ellis-Jones and O'Keeffe outline their opposition to the indoctrination of pupils in schools. Their major concern is political indoctrination. (EI:Ch1-3;5;Appendices) However, they explicitly *exclude* morality and, in a very controversial way, religion from their strictures.

Scruton *et al* hold that education involves the pursuit of truth, which is - '...furthered by an open mind, and by a disposition to consider conflicting arguments, to weigh the evidence, and to consider the reasons for each conclusion before accepting it'. (EI:15) Education, they claim, must respect the 'intellectual autonomy' of its recipient (EI:15), so that, for example, - '...when the mind closes upon its conclusion it does so neither impetuously nor prematurely, but in full consciousness of what it is being asked to believe, and in such a way as to remain responsive to argument and evidence'. (EI:26) (For a summary of the concept of indoctrination employed in the document see EI:25-26).

However, the authors observe that education does not, and should not, seek this kind of 'open-mindedness' in *all* matters. Sometimes, they argue, 'closing the mind 'has a 'fundamental educational purpose' (EI:25), arising from the fact that all education - '...leads to the acquisition of at least some beliefs for which grounds cannot be given'. (EI:15) These matters include, perhaps most fundamentally, those things which the mind must assume - '...in the very attempt to provide reasons' (EI:15), such as fundamental propositions about method in Mathematics and Science. Morality is also included in this category: - '...a large part of morality is characterised by foregone conclusions, and by a concerted attempt to induce a closed mind' (EI:45) because fundamental moral values are scarcely optional or negotiable, or discovered by experimentation with their alternatives. Thus the authors insist that - 'We do not discover the moral reality of murder by giving it a try...'. (EI:45) We acquire morality young. Although it is not acquired rationally, it forms, once gained, - '...an ineliminable part of our constitution as rational beings'. (EI:45)

These points about the development of fundamental principles of thought, and basic moral values and qualities, are widely accepted by liberal educators. (See on morality, for example, Peters,R S 1974:Ch13). However, the document expresses these points in rather a rough way in claiming, for example, that a 'closed mind' is what is being sought in these matters. (It is also worthy of note that no mention is made of the reality of moral controversy and of how it should be handled within the school).

The authors extend the category of things in relation to which the development of 'closed-mindedness' has an educational value to include religion. Thus, they insist, - '...there is a serious case for exempting religion - or at least the informal, 'immanent' presence of religion in assembly and prayers - from our strictures against indoctrination.'. (EI:46) The authors do not make explicit exactly what concept of religious education they are invoking here (a clear omission from the liberal point of view) but it seems fairly clear that they are intending that Christianity should be presented *as if it were true*. This is implied in statements such as - 'The exposure to alternatives may defeat the purpose of religious education as much as it defeats the

purpose of morality: it offers to place idle curiosity where there should be certainty and trust' (EI:46), and their admission that religious instruction involves an attempt - '...to close the mind, through apologetics, casuistry, and a one-sided diet of examples...'. (EI:45)

The authors claim that, just as in the case of morality, people *need* religion (although the qualification 'in the normal case' is added) and that it is best acquired early. The justifications offered for these conclusions seem to be as follows. All of them conflict with central features of the liberal position.

First, on the question of need, two sorts of reasons are advanced: (a) A familiar argument relating to cultural inheritance. Scruton *et al* claim that without Christianity much of our literature, art, philosophy, law and institutions would be unintelligible. - 'Its language, its melodies, and its moral presence are revealed to us in all our surrounding world, and a child who was not brought into contact with it would be a stranger in the society to which he is destined'. (EI:46) This may be true, but further argument is required to show that what this leads to is the claim that Christianity should be taught *as if it were true*. (b) Another familiar argument about the beneficial effect of religion upon morality. Thus the authors claim that religion - '...informs us of the life of the spirit, and gives sustenance to our moral sense by parables and symbols, which speak always of a world other than the one in which we pass our days' (EI:46) and that - '...it can ...be a warm sustaining part of that moral education without which no child can survive in the world. Religion shores up the certainties of morality with vague but deep foundations...'. (EI:46) This clearly infringes the liberal insistence that crucial distinctions between the moral and the religious domains be observed. (cf Hirst,P H 1974a:Ch12)

Second, on the question of the need for early acquisition, the authors seem to appeal to the essentially non-rational character of religious belief. The authors claim that whilst political indoctrination closes minds on matters which are 'genuinely open', religious indoctrination closes minds on matters 'incapable of a rational answer', ones which are claimed (rather puzzlingly) to be either open or 'non-existent' for us'. (EI:46)

For them, the matters with which religion deals - '...cannot be decided by reasoned argument but...must be pre-empted by a system of faith whose acceptability is determined not by its rational basis, but by its appositeness to the inheritance that is ours' (EI:46) It is for this reason that an 'exposure to alternatives' may 'defeat the purpose' of religious education.

A third argument involves an appeal to the wishes of parents. The authors note that - '...most parents would wish their children to have a basic familiarity with the tenets of religion, and the kind of meaning that it imparts to our experience.'. (EI:45) But it is not clear that such parents want their children formed *as religious persons* (in state schools), and whether, even if they did, this alone would settle the matter from a moral point of view. The differential treatment by Scruton *et al* of the political and religious domains is seen in the view they take of the notion of a 'withdrawal clause' for parents in these domains. They support the continued maintenance of such a clause in the case of religion but claim that the introduction of such a clause in relation to politically controversial areas would be insufficient to guard against indoctrination because many parents would be too reluctant or apathetic to exercise the option. (EI:49) Stronger safeguards are needed. It is not clear, however, that Scruton *et al* can sustain a very clear principled distinction between the two kinds of cases.

A telling passage in the document is the following, containing their account of the 'true difference' between religious and political indoctrination. - 'The enthusiasms and emotions that are stirred by religion are, if properly directed, gathered up in worship and prayer. They are not let loose in the world, to carry out a vain and destructive work of earthly redemption'. (EI:46) This view of religion as politically passive, and indeed as a kind of 'cement' for society, explains why the authors see its inculcation as a valuable thing. This general position is more fully spelled out by Scruton in 'The Meaning of Conservatism'. (6)

A similar general view is developed by Burn and Hart in their document 'The Crisis in Religious Education' (Burn,J and Hart,C 1988), the foreword of which was

written by Baroness Cox, who has been prominent in achieving modifications to the religious aspects of the 1988 Education Act. Cox sets the tone for the document by claiming that - 'As a nation, we are in danger of selling our spiritual birthright for a mess of secular pottage' (Burn,J and Hart,C 1988:4) and she calls for the re-instatement of '...Christian acts of worship and instruction in the essential tenets of the Christian faith', and the 'centrality of Christianity' rather than its submergence - '...in a welter of shallow dabblings in a variety of other religions, resulting in a confusing kaleidoscope of images of faiths, doing justice to none' (ibid:4), a call which is echoed throughout the report by the authors themselves. In Chapter 4 they mount a series of arguments designed to encourage the Government to make the religious provisions of the Act more specifically and predominantly Christian. (See ibid:29-30 for a summary of the courses of action recommended to parliament). In Appendix 1 of the document, seven arguments are given in support of the notion of Christian Education. Many of these echo the arguments of Scruton *et al* and are in conflict with liberal educational principles in the same kinds of ways.

The final modifications to the religious elements of the 1988 Education Act achieved by pressure groups such as these can be seen to be in danger of infringing these principles in several ways, most notably the provisions for a daily act of collective worship of a predominantly or broadly Christian character in the school, and for the teaching given to reflect the broadly Christian character of British religious traditions. (For discussion of these provisions, see Cox,E and Cairns,J M 1989).

There are a number of other views of education in religion which are in clearly in tension with the liberal approach. These include Muslim perspectives (Ashraf,S A 1988; Halstead,J M 1986; Halstead,J M & Khan-Cheema,A 1987) and those of some Christian writers in the fundamentalist 'Christian school' movement. (Deakin,R 1989a;1989b) In addition, a tension exists between liberal values and the position of John Haldane, who argues from a communitarian perspective. (Haldane,J 1986;1988)

In this chapter I have outlined the central features of the concept of liberal education, and have indicated its implications for religious education. In the next chapter I turn to some of the complexities and difficulties arising in relation to the concept.

CHAPTER SIX

Liberal Education: Complexities and Difficulties

The concept of Liberal Education is confronted by a number of complexities and difficulties. I can consider only a few of these. In this chapter, I shall examine the arguments of two critics of Liberal Education, Ieuan Lloyd and Keith Ward. I shall argue that their critiques underestimate the importance and resilience of central elements of the liberal educational ideal. However, I shall also argue that these writers draw attention to issues and problems which are often neglected by liberal educators and which can be seen to lend support to my own view about the plurality of starting points which liberal education requires and my claim that a particular, distinctive substantiality of belief, practice and value can indeed form one such starting point. (1)

(1) Ieuan Lloyd's Critique of Liberal Education

Lloyd's critique is developed in two articles 'The Rational Curriculum: a Critique' (Lloyd, D I 1980 - Hereinafter RCC) and 'Confession and Reason'. (Lloyd, I 1986 - Hereinafter CR) He offers a criticism of crucial features of John White's conception of education and seeks (particularly in the second article) to defend a confessional form of schooling in religion.

However, despite approval of Lloyd's arguments by some authors (2), I shall argue that his criticisms lack sharpness and cogency in a number of significant places and that he fails in his attempt to rehabilitate the confessional approach. This is because his defence of it is too sweeping and too heedless of important considerations and distinctions. Once these are sufficiently acknowledged, I shall suggest, the force of

Lloyd's arguments can be seen not to support his own conclusions, where these can be clearly discerned, but a more complex and nuanced set of educational principles.

My argument here has six sections. In the first, I attempt a brief outline of Lloyd's handling of some of the fundamental concepts and issues relevant to his argument. In the second and third sections, I examine Lloyd's criticisms of the rational approach to education in general, and of non-confessional approaches to education in religion, respectively. The fourth section contains a critical outline of Lloyd's defence of the confessional approach. I attempt an evaluation of this in the following section, and offer some concluding thoughts in the final one.

(a) Fundamental concepts and issues

Lloyd's arguments are neither systematic nor comprehensive, and indeed are rather schematic in places. It is therefore helpful at the outset to identify, for preliminary brief examination, four fundamental concepts and issues central to liberal education which are highly relevant to Lloyd's argument, and which are crucial in determining its shape and cogency.

(i) Rationality

Lloyd's first target is the general prominence of the concept of 'rationality' in relation to education, and, in particular, the apparently unexceptionable demand that a person should base his or her beliefs and actions on reason and argument, and should seek a justification for them. (Lloyd rather tightly characterises this demand as requiring persons to be able to *give* reasons and arguments for their beliefs and actions.)

Lloyd acknowledges not just the power of this appeal, arising from its connection with 'liberation' and personal autonomy, but also concedes its legitimacy, - 'We do not want people to believe the first thing that comes into their heads or to behave impulsively'. (CR:140) This demand is conceded in the educational domain also - 'The

educated man (sic) is indeed the reflective man, who distances himself from the immediate and is critical of it'. (CR:140)

Lloyd's objection to the demand concerns the *extent* to which it is being applied, and the *way* in which it is being construed. On the former, Lloyd claims that the demand has gone *too far*, - '... the desire to be rational has become an epidemic'. (CR:140) On the latter, Lloyd argues that a *mischaracterisation* of the nature of rationality is involved. In particular, he bemoans the fact that demands concerning it are often couched - '... in the language of the abstract not tempered by example or an understanding of the past'. (CR:140)

It is important to note that Lloyd does not make sufficiently clear in any detail in his article the form of rationality which he *does* see as adequately meeting the demands he concedes as legitimate. This has the effect of making it difficult for the character and scope assigned by Lloyd to rationality to be discerned, and for his own positive educational recommendations to be seen clearly. We tend not to receive from Lloyd's argument an impression of rationality as a positive ideal, linked with the search for truth and the avoidance of error. He writes rather of rationality as a word used for 'persuasive purposes' (CR:140), and as concerned with the control of impulse. In places, Lloyd seems to leave himself open to the accusation that he is advocating an uncritical acceptance of beliefs by pupils.

(ii)   Personal autonomy

The same criticisms can be made of Lloyd's treatment of the concept of the personal autonomy of the individual, a crucial notion requiring attention in any defence of confessional approaches to religious education.

Lloyd does not deal systematically with the concept of 'personal autonomy' in his articles. Once again, his criticisms seem to be not of the fundamental value of the concept itself, but of the *extent* and *character* of demands concerning it. Lloyd remarks that the claim that children must make up their own minds sounds very laudable, but - '

... the whole notion of what it is to make up one's mind deserves some unpacking'. (CR:141) (See also RCC:338-341 and my discussion in Appendix D of Lloyd's denial that choice is important in relation to autonomy).

Commenting, ironically, on the perceived relationship between 'being rational' and 'liberation' Lloyd writes

> *It enables us to put the past behind us and to start all over again. We can*
> *see, perhaps for the first time, ourselves as choosers of our own destiny.*
> *We will become autonomous.*

(CR:140)

Lloyd's characterisation of personal autonomy is over-stated here. Although the notion is by no means unproblematic (see below), in most accounts of autonomy as an educational aim crucial qualifications are supplied which emphasise the point that it is a matter of *degree*:- there is no suggestion that we can in any sense put the past completely behind us and 'start all over again' in developing and exercising our autonomy.

But, as in the case of 'rationality', Lloyd nowhere provides us with a clear positive account of the role that 'personal autonomy' *does* play in his own thinking. Granted, as he suggests, that the concept makes little sense if conceived in too abstract or absolute a way, does Lloyd nevertheless concede that it remains in some sense a fundamental value, when appropriately characterised? What might such a characterisation be? What role does it play in his educational recommendations? Lloyd's failure to pose, and offer an answer to, these questions leaves him open to an accusation parallel to that identified in relation to his treatment of 'rationality'; that the notion of an individual pupil being encouraged to reflect upon, and assess, matters of belief and value, is significantly muted in his account. (For discussion of Lloyd's claim that choice between alternatives is not necessary for autonomy see Appendix D Section 5).

(iii) Education

Lloyd's account suffers too from a failure to characterise the concept of 'Education' he is employing. This makes it difficult, amongst other things, for us to assess what Lloyd means in his reference to the religious way of life (a particular religious way of life?) not being anti-educational (CR:144), and to perceive a distinction in his argument between a person being 'religious' and being 'religiously educated'. (CR:143) (For critical comments on this, see Sealey, J 1987:15). These points will be returned to later.

But one of the most glaring omissions from Lloyd's argument is any reference to the particular schooling arrangements he has in mind. Is he providing a defence of confessional approaches to religious education in common, publicly provided schools, as well as in schools which are specifically religious in character? It would seem so, since Lloyd does not draw a distinction between the two kinds of schools; neither does he acknowledge nor explore the matters of principle (concerning, for example, the different conceptions of 'education in religion' at issue, differing mandates for the exercising of influence, parents' rights etc) which relate to the distinction.

(iv) Practical context of the discussion

This omission is linked to a more general reluctance of Lloyd to make clear the particular practical context to which he is relating his argument. This is odd, given Lloyd's insistence, elsewhere, that philosophical argument be conducted, not in the abstract, but from, and with constant reference to, particular practices and problems. (Lloyd,D I 1976)

The particular practical context to which Lloyd seems to be referring is indeed that of our own society, and the problem of how the task of education in religion should be conducted within it. Lloyd refers briefly in places to aspects of the character of that society in remarks such as - 'We are no longer a Christian country; there are children

with other cultural backgrounds which make it impracticable to teach Christianity'. (CR:142) But points such as these are not kept in view throughout Lloyd's argument, and their force is not incorporated within it. As a consequence, the argument lacks focus, and the precise conclusions that can be drawn from it are unclear.

My points in relation to (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) should be borne in mind as we turn to examination of the details of Lloyd's argument.

(b) Criticisms of the 'rational' approach to education

Lloyd chooses as an example of the general approach to education he is criticising, that of John White in 'Towards a Compulsory Curriculum' (White,J 1973), although it would seem that Lloyd's critique has a wider focus and is not limited to White's views.

Lloyd makes several telling criticisms of White's attempt to maximise the choice of pupils. He is in danger, claims Lloyd, of picturing school - '...as being like a sweet shop in which a child has been given money to spend' (RCC:334), and of conceiving the schoolchild as - '...a child without roots, without attachments and without love, concerned only with choosing...'.(RCC:341)

Lloyd insists that the early upbringing of children, involving such things as learning to speak, acquiring an understanding of the world etc. cannot involve a child making rational choices. Rather the child develops a predisposition to acquire substantive beliefs, capacities and so on, and this predisposition is - '...logically inevitable'. (RCC:335) There is therefore nothing to regret here because - '...one can only regret the absence of what is at least conceivable'. (RCC:335)

Lloyd extends this (undeniable) point, to which full weight has been given in earlier chapters, to cover White's educational recommendations. He asks

...what sense can be made of presenting a child with an outline of all other languages and ways of seeing and structuring the world? It is just this

multiplicity of alternatives which White recommends in the case of ways of

life. To be consistent, he must recommend this for language too,

inconceivable though it be.

(RCC:335)

Although this illustrates Lloyd's characteristic tendency to overstatement, he does proceed to make some interesting points in developing his general argument.

One point which Lloyd makes is that White fails to include 'ways of life' along with his 'Category 1' activities as only understandable by pupils in virtue of their actual engagement in them. (RCC:337) He rejects White's point that description - or imaginative involvement - is sufficient for understanding and decision here, together with the implication that a grasp of the formal characteristics of a way of life as distinct from its specific character and features is sufficient.

Lloyd adds a number of other points.

The first concerns difficulties in conceiving of the child as 'standing back and choosing' ways of life from amongst alternatives. These difficulties are of two kinds. The first relates to the starting point from which a person looks at other ways of life. Certain attitudes, beliefs and forms of understanding are already in place and these cannot be put to one side merely by an act of the will, either by the pupil or the teacher. Lloyd is careful not to claim that understanding of other ways of life, and possibly a change of belief and practice, is *impossible*, merely (very?) difficult. The second difficulty is that the individual who is doing the choosing is not static and immutable, constituting a fixed point from which the choosing can proceed. Rather, the child is constantly being changed by experiencing at first hand different life-styles. Although Lloyd does not draw the point out explicitly, this state of affairs presumably tells quite significantly against the aspiration of putting the child into a position where their choices are made in the 'ideal state' that White refers to. According to Lloyd, White underplays the significance of (and must in terms of his theory be suspicious of)

attraction, and the formation of *attachments* here, which may not be reflective in character. Lloyd points out that

> *...to feel the beauty of song is to be drawn towards it, and one cannot return to a state of rational reflection where one can sever those bonds of understanding and affection that have been formed. The experience will have changed one.*

<div align="right">(RCC:335) (3)</div>

This point about the mutability of the agent will be returned to later. In this connection, Lloyd invokes, but does not really explore, the example of helping pupils to choose in marriage. He asks - '...does not the child have first to find out whether he wants to be celibate or not?' (RCC:336)

A second point which Lloyd develops here concerns the criteria which are used in the making of choices. He writes - '..what counts as a reason for wanting to continue to listen to music, for example, comes from music itself and not from some meta-source. The reasons do not have a life independent of particular activities'. (RCC:335) (For a similar argument see Cooper D E 1983:22). And regarding ways of life as a whole, Lloyd argues - '...there is nothing to which one can refer whole ways of seeing or behaving...'. (RCC:334) He also makes the Wittgensteinian point that when individuals *do* change their way of life, the reasons given are not external, but a feature of the new way of life adopted and do not have a ground independent of it (RCC:338) (4)

A third point is that - '... little is ever said about what constitutes an adequate understanding of other life-styles to enable a child to be sufficiently competent to make a choice'. (CR:141) A little knowledge can be worse than none, claims Lloyd. There are dangers of unsettling a child, and of relativism. (5) Further, as noted above, Lloyd

stresses the sheer difficulty of bringing about the relevant kind of understanding. (RCC:337)

Fourth, Lloyd points to the difficulties raised by the thesis for our being able to actually recognise a rational choice in relation to the matter of life-styles once it is made. These difficulties arise, claims Lloyd, because questions of truth and value are being evaded. Although at this stage of his argument Lloyd presents this point as one about the *identification* of rational choices (with implications for the ability of teachers to evaluate the success and objectivity of their teaching), he, as we shall see, eventually develops it in the direction of calling into question the logical propriety of 'rational choice' itself in this context.

These points made against White's theory have some force, and this is acknowledged by White himself. (6)

Although 'Confession and Reason' was published after White's book 'The aims of education re-stated' (White,J 1982), and the critical discussion it has generated, Lloyd continues to confine his discussion to White's earlier argument.

This omission prevents Lloyd from developing further critical points of equal or greater force, concerning, for example, the need for more account to be taken of the role of the shaping of virtues, dispositions and character in the educative task.

Nevertheless, the criticisms which Lloyd *does* develop are significant and they present issues which liberal educators cannot evade.

However, some of the criticisms involve overstatement. For example, Lloyd writes that, in the 'rational' approach, - '...teachers who have commitments they cannot reveal, offer alternatives of massive proportions, none of which is presented in any order of preference of value or truth.' (CR:141) (7) But the rational approach is much more complex than this, not necessarily involving acceptance of the notion either of the 'neutral' teacher (Dearden,R F 1984:Ch7) or of relativism. (Crittenden,B 1978) On the accusation that the approach evades questions of truth and value, for example, Lloyd seems to give the impression that it calls for the incoherent notion of beliefs being *merely chosen*, whereas what is at stake is a person engaging in the (admittedly

complex) task of personal *assessment* and *evaluation* and *decision* on the basis of reason. (8)

What is required is consideration of the possibility that the 'rational approach' can meet the significant points made by Lloyd by offering a more nuanced account of the issues in question and by offering a plausible indication of how the problems could be resolved. For example, it might be claimed that whilst direct and adequate acquaintance by a pupil with a full range of different life-styles is difficult - maybe even impossible - to achieve, it is nevertheless possible to outline central considerations and issues about life-style which the pupil should be exposed to and which they should be encouraged to reflect upon; that although it is not possible to get a child fully into the 'ideal state' for choice, it is nevertheless something that should be aimed at *as far as possible*; that dangers of insufficient understanding, disorientation and relativism can be guarded against; that *broad* criteria can be outlined to enable the identification of rational choice between life-styles, and so on. Detailed argument would be necessary to determine the precise character of these rejoinders, and their adequacy. What they have in common is a desire to preserve in some sense an *impulse* in favour of rationality, rational choice and personal autonomy.

What is unclear, granted Lloyd's reluctance to outline his own positive account of these notions, is the extent to which he would be prepared to accept considerations of this kind. What does seem clear, however, is that much more argument is required to justify the sceptical conclusion which Lloyd draws from this part of his discussion - namely, that regarding choice of life-style - '... one should ask whether the notion of choice in relation to ... alternatives is appropriate anyway.' (CR:141) It is Lloyd's insistence upon not merely the difficulty, but also the inappropriateness - even impossibility - of the 'rational' approach which requires much fuller justification.

(c) Criticisms of 'non-confessional' approaches to education in religion

In addition to the general criticisms which Lloyd makes about the 'rational' approach to education, he makes some specific criticisms of that approach as applied to education in religion. I shall use the term 'non-confessional' as a convenient umbrella term to refer to the target of Lloyd's criticisms here. As in the case of the 'rational' approach, Lloyd does not make his specific target here very clear. (9)

Lloyd makes a number of points about this approach, each of which I will critically comment upon.

(i) Lloyd writes - '... it sometimes seems as if we are being asked to put all our beliefs into the religious melting pot. It is as if we are asked to stand nowhere'. (CR:143) A defender of the non-confessional approach could point out that there may well be a confusion involved here between the particular, *personal*, commitments of the teachers and students on the one hand, and the commitments that can be allowed, as a matter of public policy, to influence and determine the content and stance of the educational process. There is, in standard cases of the 'non confessional' approach, no suggestion that the particular commitments of individuals are necessarily to be eschewed or concealed in some way. Indeed, this form of religious education *is* concerned with commitments, it is typically argued, in the sense that it seeks to help individuals to make these in an appropriate way. Lloyd's point would seem to be that the educational process itself must involve, and depend upon, commitment to a particular religious position. But in the absence of reference to the kinds of distinctions between different educational contexts referred to earlier, it is hard to see how Lloyd can sustain the claim. It may be possible, however, to develop from Lloyd's point an argument to the effect that, granted the potential dangers for understanding and disorientation involved in a situation

where too heterogeneous a range of beliefs is being considered, it might be justifiable for there to be, alongside the non-confessional approach, an alternative approach which attempts the task of education in religion from the basis of a particular substantiality of religious belief, practice and value.

(ii)   Lloyd claims that some religious educationists 'are of no fixed abode' and have 'lost their way' and their nerve. But this is not accompanied by any clear characterisation of what the task of these religious educationists is supposed to be. The impression is given that this task is one of inculcating a particular faith; hence the reference to the educators being of 'no fixed abode' and having lost their nerve. But if the task is one of developing an *understanding* of the religious domain as in the non-confessional approach, it is not clear that these criticisms have much force. The commitment and nerve of the educators must here be characterised in relation to the educative task so construed, and not to the teaching of any particular religious faith.

(iii) Lloyd writes - 'Teachers of other subjects are not so nervous about what they teach, so that we rarely ask questions about their confessional approach' (CR:143), implying that the analogy between subjects is wholly unproblematic here. I shall return in section (d) to the question of this analogy, in the context of Lloyd's treatment of the notion of 'compulsion'.

(iv)   Another point which Lloyd makes against advocates of the non-confessional approach is that they are inconsistent in outlawing confessional approaches in the school but permitting them in the home, where they are labelled 'nurture' rather than 'education'. (CR:143) But Lloyd argues - '...if religion is epistemologically unsound in school, it is unsound anywhere.' (CR:143) Lloyd seems to be presenting as a matter of mere convention the fact that particular descriptive labels ('nurture'; 'education') are applied to particular

activities. Up to a point this is true, but without slipping into a species of essentialism, it is important to note that the activities of 'Education' and 'Nurture' are importantly different from each other in terms of aims, character and justification. (See Chapter Eight) Further, what is appropriate and legitimate in the home is importantly different from what is appropriate and legitimate in the school. Failure to engage in discussion of these distinctions leads Lloyd into his sweeping conclusion that 'what is epistemologically unsound in school is unsound anywhere'. But the criterion of soundness that is at issue here is not exclusively an epistemological one, but one relating to a mandate for developing particular religious commitments in young people. The mandate possessed on the one hand by teachers in the school, and on the other by parents in the home, is different. The character of these mandates, and the soundness of the activities licensed by them depends on a broader range of considerations and grounds than epistemological ones.

Underlying all these particular points seems to be a claim that the non-confessional approach to education in religion is in an important sense *impossible* or *incoherent*. But Lloyd needs to say much more in defence of such a conclusion.

(d) A defence of a confessional approach to education in religion

A problem which arises in giving an account of Lloyd's defence of the confessional approach is that the *extent* of his defence is unclear. It is clear, however, that Lloyd *is* seeking to defend a confessional approach. He states quite explicitly that - 'The kind of religious education discussed in this paper is one where a confessional approach is adopted.' (CR:144) But the precise character and status of Lloyd's recommendations is obscure.

Lloyd seems to advance two main sets of arguments in defence of the confessional approach: (i) *The necessity for unshakable beliefs* and (ii) *An analogy with*

the compulsoriness of other subjects. I shall examine each in turn and shall suggest

that neither are in the end convincing.

(i)   The necessity for unshakable beliefs (10)

Lloyd first draws attention to the general necessity for unshakable beliefs. He

asks the question - 'What is wrong with inculcating in children unshakable beliefs?'

(CR:142) He makes the point that there are many beliefs which we *would* in fact want

a child to hold unshakably. (In view of our earlier discussion of the notion of

unshakability in Chapter Two I shall not explore here the various difficulties arising in

relation to the notion). Lloyd gives as examples of what he has in mind here - '...

beliefs in the external world, in our own identity, that events are caused, that the sun

will rise tomorrow, that one cannot walk through walls, and so on.' (CR:142) These

beliefs, which are not taught explicitly to a child, are basic in the sense that they

constitute fixed points around which our other beliefs revolve. It is inappropriate to

entertain ordinary (as distinct from philosophical) doubt concerning them. No person

in their right mind, claims Lloyd, would call them into question in any ordinary sense.

Lloyd is surely right about this, at least insofar as he is referring to the kinds of

basic - or bedrock - (hereinafter 'B') beliefs, he specifies. Such beliefs are indeed, in a

fundamental sense, necessary to our rationality and our human life more generally. The

difficulty arises when Lloyd attempts to extend the conclusion that inculcation of B-type

beliefs in an unshakable way is unexceptionable, to other types of beliefs, including

moral and religious ones. In this move, Lloyd fails to take sufficient account of his

own insistence that - 'The issue is not that we have unshakable beliefs, but *which*

beliefs are unshakable'. (CR:142, my emphasis)

Lloyd first tries to extend his conclusion to moral (hereinafter 'M') beliefs. He

makes the correct point that much moral education must be substantial in character, in

the sense that the truth or correctness of a number of moral values must be presupposed

and inculcated in children without their being given much opportunity, at least initially, for reflection and criticism. This point is, of course, widely accepted by philosophers and educationists. It is supported by considerations derived from the character of the development of moral agency, the necessary primacy of action over reflection in moral learning, and so on. (11) The precise conclusion that Lloyd draws for moral education from these considerations is unclear. He writes - 'There is therefore no reason to speak of the inculcation of these beliefs as being indoctrination'. (CR:142) The lack of clarity in Lloyd's argument arises, as we shall see, partly from his failure to spell out in any detail just what he means by 'these beliefs' here (*viz*: moral beliefs in general, or just certain categories of them?).

Several critical points can be made about Lloyd's argument here. First, Lloyd seems to be operating with a notion of indoctrination as involving the inculcation of unshakable beliefs. The limitations of this interpretation of the concept were noted in Chapter Two. If, however, a form of inhibition of reflection on beliefs is taken as an account of indoctrination then merely the presence of what might appear to be 'unshakable beliefs' does not indicate indoctrination. A person might reflect upon the beliefs, and acknowledge the character and force of their 'unshakability'. So the crucial issue here for the avoidance of indoctrination is 'provision for reflection'. Throughout, Lloyd says little about this.

Lloyd does not distinguish between different *stages* in moral education. Much of what he has to say sounds plausible as far as the early moral education (or training) of young children is concerned. Even here, however, caution is needed about the advocacy of too uncritical an approach. (See, for example, Matthews,G 1980a; Short,G 1988). But what of the later stages of moral education? Surely it is not only appropriate but also necessary for pupils to engage in appropriate forms of independent critical thought about morality and their moral lives? Indeed, many would hold that independence and criticism are two important features of moral agency itself. Lloyd does not acknowledge the complex structure of moral beliefs. Some moral beliefs are arguably basic to the moral domain in that, in something of a parallel to the beliefs

identified earlier (12), they constitute the 'bedrock' of that domain. In a real sense, they - '... form the axis around which our moral behaviour revolves'. (CR:142) Although Lloyd does not explore the character of these basic moral beliefs, several of the examples he refers to (concern for others, fairness etc) lead us to think that he has in mind certain of the 'bedrock' moral beliefs to which Bernard Williams draws attention. (Williams,B 1985) These values provide in some sense the conditions for civilised life to proceed. It may well be that - '...if we are ever challenged as to why these values have the position in our lives that they have we are lost for words.' (CR:142) This, claims Lloyd, is not 'because we are speechless, but because there are no words that are required.' (CR:142) Lloyd continues - 'It is like being asked to define the words we have already used in a definition, or like being asked if the ruler is the right length. Reasoning must stop somewhere. This is not a logical deficiency but a logical necessity.' (CR:142) Leaving to one side disputes about the role of reason in relation to basic moral values, although even here the issues are complex, it seems clear that reflection, reasoning and judgement are both possible and necessary in relation to other more complex aspects of the moral domain. Some of the examples given by Lloyd (e.g. heroism and cowardice) clearly involve thought and judgement. There are also problems of *conflicts of value* (even within one moral 'world view') to be resolved, and the problem of value diversity more generally, not to mention the complexities of the practical situations in which the values arise and require application. All this is seen in the context of such disputed moral questions as nuclear disarmament, abortion and so on.

It is unclear quite what educational principles Lloyd would recommend in dealing with these, more complex, aspects of the moral domain. Certainly the notion of developing unshakable beliefs begins to look distinctly problematic here. Lloyd's defence of the confessional approach in moral education demands considerably more elaboration and defence than he has provided. For these, and other, reasons it does not

constitute an unproblematic analogy for religious education, which is the analogy that Lloyd proceeds next to draw.

In arguing for the necessity of initiation into the foundations of religion, Lloyd claims that - '... any religion, like the other dimensions of experience, has its foundations and its superstructure' (CR:143), and he proceeds to argue that, just as in morality and in our understanding of the physical world, we are justified in initiating our pupils in a fairly substantial and unreflective way into the 'foundations' as a precondition of understanding anything at all in the domain.

There are, however, great difficulties involved in Lloyd's invocation of the notion of 'foundation' in religion. What are these foundations, and how irreducibly basic are they to the possibility of understanding? As we saw earlier, Lloyd might legitimately claim that B-beliefs and (some) M-beliefs are foundational in this way. But what of the religious domain? A crucial problem here is one of *particularity*. Particular, specific, religions no doubt have (in some sense) their fundamental bases, an understanding of which is crucial to a grasp of the religion in question. But what of religion in *general*? What might be invoked here as candidates are the very general features of human life that can in principle be experienced by any reflective person, to which R.S. Peters draws attention in his Swarthmore Lecture 'Reason, Morality and Religion'. (Peters,R S 1972) These may be claimed to be 'foundational' in the sense that it is out of these experiences, or in relation to them, that religion claims its 'anchoring point' in common experience.

But *these* foundations are clearly not what Lloyd has in mind, for, apart from the fact that his philosophical perspective renders him highly suspicious of such general 'foundations' for religion, initiation of a pupil into them would not justify a confessional programme, since the very character of the foundations as outlined by Peters is that they are only *tentative* bases for the more detailed religious 'superstructure' which may be built upon them. They are, in themselves, very general and schematic and can, of course, be given a wholly non-religious interpretation.

Initiation of children into *these* foundations could involve no more than sensitising them to a range of features of common experience which religion is claimed to be related to. But it is clear that Lloyd throughout has something very much more specific in mind: - the notion that a child's 'confession of a faith' might be brought about - '...in an educational institution.' (CR:143) Clearly Lloyd has in mind here the confession of a *particular* faith.

Lloyd's point about the necessity for the development of 'unshakable beliefs' in religious education only really follows if one accepts that such an education involves the inculcation of a particular faith. But Lloyd nowhere deals with the various complexities to which this suggestion gives rise, and which will be alluded to later.

(ii)   The analogy with the compulsoriness of other subjects

In exploring a defence of the compulsoriness of a confessional form of religious education, Lloyd makes much of the analogy with the arguments and considerations used to support the compulsoriness of school subjects in general (e.g. that children cannot make choices about a subject before they have been introduced to it; that eventual interest and involvement is compatible with compulsion etc.). (see CR:144) Doubtless, arguments of this kind can be used to support the compulsoriness of the study of religion *in some form* in the school curriculum. But what is at issue here is not whether religion should be part of a compulsory curriculum, but the *kind of treatment* it should receive. Arguably, non-confessional approaches to religious education can be seen as genuinely analogous to other elements of the curriculum, and the general arguments for compulsoriness apply. But arguments which have considerable power in supporting the compulsoriness of school subjects in general cannot be deployed unproblematically to defend a confessional approach to religious education - at least in common schools. Such an approach is open to serious criticism on the kinds of moral, educational and epistemological grounds which have emerged in earlier chapters. Lloyd seems not to see the matter as one of *principle*, but rather as one

ruled out (at the present time?) on *practical* grounds. Regarding the confessional

approach Lloyd writes - 'At the present time there seems little justification for it being

compulsory, but for me that is a practical point. I wish it were otherwise.' (CR:144)

What is the character of the 'practical point' that Lloyd refers to here? Presumably he is

referring to the lack of homogeneity of religious belief in our society, a state of affairs

he alludes to briefly at the beginning of his article - 'We are no longer a Christian

country; there are children with other cultural backgrounds which make it impracticable

to teach Christianity.' (CR:142)

(e) An evaluation of Lloyd's defence of the confessional approach

In attempting to produce an overall assessment of the strength of Lloyd's

argument, I shall refer back to the four fundamental issues and concepts identified in

Section (a).

(i) Rationality

My preliminary remarks here drew attention to Lloyd's failure to provide a clear

indication of the character and scope of the 'rationality' that he *does* see as acceptable

on his view, resulting in a perception that he is advocating an uncritical acceptance of

beliefs by pupils.

My subsequent discussion has illustrated this in relation to Lloyd's treatment of

the 'rational' approach to education in general, to moral education and to religious

education itself.

In relation to religion, Lloyd makes several remarks which give the impression

that rational thought has *no* legitimate role or scope. Thus he criticises a 'pseudo-

rationality' held by religious educators - '... where it seems they are prepared to claim

that whole systems of beliefs can be judged to be rational or not' (CR:143) and he calls

into question the view that the 'truly religious person' is - 'required to make a rational

choice amongst alternatives' (CR:143) The very way in which these demands are here characterised illustrates Lloyd's tendency to portray the demands of rationality in an unduly stark way. Rationality in religion is clearly a more complex affair than one of judging 'whole systems' of beliefs 'to be rational or not', or of 'choosing amongst alternatives' in any crude way. As we saw earlier, Lloyd acknowledges the general significance of the 'rational demand' (properly understood). It is therefore incumbent upon him to indicate just where and how he considers that demand (understood in his own way) to have application. This indication is not provided, and we are left with the impression that Lloyd is favouring a wholly unreflective inculcation of religion.

What underlies Lloyd's remarks here is a Wittgenstenian view of religion (13), and, indeed, a Wittgensteinian perspective generally. On this view, speaking very roughly, reason is seen as having a role 'internal' to a given religion, 'external' questions being seen as not only inadmissible, but, in an important sense, incoherent. It is only in the light of such a perspective that Lloyd's position becomes more intelligible. For example, rather enigmatic remarks such as the following begin to come into focus - 'One can more readily understand someone who wants to jack in religion altogether than someone who thinks religion does have sense and meaning but does not know what to do with it.' (CR:143)

A crucial question here, of course, is the adequacy of the Wittgensteinian perspective, which has been heavily criticised. (14)

Leaving this aside, however, it is still necessary for Lloyd to say more about the implications of his own view. For example, Lloyd admits that, in relation to the comparison of different religious faiths, questions of 'depth' and 'shallowness' arise. Even if Lloyd is opposed to these issues being addressed in schools in an unjustifiably 'rationalist' way, it is still incumbent upon him to indicate just how such questions should be handled on his view; a matter which provides a clear illustration of the need for Lloyd to provide more scope in his thesis for the demands of 'reflectiveness'. Above all, it is necessary for Lloyd to state clearly how his view can be reconciled with

the demands of the practical situation which confronts us regarding education in our society.

(ii)   *Personal autonomy*

Since many of the points relating to personal autonomy are broadly similar to those raised in relation to 'rationality', I shall proceed to the next section.

(iii)   *Education*

We have seen the consequences of Lloyd's failure to clarify the concept 'Education'.

Lloyd, of course, is reluctant to concede that any one form of religious education is exclusively deserving of the name 'Education'. It would, he writes, '... be a form of blinkered legislation to say that the only kind of education one agrees with is really education.' (CR:144) Perhaps Lloyd is right about the merely terminological point, but it is still necessary for him to recognise the issues of principle which are raised by the two different conceptions of religious education, the non-confessional and the confessional, and to develop his defence of the compulsoriness of a confessional form of religious education in the light of, and taking account of, those issues and in relation to particular schooling arrangements that might be proposed. Prominent among the issues are the justificatory grounds for the granting of mandates for the exercise of influence over children licensed by the two different conceptions. It is clear that Lloyd needs to outline more fully what he means by the concept 'Education'. He writes - 'Some may be thinking that one is providing a blank cheque such that anything can be taught in school, as if education is infinitely expandable. This is not the view being presented here.' (CR:143) However, it is necessary for Lloyd to make clear just what view of Education he is committed to.

A further reason why Lloyd needs to clarify his concept of Education emerges in what appears to be a confusion between the notions of being 'truly religious' and 'religiously educated'. Lloyd asks the question whether a 'truly religious' person is - '...required to make a rational choice amongst alternatives.' (CR:143) Lloyd points out that many famous religious figures, and millions of unknown devout believers, would fail this test. He asks - 'Are we to conclude that they were inadequate in some way?' (CR:143) The answer to this is surely, not necessarily, from a *religious* point of view. But it is a further question as to whether they can be appropriately described as religiously *educated*. Here, requirements of breadth of understanding of the religious domain etc. might well be necessary. Everything depends on how 'Education' is construed here. A failure to characterise this clearly makes it very difficult to satisfactorily deal with issues raised by Lloyd such as - '... if a religious educator really does believe that the religious way of life is not anti-educational, then he is being unnecessarily nervous in frowning upon the confessional approach to the teaching of a religion.' (CR:144) (15) How can this be addressed without a clear notion of the concept of 'Education'? Further questions relating to this general issue concern possible incompatibilities between being religious and being religiously educated and, in the event of a conflict between the two determining which is the most important for a person: to be *religious* or to be *religiously educated*. Considerable argument might well be required to show that the latter should take priority of importance over the former. What seems clear, however, is that a distinction can be drawn between the two notions, and that Lloyd cannot lend weight to his support for a confessional approach to religious education by unreflectively conflating the two.

(iv)   Practical context to the discussion

A major difficulty with Lloyd's argument is that he never makes clear the practical situation and context in which it is situated.

Lloyd never directly poses the question: How are we to deal with education in religion in a society such as ours, where a homogeneity of religious belief and practice can no longer be assumed? As we have seen, Lloyd does no more than show some awareness of the problem, acknowledging that - 'We are no longer a Christian country; there are children with other cultural backgrounds which make it impracticable to teach Christianity'. (CR:142)

We have already seen how Lloyd neglects the questions of *principle* that arise in relation to this problem. Lloyd characterises these questions of principle as twofold. First, claims concerning the freedom of parents in the education of their children and, second, arguments - ' ... that relate to the obligation that teachers have to the 'autonomy' of their pupils.' (CR:142 Lloyd's inverted commas) As we have seen, Lloyd nowhere attempts to give any treatment at all to the first of these, and his treatment of the second leaves much to be desired. Perhaps this neglect follows from the Wittgensteinian character of his assumptions, which in some sense prevents these questions from being squarely posed and tackled.

There may be a certain intractability about these matters of principle when treated generally. But what remains in spite of this is the particular practical problem which has to be faced: What ought and can we do in the face of it concerning education in religion? What is needed are principles for precisely this practical situation.

Lloyd has raised a number of crucial difficulties for the concept of liberal education. One matter which emerges from Lloyd's account is the way in which the concept of liberal education rests upon certain epistemological foundations which need to be provided and justified.(16) This is seen clearly in Lloyd's challenge to them from a Wittgensteinian point of view. I shall later attempt to show that even if a 'critical rational' approach to the religious domain can be defended, the lack of detail about what this involves given by liberal religious educators means that no one form of liberal education in religion can be unproblematically identified. (17)

I have tried to show that Lloyd has failed to demonstrate that the difficulties he refers to succeed in demolishing the concept of liberal education, or in providing a

support for his own conclusions. However, the difficulties are real ones, and they are insufficiently addressed by liberal educators. I intend to explore in due course how some of the difficulties can be eased by the kind of approach which links liberal education to a particular substantiality of belief, practice and value.

(2) Complexities Relating to Autonomy

As we have seen throughout, the notion of autonomy is central to the concept of a liberal education. Although I have had no space to explore the notion in any detail, it is far from being unproblematic. Lloyd is right to draw attention to some important problems concerning it.

Theorists of liberal education have tended to present this notion in a way which fails to bring out its complexities. Yet it is only when these complexities (of conceptualisation, justification, development etc.) are squarely faced, that the nature of a liberal education can be fully and convincingly outlined.

Further complexities emerge from a consideration of some of the recent treatments of the concept of autonomy. (See, for example, Dworkin,G 1988; Kekes,J 1988:esp Ch4; 1989:esp Ch2,5,6; Lindley,R 1986; Haworth,L 1986; Raz,J 1986:esp Sec V; Young,R 1986). A full treatment of these complexities cannot be entered into here. However, to extend the discussion beyond the points made by Lloyd, I shall concentrate upon the argument developed by Keith Ward in his article - 'Is autonomy an educational ideal?' (Ward,K 1983) He offers a much fuller analysis of the problems inherent in the notion of autonomy than does Lloyd.

Ward claims that the monolithic unitary concept of 'autonomy' is incoherent in that it mixes together, in an indiscriminating way, diverse (and at least potentially) incompatible notions and ideals. Ward claims to identify sixteen different senses of - or principles embedded within - 'autonomy'. He argues that this not only makes the notion ambiguous and misleading as an educational ideal, but also *redundant*. He writes

- 'Insofar as it is taken to represent a distinctive principle, autonomy is not an ideal at all, and its use in this sense is a mistake.' (Ward,K 1983:47) What is needed, in Ward's view, is a careful, individual, consideration of the appropriateness, as educational ideals, of each of the elements concealed in the unitary concept.

Whilst Ward's remarks are useful in drawing attention to the unanalysed complexity of the concept of 'autonomy', in my view he fails to substantiate his conclusion that this complexity renders that concept redundant. Once understood in the light of all the neglected complicating issues, 'autonomy' does remain as a coherent and significant general principle and educational ideal. However, it is precisely those 'complicating issues' which support my claim that there is a necessary pluralism about the way in which 'autonomy' (fully understood) is to be developed.

Ward's strategy in analysing the various constituent elements of the concept 'autonomy' is to show that, in relation to each element, 'autonomy' cannot be presented as having neither a clear meaning (without specific interpretation) nor - when properly understood - an over-riding priority with regard to other relevant values. Although I lack the space to deal with each of the sixteen elements which Ward identifies - several of which in any case significantly overlap with each other - a representative selection of them (expressed in my own words) should serve to illustrate his approach. I therefore outline below some of the interpretations of autonomy he refers to, including in parentheses beside each one the essence of the qualification he raises in relation to them.

(i)   Independence of action. (But this is limited by circumstances of birth, the constraints of one's culture, moral and social obligations, political considerations etc).

(ii)   Making up one's own moral rules - radical prescriptivism. (But this is a highly disputable account of morality and neglects the possibility that we discover moral truths, rather than invent 'moral' principles of action).

(iii)   Becoming a Kantian-style moral agent. (But is the Kantian account of morality a correct - or full- account? Can 'rational co-legislation' function as an adequate approach to the determination of personal moral ideals and values - as distinct from those involving justice?).

(iv)   Criticising one's own views and holding them in a reflective way. (But criticism should not be understood too crudely here. If it is not to become destructive it must be balanced against a capacity sensitively to 'respond' to beliefs in various ways. In any case, not everyone has the ability or inclination to engage in critical activity in any developed sense. It cannot, therefore, be something to be encouraged in everybody).

(v)   Being rational. (But this is not necessarily the same as being moral, which requires additional qualities).

(vi)   Being 'psychologically autonomous' in the sense of assuming responsibility oneself for the evaluation, judgement etc. of one's views and beliefs. (But this needs to be balanced against our defensible need to depend for many of our beliefs - including moral beliefs - upon authority and tradition. 'Reflective obedience' rather than 'psychological autonomy' is a better description of the ideal to be aimed at here).

There is much sense in Ward's warning comments here, if he is merely trying to balance the notion of autonomy against other important values and considerations, and to warn against construing the character of autonomy in too abstract - or its importance in too absolute - a way. This is what one might refer to as the 'weak' thesis implicit in Ward's article. Thus, at the conclusion of his argument, Ward asserts - 'There are many values, often put under the heading of autonomy, which should be encouraged,

when complemented by other values.' (Ward,K 1983:55) When emphasised on its own, however, a stress on autonomy as an educational ideal can lead to over-intellectualism and rationalism, an unduly formal and content-free view of morality, arrogant rejection of tradition and received ideas, intellectual anarchy, individualism and so on. It needs to be balanced by a stress upon

> *...the value of accepting traditions of thought and perception, of understanding and valuing them sympathetically, and of a creative re-shaping of the tradition, rather than its outright rejection ... (of) fully appreciative response, not the capacity to reason abstractly ... the cultivation of sound judgment and wide knowledge, not just the disposition to be self-reliant.*

> (Ward,K 1983 54-55)

Thus Ward prefers to speak not of 'autonomy' but 'reflective commitment' and 'depth of understanding and width of reflective concern'. (18)

Construed in this 'weak' way, as a call for the concept of autonomy to be located in a balanced relationship with other concepts and values, Ward's thesis has much to recommend it. Such a weak (though important) thesis constitutes a basis on which my view about the plurality of forms of liberal education can be built.

Ward has a tendency, however, to give the false impression that philosophers of education advocating autonomy as an educational ideal are unaware of the need for this balance. On the contrary, each of the points (i) - (vi), for example, has been recognised by these philosophers and figures to some extent in their discussions. (19)

It is true, however, that philosophers of education do not deal extensively with complexities in the autonomy ideal, and the educational implications that arise from that complexity. Ward's thesis - construed in its weak sense - is therefore important. It is echoed in Richard Pring's book - 'Personal and Social Education in the Curriculum' (Pring,R 1984) where similar points are argued about the need for stress upon

autonomy to be balanced against the dangers of individualism and an acknowledgement of the crucial role of moral and social factors in the development and exercise of autonomy (the importance of the child accepting a well-established moral content, the significance of community, tradition etc. as features of the social context in which personhood develops and so on). (Pring,R 1984:See esp 72-75)

What of Ward's stronger claim - that the concept of autonomy is *redundant* as an educational ideal? Ward's rather eclectic treatment of examples, and the fact that he does not develop a clearly structured view of his own, makes it difficult to see how far he is in fact committed to this claim. Elements of his argument give clues to his tacit espousal of a stronger view, and it is worth looking briefly at a few examples of this:

(a)   Ward writes, concerning a hypothetical religious believer -

> *... I may be quite conscious that, as an orthodox Jew, I obey the Torah because it has the authority of a long tradition of spiritual experience. I do not choose those rules, or that authority, in any sense. I am born into the tradition; I come to recognise its value; but I have never chosen it, nor am I really free to leave it, unless I 'lose faith' - which I cannot help. Talk of choice is irrelevant. And to say that I must become aware of my values and think about them is hardly to say that I am autonomous, in any useful sense at all. Here the idea has become vacuous.*
>
> (Ward,K 1983:49)

This is a puzzling passage, in that it is unclear precisely what Ward is arguing here. The general drift of the passage seems to be towards a claim not only that the achievement of autonomy in such a context is complex or difficult, but also that it is impossible or, indeed, inappropriate. This latter claim goes too far. Why, and in what sense, are believers not free to leave their tradition? And if

they are not free for reasons out of their control, what does this conclusion

mean for the necessary freedom of their (mature) act of faith? Why is talk of

choice irrelevant rather than merely complex? Why is the concept of autonomy

vacuous in relation to this case? Ward fails to consider that, in the midst of the

complexities, the achievement of an appropriate form of autonomous faith is

demanded not only by defensible liberal principles but also by the logic of the

particular religious faith itself.

(b) Ward, when discussing what is meant by the claim that a person should criticise

his or her own beliefs, distinguishes two senses of the term 'criticism'. The

first sense involves merely reflection upon beliefs, whilst the second is stronger

in that it requires positively finding objections to them. Ward holds that there is

'nothing wrong' with encouraging everybody to engage in criticism in the first

'reflective' sense; (note the negative way in which this is presented as a matter

of conceding the legitimacy of a practice rather than of positively encouraging it

as an ideal). On the other hand, he considers that only a few should be led to

engage in criticism in the second, fuller, sense. This is because the activity of

positively seeking out objections requires intellectual dispositions and capacities

- and time - which is beyond the reach of most people. Ward also considers

that 'finding objections to' is a destructive activity, which is another ground on

which he restricts engagement in it to intellectuals. Ward's position here is

similar to that developed by Robin Barrow in 'Plato, Utilitarianism and

Education' where he argues that whilst all citizens should be encouraged to

develop a certain degree of autonomy, only a select few should be encouraged

to delve into more full-blooded autonomy, involving the questioning of

fundamental assumptions. (Barrow,R 1974a:See esp 123-124) Ward's view is

also reminiscent of other views postulating two senses of autonomy. (20)

My criticism of Ward here, parallel to that of Lloyd, is that whilst there are absurdities in the claim that everyone should question everything in a fundamental fashion, and whilst it is true too that some individuals will be better equipped than others to engage in fundamental thinking, he fails to embody in his account the principle that as far as possible, (and acknowledging all the complexities), every person should be encouraged to develop their autonomy as much as they can. Paul H Hirst comments that

All that rational autonomy in morality demands is as developed a capacity
for commitment to making rational judgments as is practically possible
under existing conditions and with available methods and resources.

(Hirst,P H 1974b:64)

While he insists that to ask for more would be 'unreasonable', Hirst's position retains a '*prima facie*' commitment to the principle of autonomy which is missing from Ward's account, as it is from Lloyd's. Failure to stress this principle leaves open the door for Platonic-style elitism and the possibility that individuals functioning at the 'lower' level of autonomy may be manipulated in crucial respects. A person who is discouraged from engaging with fundamental matters is, to that extent, diminished in his or her autonomy. Much depends, of course, on how much critical activity Ward is building into his first concept of 'reflection'. Even a minimal level of critical reflection involves 'finding objections to', so it is difficult to see how Ward can separate out his two senses very clearly. Further, why is the activity of 'finding objections to' *necessarily* destructive in character? Surely there are forms of fundamental questioning - and ways of encouraging it - which avoid this danger? In short, Ward fails to substantiate his apparent claim that autonomy in a significant sense is an educational ideal for some and not all children.

Examples such as these reveal a tendency in Ward to push his argument too far; to fail to allow the concept of autonomy a significant enough role in the characterisation of

educational ideals. Ward does not succeed in showing that, since autonomy needs to be carefully analysed into its various component parts, it no longer has any *general* value as an educational ideal; it has become 'redundant'. My own view is that, suitably modified to take account of the complexities to which Ward draws attention, autonomy still retains a value as an ideal of this kind. The ideal reminds us that autonomy retains its force as something we should constantly bear in mind in every judgement about educational aims and practices. It is something which should be aimed at as far as possible, and even in the midst of complexity, it should retain a *prima facie* priority. Espousing autonomy as an educational ideal serves to guard against autonomy being overlooked or neglected in crucial elements of the child's educational programme. (For similar, though less nuanced, criticisms of autonomy as an educational ideal see, for example, Allen,R T 1982).

But if autonomy can remain in some form as a general educational ideal, what are the implications for liberal education of acknowledging the complexities in it to which Ward and Lloyd draw attention? In my view, philosophers of education have not really begun to analyse this question in any detail.

In this chapter, I have examined a number of significant difficulties facing the liberal conception of education, and have shown that they do not succeed in radically undermining it. However, these critiques do illustrate the complexity involved in the liberal educational enterprise, and, in particular, they cast doubt on the claim that we can be clear about the optimum form that it should take. I shall illustrate later how critiques such as these support my position about the need to acknowledge a variety of forms of liberal education.

In the next chapter I begin the exploration of the claim that the 'liberal religious school' is one context in which liberal education might be undertaken.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Liberal Religious School: A Proposal

In this chapter, I shall seek to develop in more detail a preliminary sketch of the concept of a 'liberal religious school' which has been mentioned in earlier chapters as one context in which parents might legitimately want the liberal education of their children to take place.

I propose to develop this notion in relation to the arguments of the Swann Report on religious schools. Since Swann's concept of 'Education for All' is very similar to the concept of 'liberal education' which was outlined in Chapter Five, the choice of Swann is perhaps particularly appropriate here.

The Swann Report, 'Education for All' (1985 - Hereinafter S), despite some qualifications and reservations (S:Ch8, II, para.2.18), and a dissenting minority report (S:515), is opposed to, or is at least highly critical of, the concept of separate religious schools within the maintained system in England and Wales. Thus, whilst acknowledging the existing legal situation and the rights arising from it (S:Ch.8,II, para.7.2), the report argues against the proposals made on religious and other grounds, for the establishment of their own voluntary-aided schools by certain sections of the Asian, Muslim and Black communities. (S:Ch.8, II, paras 2 and 3) In addition, the report calls for a reconsideration of the existing dual system which provides for voluntary schools in general within the maintained sector. (S:Ch.8,II, para.2.19) (1)

This attitude to religious schools is likely to be, and has been, criticized and rejected by those who find themselves in fundamental disagreement with some of the central principles involved in Swann's conception of 'Education for All'. (See, for example, the Islamic Academy, 1986; Ashraf,S A 1988). It is also unlikely to appeal to those whose general perspective on a range of relevant issues is rather different from that of Swann (for example, Cohen,B 1981, Cox,C et al,1986, Flew,A 1987,

Haldane,J 1986;1988, Scruton *et al.*, 1985, some of whose views were considered earlier).

In line with the general character of my argument, in this chapter I do not intend to deal with the complex issues which arise from such conflicts of basic principle and value. For example, I shall not be concerned directly with a full analysis of the case for Muslim voluntary-aided schools, which requires an engagement with such fundamental conflicts, and with a range of other philosophical issues, which are beginning to receive sustained attention. (Halstead,J M 1986) It is worth observing in passing, however, that in the light of arguments developed by some of my fellow contributors to the volume in which my argument for liberal religious schools first appeared (Haydon,G (Ed) 1987b - Hereinafter H), the case against Muslim schools might appear to be less clear-cut than is often supposed. For example, a common charge against Muslim schools (expressed in its simplest form), is that they are likely to indoctrinate their pupils; to make insufficient provision for the development of their personal autonomy and their awareness of the demands of critical rationality. But in view of the claim of Graham Haydon, and others, that no one ethical theory or framework of values can be shown to be correct or true in any sense, what grounds might be appealed to in objecting to indoctrination, or in valuing the importance of personal autonomy, in the face of a self-consistent theory and framework which justifies different values? (2) And how confident can one be in asserting the importance of critical rationality in the light of the argument of Malcolm Jones about the scope of reason in human life and the limited role it can play in the evaluation of the foundational prejudgements or presuppositions of particular cultures or forms of life?

It may well be felt that views such as these, which at face value seem to undermine the foundations for some of the central principles implicit in 'Education for All', render more problematic an opposition to Muslim voluntary-aided schools.

Whether or not that is so, however, I shall be concerned in this chapter with more limited and specific questions about religious schooling which arise *within* the framework of these principles. If one accepts the essential features of Swann's

conception of 'Education for All', is one necessarily committed to a rejection of religious schools? Are there at least some forms of religious schooling which could be compatible with these essential features, and, if so, what conditions must the aims and practices of such schools satisfy in order to achieve this compatibility? What motives could underlie support for such schools, and on what grounds might they be justified? (3)

In exploring these questions, I shall accept for the purposes of argument the central principles implied in Swann's conception of 'Education for All', without examining questions about their justification. I shall also accept Swann's conception of the kind of society for which our educational system should be preparing all young people. (S:Ch1) Although my discussion is in this sense 'internal' to the Swann Report, I shall not confine my remarks to its detailed arguments, and shall deal with questions which go beyond its terms of reference. I therefore use the report as a framework within which I raise broader questions.

Since the term 'religious school' is ambiguous, it is appropriate for me to indicate clearly here how I intend to use it.

By 'religious school' in this discussion, I mean a school (a) which provides a full-time general education for its students; (b) in which the truth of a particular religion in presupposed and taught; (c) in which the understandings and commitments characteristic of the 'educated person' are developed; and (d) in which the understandings and commitments of the 'religious person' are developed where these include the formation, to some extent and in some form, of a determinate religious commitment. To use the terminology employed in Swann, the school therefore seeks to undertake in the same institution the activities of 'education' and religious 'nurture' and 'instruction'. (see S:Ch8, I, para.5.2.)

In the light of (a), therefore, it is clear that I am not referring in this chapter to the various forms of 'supplementary' religious school which seek merely to provide an *addition* to the general education being received by the child elsewhere. (On supplementary schools, see McLean,M 1985).

Like Swann, I shall confine myself to a consideration of the acceptability of religious schools within the maintained sector, and so shall be referring throughout to voluntary schools, although I have no space to explore in any detail at this point issues relating to status and funding.

If we read Swann's view of what is implied in 'education' into (a) and (c), then precise questions which arise in relation to the compatibility of such schools with 'Education for All' include the following: are (a) and (c) compatible (logically and empirically) with (b) and (d)? On what grounds, and with what justification, can it be claimed that (a), (b), (c), and (d) should be linked together in the same institution?

One might imagine that a good starting point for our discussion is the stance of the minority report (S:515 footnote), whose rejection of Swann's position on religious schools was not based on a parallel rejection of its philosophy of 'Education for All'. This, however, is of limited value for our purposes, because its defence of religious schools is confined to a claim about their contingent value and necessity until 'Education for All' can be fully established. Thus, the minority statement concedes that 'If and when Education for All is a reality, there will be no need for separate schools'. (ibid) There is no attempt to consider and develop an argument to the effect that, even when fully implemented, the character of the principles of 'Education for All' are such that they are compatible with a legitimate plurality in forms of schooling; a plurality which licences certain forms of religious school.

(1) Swann's Educational Principles

I have no space here to attempt a detailed analysis of all the principles involved in 'Education for All', or to trace the different kinds of principle, their relationship to each other and the contradictions and tensions between them. (4) In this section, I intend simply to outline four principles which seem to me to be not only fundamental to the concept of 'Education for All', but also most clearly at odds with the notion of a

religious school. For convenience, I will refer to these principles as the 'personal autonomy', the 'breadth and diversity of curriculum', the 'differentiation of responsibilities' and the 'opposition to separate provision' principles respectively.

(a) Four principles

(i) The 'personal autonomy' principle

Swann is clearly committed in a fundamental way to the value of a principle, central to the notion of Liberal education which was examined in Chapter Five, which might be roughly expressed as the freedom of the individual as a rationally autonomous agent in a pluralist, democratic society. Although for convenience I shall refer to this principle as one involving 'personal autonomy', it is important to note that this is not intended to overlook the important point that, for Swann, the kind of agency that is being aimed at is one that is to be exercised within the context of a particular conception of society (S:Ch1), a conception which has important implications for the character of the autonomous agency in question. Throughout this chapter I am therefore using the term 'personal autonomy' in a specific sense which includes this important condition. Coupled to this conception is a view of education which has as one of its central aims the development of such persons. Elements of this commitment can be seen throughout the report. For example, it insists that 'It is important to emphasise ... free choice for individuals, so that all may move and develop as they wish within the structure of the pluralist society' (S:Ch1, para4), and argues that, in schools, 'All pupils should be given the knowledge and skills needed ... to determine their own individual identities, free from preconceived or imposed stereotypes ...'. (S:Ch.6, para.1.4) Schools must therefore avoid imposing a 'predetermined and rigid' cultural identity on any student so as to restrict their freedom to 'decide as far as possible for themselves their own future way of life'. (S:Ch.6, para.2.5) With regard to matters of schooling and religion, a

major aim of religious education should be to enable students to '... determine (and justify) their own religious position'. (S:Ch.8, I, para.2.11)

(ii)   The 'breadth and diversity of curriculum' principle

As a consequence of the educational implications of (i), and as part of what is involved more generally in education for a pluralist, democratic society, Swann insists that all pupils be exposed in a systematic and appropriately objective way to a broad range of values, beliefs, ways of life and life ideals. Thus '... a good education must reflect the diversity of British Society and ... the contemporary world' (S:Ch.6, para.2.1), and the curriculum for all pupils '... must be permeated by a genuinely pluralist perspective which should inform and influence both the selection of content and the teaching materials used'. (S:Ch.6,para.3.1) In the area of religion, too, pupils must be given the opportunity 'to enhance their understanding of a variety of religious beliefs and practices'. (S:Ch.8, I, para.1.2)

(iii)   The 'differentiation of responsibilities' principle

Swann characterizes in a very clear way the respective responsibilities of the school and the home/religious community with regard to religion. In general for Swann, the school does not have a responsibility for the *reinforcement* or *preservation* of the values, beliefs and cultural identities of pupils. The task of the school is appropriately to *develop* these (S:Ch6, para.2.5) in the light, for example, of principles (i) and (ii) above. Applied specifically to religion, this principle holds that schools do not have a responsibility for 'nurturing', 'instructing' or 'maintaining' religious beliefs and practices. These tasks are the prerogative of the home (if it wishes to undertake them) and the religious community, and, may include 'community-based provisions for religious instruction' (S:Ch8, I, para.5.2) complementary to the work of the school. The responsibility of the school as seen by Swann is the educational one of assisting its

students '...to understand the nature of religion and to know something of the diversity of belief systems, their significance for individuals, and how these bear upon the community'. (S:Ch.8, I, para.2.8)

(iv)   The 'opposition to separate provision' principle

In a quite general way, Swann stresses its 'fundamental opposition' to any form of 'separate provision' (see, for example, S:Ch7, para.2.10), and emphasises the need for ' ... *all* pupils to share a common educational experience which will prepare them for life in a truly pluralist society'. (S:Ch8,II, para.2.11)

At first sight, the task of reconciling principles (i)-(iv) with the notion of a religious school would seem to be a difficult one. Is not each of them straightforwardly in conflict with such a notion?

I shall seek to show, however, that when the complexity of the principles and their implications is examined, it is possible to see how scope exists for the development of an argument to the effect that at least certain kinds of religious school can be seen as compatible with the essential ideas contained in each principle. This argument will be sketched only briefly in this chapter. I shall, however, in due course indicate some of the difficulties that the argument faces in order to become fully plausible, and I shall address some of these difficulties in the next chapter.

I shall consider each of the four principles in turn. The kind of religious school that might be compatible with 'Education for All' will emerge progressively throughout the discussion.

(b) The four principles and the concept of a liberal religious school

(i) The 'personal autonomy' principle

If we accept that a principle of this form can be justified as an aim of education when stated in an appropriately nuanced way in the face of recent critiques (see, for example, Dunlop,F 1986; Godfrey,R 1984; Lloyd,D I 1980; Ward,K 1983; White,J 1984a), it remains an open question what conditions - especially conditions of schooling - actually help to facilitate and develop the aim. It is not clear that the kind of common school envisaged by Swann, even granted its successful implementation, is necessarily the *only* way in which this is best promoted.

One rather crude way of developing this point is to refer to the fact that many people seem to achieve an independence of mind about religious issues despite having received what appears to be a very restrictive and determinate form of religious schooling and training. (See, for example, Kenny,A 1986). (5) But this observation cannot licence *any* form of religious schooling. The element of risk and randomness has to be taken into consideration. Any religious school compatible with the principle of the development of autonomous agency must be able to show that it is, in virtue of its aims and practices, *likely* to develop such agency in its students, albeit in a distinctive way.

In what follows, I shall try to develop the idea raised in earlier chapters that *one* way in which autonomy might be developed is *from the basis of* a form of schooling *within* a determinate religious tradition of belief, value and practice. A fuller outline of what I have in mind here will emerge in subsequent discussion. Such a schooling seeks not to *confine* its pupils within the tradition, but to use it as a substantial basis from which pupils might be launched on their own search for autonomous agency. Religious schools engaged in such a task can, I suggest, be seen as fulfilling the first principle of 'Education for All' in a distinctive way, and can be regarded as a legitimate alternative to the common schools favoured by Swann. Both kinds of school can be seen as

having their advantages and disadvantages in this respect and neither can be seen as having privileged status.

A general point about any educational conditions which are likely to favour the development of autonomy is that they must establish a balance between two sets of demands. I shall characterize these demands loosely as 'openness' and 'stability' respectively. By 'openness' I refer to those features of children's education which enable them to avoid being trapped in the possible limitations of the 'present and particular'. (Bailey,C 1984) Included here is an emphasis upon critical questioning; a broad knowledge of the variety and legitimate diversity of belief, practice and value; the importance of a person's making judgements and commitments about belief and action on the basis of evidence and grounds which they have assessed in the light of reason; the dangers of making unduly determinate commitments in the face of objective uncertainty, and so on. In contrast, 'stability' refers to the significance of, and need for, 'the present and the particular', if children are not to be disorientated and to lack a context for the development of their intellectual, moral, emotional and practical lives. Here there is an emphasis upon the limits of critical questioning; knowledge of, and adherence to, a substantiality of belief, practice and value; the significance of authorities and the wisdom contained in traditions; the difficulties involved in establishing merely formal criteria of evaluation for belief and value, and so on.

What seems clear is that some appropriate *balance* needs to be struck between these two broad demands in any adequate characterization of the kinds of educational conditions likely to develop personal autonomy. But where should this balance be struck? Is the kind of religious school I have sketched one which might embody an acceptable balance, or can such a balance only be found within the parameters of the common school?

It is important to note that this question cannot be answered satisfactorily in the abstract, or on philosophical grounds alone. A wide range of complex empirical judgements about the operation of particular institutions in particular contexts would be required, for example, as part of any full treatment of the question. Granted that there is

no incoherence in any aspect of the proposal, it would seem that *in principle* certain

forms of religious schooling might satisfy (i) - the personal autonomy principle.

This possibility, together with some of the arguments which might be used in

favour of the kind of religious schools I characterize, emerges inadvertently from the

positions taken by some of my fellow contributors to the volume in which my argument

originally appeared. They acknowledge the significance and importance of aspects of

'stability', and are conscious of the dangers arising from a neglect of them. John

White, for example, outlines the connection between the possession of a hierarchy of

values and a person's sense of their self identity, which can be threatened by any 'acute

incoherence' in these values arising, for example, from the 'Babel of values' in the

broader society. (H:16) Patricia White draws attention to the fragility of a person's

self-esteem arising from the fact that the basis of it may be dependent upon the

changing perceptions and valuations of others in the community. (H:57ff) Malcolm

Jones, as part of a considerable emphasis upon the importance of tradition, brings out

the significant effects of becoming alienated from the 'modes of judgement and

practice' in which we have been brought up: a person can be in conflict with the habits

of feeling and response acquired in their early socialization and their conscious

decisions at odds with deepest tacit beliefs. The result of this, according to Jones, may

be 'confusion, loss of assuredness and self-doubt'. (H:49) Graham Haydon

acknowledges the inadequacy of the abstract individualism of the liberal tradition of

political philosophy and brings out how any adequate resolution of the questions he

addresses must acknowledge the 'rootedness' of persons in diverse traditions or blends

of them. (H:27ff)

In other work, John White (White,J 1984b) stresses the significance of settled

conventions for the task of educating the emotions, and Malcolm Jones (Jones,M 1986)

criticizes Swann for failing to take account of the need to establish in pupils 'reflective

awareness' of their cultural identities, a prerequisite of the self-awareness, critical

capacity and emotional security necessary for participation in 'cross-cultural

negotiation'.(6)

One reaction to these points is to call for a form of schooling which satisfies them by simply confirming and maintaining its students in a particular religious or cultural tradition. But this would fail to do justice to the demands of 'openness', and would clearly fall foul of Swann's fundamental principles, and liberal principles more generally. My concern here is merely to explore whether there can be different kinds of appropriate balance between the demands of 'stability' and 'openness' in 'schools', such that the common school can be seen as not necessarily the *only* context in which this balance can be achieved.

An obvious worry, for example, is whether the common school can adequately meet these various demands of 'stability'. Might not self-identity, self-esteem, psychic and emotional unity, moral development, critical capacity, emotional security and so on be threatened by too high a level of 'openness' (in its various aspects) in the common school; by a 'Babel of values' at school level? Is it not arguably the case that the greater degree of interim coherent stability in the religious school might not better facilitate the development of the autonomy of its pupils? Might it not have other advantages, too, for example, in counterbalancing for pupils prevailing and dominant conceptions and prejudices in society?

In defence of the common school it may well be urged that the dangers arising from 'openness' have been exaggerated. Although the concerns expressed can only be fully resolved in the light of empirical enquiry, such schools, it will be claimed, operate according to a very clear set of *principles* concerning reason, knowledge, values and the like which yield a defensible, practical and balanced view of all the aspects of 'openness' - and enable them appropriately to be related to those of stability. (See, for example, Hirst, P H 1985; Crittenden,B 1982). It may be claimed that a set of firm principles is available to underpin the work of the common school and assist it in resolving the two sets of demands in an adequate way.

Reflection upon some of the arguments of my fellow contributors might lead us not to accept this defence too uncritically, for some of their arguments seem to undermine foundations upon which such principles have been based. Thus we discover

that we lack both an agreed framework of common values in our society, and an idea of what such a framework should include; that we can identify no independently justified ethical theory which would provide us with a set of fundamental moral principles which we could use to settle particular issues; that reason has only limited scope in dealing with these matters, and so on. Such claims might lead us to think that the confident claims of the previous paragraph are less secure than they appear, and that the dangers arising from 'openness' in the common school are real. This worry is not merely, then, one about the contingent shortcomings of particular common schools, but about whether a firm and coherent set of principles can be outlined to govern their work and to give some indication about how the 'balance' in question might be struck. John White alludes to the difficulties here when he refers to the 'ethical dilemmas' facing teachers who have to bring up children within a defensible and coherent scheme of values when we as yet have no clear collective agreement about what that scheme should comprise. (7)

The force of these worries about the stability of the common school would seem to be borne out by Graham Haydon's proposal that the rather open-ended negotiation of values that he calls for - in which even the ground-rules for the debate are themselves open to negotiation - be conducted at *school level*. (H:33)

What emerges from this is the need for a much fuller account to be given of how the common school, in both theory and practice, might meet this range of concerns before it can be accepted as the only, or best, way of developing personal autonomy for all students.

The case for the kind of religious school I have sketched is strengthened by considerations relating to the character of religion and religious understanding. A major consideration here concerns the significance of involvement in and with a particular religious tradition for the ability to understand and evaluate it, and to work out one's own position in relation to it. The 'phenomenological' approach to religious education recommended by Swann has its disadvantages in this respect. The approach through involvement, of course, has its own disadvantages. Might it not be claimed, however,

that these are two *alternative* bases from which a school might work in developing the autonomy of its students in the area of religion?

Religion is not mentioned in any detail by any of my fellow contributors. It is not clear whether it is envisaged that religion should be one of the issues included in the processes of negotiation, compromise and conversation, since these are confined to issues of communal significance. It does seem clear, however, that such processes - particularly if conducted at school level - are not very suitable for religious questions, not least because of their substitution of 'practical compromise' for a search for truth. John White is surely correct in claiming that, given this treatment, religious values would eventually disappear. (H:22)

What has emerged from this section, therefore, is a claim that a certain kind of religious school might constitute an alternative to the common school in providing a set of educational conditions likely to develop the autonomy of young people. Such a school provides through its particular religious tradition a context of relative stability of belief, practice and value, with the aim, not of entrapping pupils within it, but of providing them with a base from which their self-determination can proceed.

Such a school would, of course, have to satisfy certain conditions if it were to be acceptable for this role. For example, it would have to include a clear commitment to the development of autonomy as part of its aims, and be able to show that its practices were consistent with this aim. The character of these required conditions will emerge in subsequent discussion.

(ii)   The 'breadth and diversity of curriculum' principle

How might the kind of religious school I have sketched in the last section deal with the requirement for breadth and diversity of curriculum? Even though such a school might have the aspiration of leading its pupils towards autonomy, is it not the case that the attention and commitment of its students are being focused upon the determinate beliefs and practices of just one religion? I think that such a school might

meet this challenge in two ways. First, in relation to the religious aspects of its work, the school should ensure that it is not simply providing religious nurture, but a form of nurture which is capable of acting as a basis for the kind of open, phenomenological approach to religion which Swann recommends. Thus such a school would not eschew the phenomenological approach and the breadth and diversity associated with it, but would introduce it to its pupils at an appropriate point as part of its efforts to develop their autonomy in religion from the basis of a particular religious tradition.

Second, in relation to its general curriculum provision, the school should offer a broad curriculum which satisfies all the conditions of breadth and diversity stipulated in 'Education for All', and which is equally committed to preparing pupils for life in a pluralist, democratic society. This implies that whilst the general curriculum of the religious school might have a particular flavour or series of emphases, it must not be domesticated to religious ends; the various disciplines, for example, must be fully independent. (For a related discussion see Walsh,P 1983).

(iii)   The 'differentiation of responsibilities' principle

It would seem that religious schools of the type I have characterised clearly fall foul of this principle, since in offering a form of religious nurture they attempt a function which is clearly seen by Swann as the sole responsibility of the home and religious community.

This principle needs, however, to be stated in a more sophisticated way in the light of our earlier discussion. Religious schools of the sort we have been discussing are compatible with certain fundamental points that the principle seeks to capture - namely that the common school has no mandate to engage in any form of religious nurture, and that parents and the religious community have responsibility for any that is provided for the child.

But what Swann does not consider is the possibility of 'nurture' and 'education' being brought into a more complex relationship of the sort briefly sketched earlier. If

this is admitted, then the distinctions upon which this principle depends (for example, that between 'maintaining' and 'developing' beliefs), and which are used to identify and allocate the 'differential responsibilities', need to be made in a more subtle way. The possibility is opened up of parents and the religious community exercising their right to provide a religious formation in the context of a form of schooling which links it with their child's education.

What motives might parents have in seeking this form of schooling for their children? To be compatible with the principles of Swann, these motives must satisfy certain conditions, i.e. parents must value for their children the kind of autonomous agency characterized in (i) - (the personal autonomy principle); must not be motivated by racist considerations; must be genuinely committed to the educational aspects of their child's schooling; and so on. But within this framework of assumptions, several motives compatible with Swann's principles might be discerned. Parents might be concerned, for example, to ensure that their child's religious formation is not limited, narrow and divorced from its wider educational experience, as it conceivably might be if left solely to the family and the religious community. Further, parents may claim that in giving their child a clear, initial, non-restrictive identity, they are giving him or her a very important foundation for life in a pluralist, democratic society, and making a contribution to that society itself.

Another aspect of this question concerns parents' rights, which is a subject which Swann does not deal with in other than a legal sense. Swann calls into question the legal rights that parents and communities currently enjoy concerning the establishment of voluntary schools. It might be felt by some that, in the light of 'Education for All', such parents do not have a moral right to establish such schools. But whilst the principles of 'Education for All' cannot be rendered compatible with an acknowledgement of *unlimited* parental moral rights over the education of their children, parents may see the availability of certain forms of religious schooling as an extension of their moral rights to provide their children with a distinctive 'primary culture' of the sort discussed in earlier chapters, which does not infringe the demands

of autonomy, but provides a distinctive basis for it. (See particularly the discussion in Chapter Four). Recognition of such a moral right is arguably compatible with Swann's basic educational principles. This observation should be borne in mind in any reconsideration of the legal rights which currently exist.

(iv) The 'opposition to separate provision' principle

Since a fundamental opposition to separate provision of any kind seems to be *built into* the concept of 'Education for All', how can religious schools of however liberal a character be regarded as compatible with it?

One can question, to begin with, just how *fundamental* this principle actually is to 'Education for All'. As is well known, Swann does in fact provide, on various grounds, separate provision in the case of single-sex schooling. (S:Ch8 II, para.2.15) Why is *gender* rather than, say *religion* being singled out as an acceptable criterion for separation?

The answer which Swann might give to this question is that in such schools the *general character* of the education that is being provided is no different from that in mixed schools operating on the principle of 'Education for All': it is not a special kind of education with different aims and content (of the sort that might be offered in a Muslim girls' school, for example). The variable involved in this instance of separate provision might be claimed therefore not to be a significant one. (For critical comment on this, see Taylor, M J 1986).

What this seems to reveal is that there are at least two senses of the term 'separate provision' implicit in Swann. In the strong sense, 'separate provision' refers to provision which not only creates separate or distinct groups of students, but also seeks to achieve with them kinds of objectives that are very much at odds with the principles of 'Education for All'. (See S:Ch8,II, para.2.16) In the 'weaker sense', 'separate provision' refers simply to the creation for various reasons of separate or distinct

groups of students whose schooling does not infringe these principles in any significant sense, but seeks to satisfy them in a particular way.

Since Swann seems to allow 'separate provision' in the weaker sense in the case of single-sex schooling, it is difficult to see how there can be objection to the kind of religious school I have been characterising, which, if my earlier arguments are accepted, can be seen, parallel to single-sex schools, as institutions which are not in conflict with the fundamental principles of 'Education for All', but seek to achieve these in a distinctive context.

(2) Some Critical Questions

In this final section I shall try to outline some of the critical questions which arise concerning the argument sketched in this chapter, and the conception of religious schooling involved in it. These - and other - questions require further detailed exploration before a final judgement can be made about the overall plausibility of the argument.

With regard to (i), the 'personal autonomy' principle, a critical question arises concerning the suggestion that the religious school is aiming to provide in the same institution *both* a form of (determinate) religious nurture *and* education (as Swann understands that term). Paul H. Hirst holds that these two kinds of activity are logically different from each other, in that they have (for example) fundamentally different aims. Further, whilst the two sets of activity may be mutually *compatible*, any institution attempting to undertake *both* in the same context must ensure that they are very sharply distinguished from each other not only in the minds of teachers, but also in the institutional policies and practices of the school. It is only in this way, claims Hirst, that such a school can avoid creating misunderstanding and confusion. (Hirst, P H 1981) To meet these points, our suggestion that a form of religious nurture might constitute a substantial basis from which a child's education might proceed would require further

detailed analysis and defence. It would be necessary, for example, to determine the precise relationship that is envisaged between the elements of 'education' and 'nurture' and to defend that relationship in the light of important distinctions that must be preserved. Further, an outline of implications for the practices and life of the school is required which do not result in its having, as Hirst would seem to recommend, the kind of fragmented and disjointed character that was identified as a danger of the common school.

Another difficulty is that, even granted the benefits of a child's education being conducted in relation to a particular tradition of belief, practice and value, further defence is required of the view that a *religious* tradition should be allowed to have so much salience in a child's schooling.

Several difficulties arise from the side of religion. First, can all religious faiths accommodate the kind of commitment to personal autonomy that is envisaged in this argument? It would seem that at least some faiths would be resistant to such an accommodation. If this is so, might it not be claimed that, to avoid the invidious and highly controversial task of distinguishing religious faiths capable of establishing acceptable voluntary schools from those that are not, as a matter of public policy no voluntary schools should be supported? Second, and more generally, what exactly is the character and force of the claims made about the significance of involvement and practice for a capacity to understand a religion, in contrast to the kind of understanding that can be gained from the 'phenomenological' approach to religious education?

Several of the concerns about the coherence of the relationship between the 'nurturing' and 'educating' functions of the religious school emerge specifically in relation to (ii), the 'breadth and diversity of curriculum' principle. How, for example, is the religious teaching offered from the standpoint of 'nurture' to be related to that offered from a 'phenomenological' perspective? How can the potential conflict between the two be resolved, and the differences between them marked out? A further problem arises from the insistence that the general curriculum of the school be largely independent from determination by religious considerations. In the light of this, what

force has the claim that a *separate school*, rather than, say, the provision of supplementary religious schooling, is necessary for the pupils in question? If an answer to this is given in terms of the effects of the committed ethos of the school, then what implications does this have for the demands of breadth and diversity?

Since my argument in relation to (iii), the 'differentiation of responsibilities' principle, depends upon claims to which I have already indicated some critical objections, I shall proceed to an outline of the difficulties that arise concerning (iv), the 'opposition to separate provision' principle. Here it may be felt that insufficient justice has been done to Swann's concerns about separate provision. What, for example, about the danger of religious schools leading to social divisiveness and attitudes related to it (see, for example, S:Ch8,II, paras.2.12, 2.14)? Whilst it should be noted that such claims wait upon empirical support (Haldane,J 1986), and that there are complexities in assuming that a straightforward connection exists between the development of tolerance and attendance at common, as distinct from, religious schools (Thiessen,E J 1986), it may still be felt that there is a *prima facie* case to answer here. One needs also to consider the various educational arguments against separation, involving claims about the educational significance of pupils mixing together throughout their schooling, encountering a variety of views from particular persons rather than from hypothetical or abstract sources, and receiving their education in a school which is thereby forced to make 'Education for All' a reality.

There is a need, therefore, for an examination of the adequacy of the various steps that religious schools might take to overcome these criticisms: for example, by broadening the character of their intake to include a certain proportion of students who are not adherents of the particular religion in question; by demonstrating that they can make a distinctive contribution to social justice and harmony, and so on.

A further general concern about my argument might be that it alludes insufficiently to the specific issues which were the concern of Swann, namely those arising in relation to the education of children from ethnic minority groups. Given that

particular context, it might be claimed, many of the arguments against separate religious schools take on a much more forceful and urgent significance.

This chapter has examined only a limited question in relation to religious schooling: whether some kinds of religious school are compatible with the principles of Swann's 'Education for All'.

In view of all the complexities involved in this suggestion, the issues requiring further exploration and the critical challenges that need to be met, I consider that this question is an open one which is worthy of fuller investigation.

It should be noted, however, that establishing whether such schools can be compatible with the principles of 'Education for All' is only part of developing a full case that they should be accepted as part of the maintained school system of England and Wales. A judgement about this broader matter requires a full consideration of all the relevant practical, legal, demographic, political, etc., issues and implications, together with an assessment of the attitudes and requirements of the various religious communities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Liberal Religious School: Two Conceptions

The concept of the 'Liberal religious school' outlined in the last chapter is clearly

not without its difficulties and problems. Leaving to one side the various (and

complex) practical problems identified, I shall concentrate in this chapter on

philosophical aspects of one central problem which surfaced and which is connected to

the point that the school is envisaged as aiming to provide in the same institution *both* a

form of determinate religious nurture/formation *and* a form of (liberal) education.

As mentioned above, Paul H Hirst holds that these difficulties can only be

addressed if the religious school in question is of a certain kind; one where the sharpest

distinctions are drawn between the faith nurturing/catechetical and educational functions

of the school. I shall refer to this conception as the 'Dual function' conception and

shall subject it to analysis and criticism. Subsequently, I shall examine a conception

which seeks to reconcile the principles and demands of Liberal education with a

religious school which has a more organic and holistic character.

(1) The 'Dual Function' Religious School

This conception of the religious school I shall call 'dual function' because it is

based on an interpretation of liberal educational demands as requiring that the notions of

'education' and 'religious nurture' (or 'catechesis') be clearly separated and

distinguished from each other in the sharpest possible way both conceptually and

practically. The character of such a school is determined by the principle that, although

a single institution might legitimately attempt to conduct these two activities within

itself, and therefore have both an educational and a catechetical function, the two

functions must be separated out and distinguished from each other, not only in the aims and rationale of the school, but in its teaching, structure and practices and, crucially, in the minds of the pupils themselves.

This conception of the religious school has been explored by Paul H Hirst (Hirst,P H 1981), who regards it, though problematic, as the only one which is compatible with the general liberal educational demands we have been characterising.

How does Hirst draw the distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis', on which the conception depends? I offer an account of this in Appendix C, together with an outline of its relevance for Hirst's concept of a defensible religious school.

Hirst holds that the two activities of 'Education' and 'Catechesis', whilst distinct, are not necessarily *in conflict* with each other, but may be complementary. It is for this reason that he is prepared to consider the possibility that they might be conducted within the same institution, as long as it succeeds in preserving, and presenting clearly, the necessary distinctions between the activities. How can the school do this?

Hirst puts the dilemma in this way - '...a church school in these terms is endeavouring both to educate and to catechize. It is at one and the same time committed to trying to develop commitment to reason and commitment to a particular faith. But whereas the aim of education...must be one of leaving religious commitment open, catechesis is necessarily aimed at a personal response of one and only one kind.' (Hirst,P H 1981:91) Amongst the resultant dangers is that pupils will fail to grasp the important distinction between matters of faith and matters of reason. As Hirst puts it - 'If matters that should be seen as claims to faith are regarded as the conclusions of reason alone, or if matters that should be seen as the conclusions of reason are seen as claims to faith, the nature of both faith and reason is thereby confused.' (Hirst,P H 1981:91) In particular, confusion is likely to result about what is and what is not legitimately to be demanded by the school in terms of the child's 'intellectual and behavioural acceptance'.

What does the avoidance of these dangers involve in practice? Hirst insists that the activities of education and catechesis be - '...sharply separated within the school,

being self-consciously and deliberately presented to pupils as clearly different in character and objectives.' (Hirst,P H 1981:91) Hirst focuses in particular on the religious component of the curriculum of the school where there should be - '...the sharpest separation of religious education activities concerned with reason and denominational catechetical activities.' (Hirst,P H 1981:92) Both approaches to religion must be offered by the school. Hirst insists that more is required to achieve this separation than care and sensitivity on the part of individual teachers. The separation needs to be underlined by institutional policies also. Amongst these, Hirst suggests:

(i)   The two kinds of activities should be in separate curriculum units i.e. not combined together in a unitary block of activities called 'religious studies'.

(ii)   Catechetical activities should be explicitly labelled as such.

(iii)   Different personnel should be used for the two activities.

(iv)   Catechetical activities should be voluntary.

Hirst is rather hesitant in putting forward these suggestions, and admits that they may be 'alarming' or 'inappropriate'. (Hirst,P H 1981:92) Yet he insists that some institutionalisation of the crucial distinctions is necessary for their effective preservation and transmission to pupils.

How plausible and coherent is this conception of the religious school? This question is, of course, crucially connected to the plausibility and coherence of the underlying distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis' on which it is based. I shall return to this matter shortly. But accepting for the moment the validity of the distinction, what objections can be brought against the kind of religious school that is based upon it?

(a)   The theory, surprisingly, neglects the significance of the general ethos of the
school, which is as important in terms of its effect and influence upon pupils as
the formally planned curriculum. Philosophers of education have given little
attention to this aspect of schooling. But in the absence of a detailed analysis, it
is surely clear that it is in the very nature of an ethos of an institution -something
that is general, pervasive, enveloping and enduring,- that it cannot perform the
'quick changes' that Hirst demands of the curriculum. The ethos cannot be
'educational' one day (or hour) and 'catechetical' the next. Nor, granted the
sharp distinctions which Hirst draws between the functions, can the ethos
combine them both in a coherent way. It would seem, therefore, that the ethos
would have to be either substantively 'educational' or 'catechetical'. If it is the
latter, then the problem arises that it might well upset the delicate balance that
Hirst is seeking to achieve in the curriculum; it may heavily colour the
experience of the pupils in a catechetical direction, and complicate the attempt to
establish the necessary distinctions in the minds of pupils. On the other hand, if
the ethos is educational in character it is difficult to see exactly what would
distinguish the school from any other. Why would a religious community seek
to establish a religious school whose distinctiveness consisted simply in the
provision of catechetical lessons? Could not these be just as well provided in
various forms of supplementary provision? In his later work, (Hirst,P H
1985:16), Hirst does refer briefly to the question of the ethos of the religious
school, but in the context of indicating grounds on which such schools might be
opposed.

(b)   The theory neglects another aspect of the social reality of the school, namely
that the pupil and staff population will, at least in principle, consist to a large
extent of adherents of the particular faith in question. This presents a similar
dilemma to that outlined in (a), as well as leading to charges of social

divisiveness. This is also a matter which Hirst refers to later (Hirst,P H 1985:16) but, once again, as an obstacle to the acceptability of religious schools.

(c) Are Hirst's suggestions about institutionalising the distinctions in fact practically feasible? Would they not lead to a kind of schizophrenia and instability within the school? In particular, is not the attempt to develop religious understanding from the basis of catechesis going to be undermined by the parallel attempt, conducted at the same time, to develop it from the basis of education?

One reaction from the liberal point of view to criticisms of the sort outlined above is that, since the conditions identified by Hirst, and incorporated in the 'Dual Function' religious school, are indeed a necessary feature of any religious school seeking compatibility with liberal demands, then religious schools are always going to be seen as rather unstable and unsatisfactory institutions whose existence is likely to be only reluctantly tolerated on grounds other than educational ones (e.g., those of a practical or political character).

But is another reaction possible within the liberal perspective? Is it possible that a religious school conceived in a more *organic* or *holistic* way might satisfy liberal demands? I now turn to this matter, the critical assessment of which will involve an assessment of Hirst's position.

(2) The Organic or Holistic Religious School

Such a conception of the religious school is outlined by Patrick D. Walsh in his paper - 'The church secondary school and its curriculum'. (Walsh,P 1983 - Hereinafter W) Although Walsh's arguments do not engage directly and in depth with those

developed by Hirst, his conception nevertheless infringes clearly several of the principles underlying the 'Dual Function Religious School'.

Walsh explicitly rejects the suggestion that the religious element in the school should be seen as something essentially separate from, and additional to, its already existing, independently determined, educational character. Using Walsh's metaphor, the religious element should not be seen - ' ... as a Christian icing on the cake of a pre-baked education' (W:4) but rather - ' ... a secret ingredient *in* that cake'. (W:4. Emphasis in original) What parents should seek from a religious school, according to Walsh, is not a good education *plus* a religious upbringing, but an education which is good *in a Christian way*.

Walsh holds that such schools should make quite explicit their commitment to the development of faith as their primary rationale, that a specific religious commitment should in some sense permeate the whole of the school, and that criteria of judgement derived from that commitment should be employed in evaluating it.

How can such a school be rendered compatible with liberal ideals? Walsh's position is of interest because he is alert to these ideals and makes some effort to accommodate them within his account. Like Hirst, Walsh focuses upon the *curriculum* of the religious school to the neglect of other crucial aspects of it, such as ethos. But in relation to the curriculum, Walsh develops several arguments which are of crucial significance to the question of the reconcilability of an organic/holistic religious school and liberal education.

Walsh first looks at the curriculum *as a whole*, seeking to identify how the religious tradition can have a substantial bearing on that, and then concentrates more specifically upon the directly religious elements of the curriculum.

(a) The curriculum as a whole

Walsh makes two broad suggestions here, each of which invites critical assessment.

(i)   The first concerns the criteria that should be used in the selection of curriculum

content. Walsh holds that a distinctive source of *some* of these criteria is to be

found in the particular cultural tradition of the religion in question. Walsh asks

- 'If black studies for black children then ... why not Christian studies for

Christian children?' (W:6) Whilst he does not develop in detail exactly what he

understands by the notion of 'Christian Studies', Walsh does claim that at least

some elements of the arts and humanities areas could be taught through the

selection of *examples* drawn from, and relevant to, Christian tradition (e.g.,

sacred music and art, literature about Christian experience, an emphasis on

relevant and significant periods of history etc.).

Walsh attaches two conditions to his proposal which preserve a liberal impulse.

First, he argues that - ' ... these subjects must maintain their own identities, must not

be absorbed or manipulated by theology.' (W:6) Thus - '... the art, music or literature

must be good *as* art, music or literature and the history must remain critical.' (W:6)

This is an important condition if Walsh is to avoid the accusation that he is failing to

preserve the *independence* of the disciplines and is merely domesticating them to

religious ends. (Compare Roques,M 1989 who offers a view of the curriculum as a

whole from a religious point of view). There are perhaps two critical points to be made

about this condition as stated by Walsh. First, a problem might arise because if, as he

states, the aim of the school is to promote and develop faith, then the religious elements

of the material chosen as examples will be seen as (and presented as?) embodying and

expressing religious truth. So, for example, the Pieta of Michaelangelo might be seen

not merely under an aesthetic aspect, as a work of art, but also as the embodiment of a

particular religious truth. This may raise difficulties for the attempt to ensure that the

religious significance of the example does not predominate, obscuring its function as

merely illustrating an appropriate aspect of the discipline for which it is serving as an

exemplar. The fact that the religious elements of the examples chosen are in an

important sense related to a tradition of religious *truth* which is presupposed and taken as normative also raises difficulties in ensuring that the critical resources of the disciplines are not inhibited when dealing with examples of their work in action chosen on grounds of religious relevance or significance. (1) Pupils might therefore be misled about the true character of those disciplines, since the full breadth of their descriptive/explanatory power might be (perhaps unconsciously) concealed.

Walsh seems to anticipate this point in his insistence that history 'must remain critical'. The difficulties of actually achieving an aim of this kind in an organic/holistic religious school should not be underestimated, however. The way in which the basic assumptions/commitments of such a school exert a pervasive and subtle influence can be seen in the way in which Walsh expresses part of his argument. (2)

A further difficulty concerning Walsh's proposal is that the emphasis upon 'religious examples' might well exclude, or reduce the time available for, the study of other examples necessary for a balanced understanding of the character of the discipline in question. Walsh's second condition is designed to guard against this. Thus, he claims that - ' ... the diet should fall some considerable way short of being exclusively Christian...' (W:6) This criterion of breadth and balance needs to be stated more firmly and clearly, however, if it is to satisfy liberal demands. What is needed is a clear statement that examples will be chosen in such a way that the true character of the discipline will be exhibited in an undistorted and broad way. Again, a close examination of Walsh's text gives rise to doubts about whether he is fully committed to the criterion of breadth. (3)

It is worth noting a further difficulty which arises from the fact that Walsh throughout gives an account of the curriculum as consisting of 'subjects' or 'disciplines'. If one accepts the development of 'multi-disciplinary', or (more recently) modular approaches to the curriculum and the arrival of important curriculum areas such as 'social education', 'personal education' and so on, it may be more difficult to ensure that the safeguards outlined above are actually applied. This is because these areas lack a clear, publicly acknowledged, disciplinary structure which can be appealed

to in order to ensure *perspective* and *breadth* in relation to choice and use of religious examples. And some of these areas, such as 'personal education' for example - are notoriously complex to evaluate, calling precisely for the kind of safeguards which are so difficult to apply. More needs to be said about precisely how such an application might be made, in order for this part of Walsh's thesis to be sustained.

For all this criticism, however, it is possible to see that, despite unexplored and underemphasised aspects and issues, *in principle* Walsh's suggestion that elements of the whole curriculum, whilst preserving their independence and integrity, might deploy *examples* of a religiously significant kind, is at least a coherent possibility. However, the acceptability in principle of some of Walsh's *subsequent* proposals is at issue.

(ii)   Walsh's second suggestion about how the distinctiveness of the curriculum as a whole in the organic/holistic religious school might be characterised, arises from his awareness that the kinds of strategies outlined in (i) do not really - '...get...to the heart of the matter.' (W:6) It is necessary, he claims, for the whole curriculum of such a school to be constructed in relation to an answer to the question - '... about the *point* which is to be assigned to the curriculum as a whole and in its parts, and consequently ... (about)...the *spirit* in which it is to be conducted in the Christian school.' (W:6-7. Emphasis in original)

For Walsh, that central point and spirit are related to a theologically inspired conception of *love*: love of God, love of persons as individuals and in general, and love of the whole physical universe. For him, the crucial question becomes:- 'What would it mean to conduct the teaching and learning that comprise the curriculum in *love*?' (W:7. My emphasis) He holds that there are two related but distinguishable elements in this: theoretical and practical. Each gives rise to different sets of problems from the liberal point of view.

On the theoretical side, Walsh sees the central charge on the curriculum as one of providing opportunities for - '... developing a contemplative regard for creation' (W:7),

a general attitude which should be promoted by all subjects. Thus science, for example, should provide *food for the soul* by being conducted in a way which reveals the world as - ' awesome, wonderful, marvellous, beautiful' (W:8), involving an attitude and response - ' ...akin to that of the lover and religious worshipper...' (W:8) - a response which is, from the religious point of view - '...actually a part of worship.' (W:8) It is precisely the nourishment and preservation of this attitude and response which is seen by Walsh as one of the major aims of science teaching in the organic/holistic religious school. (On Science Education viewed from a religious perspective compare Nasseef,A and Black,P 1984). Similarly history is seen as *piety* - '... love of the human past'. (W:9) (4) Although one would need to explore in more detail exactly what is implied in statements such as these, it seems clear that underlying them is a particular, substantive, theologically inspired view of life and of the character of human existence. It is only in this way, I think, that one could account for the distinctive emphasis upon *love* which seems pregnant with theological and spiritual associations rather than upon, say, merely sympathetic understanding.

What is to be made of all this from the liberal point of view? It is difficult to ignore the accusation that what we have here is a direct infringement of certain liberal educational principles. First, it is hard to see how Walsh can avoid the accusation that he is here making the disciplines subservient to religious ends. For now they become the vehicles for the transmission of certain very general religious attitudes and conceptions, and are not presented to the child's understanding simply 'as they are in themselves' but with pervasive religious colouration. Although certain liberal safeguards can be specified which might be brought into operation in relation to the kind of proposal outlined in (i) concerning criteria for the selection of curriculum content, it is difficult to see what kind of safeguard could be applied here. For what is proposed is the transmission of a distinctive and basic conception of the nature of each of the disciplines; and of how their function and purpose is to be characterised. Second, this proposal seems to increase the liberal concern that unjustifiably determinate beliefs and values should not be transmitted to children. Religious schools

are, by their very nature, open to this charge in the specifically religious area of their work. But Walsh's proposal here calls for a substantive view of life to be transmitted *throughout* the curriculum - and in a pervasive way which makes the achievement of perspective and balance very difficult. The substantiality of the view of life involved is brought out very clearly by Walsh when he writes that a curriculum conducted in the spirit he has recommended - ' ... would already embody an attitude of faith, if only implicitly and 'anonymously'. For its spirit is one of contemplative and practical love of creation and, therefore, implicitly of God ... (C)harity presupposes faith.' (W:11)

These difficulties are not eased when we turn to the practical aspects of 'love', which create parallel problems to those just examined. As an illustration of one element of this practical aspect, Walsh claims that the church school should give particular attention in its curriculum to significant social and political issues (questions of hunger, disarmament, energy conservation etc.) where - ' ... learning relates directly to matters of justice and love' (W:10) and should take a *distinctive approach* to such questions. The key to what Walsh has in mind here by a 'distinctive approach' is to be found in his remark that the church school should be engaged in - ' ... the critical pursuit of justice *across* the curriculum.' (W:10. Emphasis in original) Although he incorporates the word 'critical' once again into his account at this point, he is faced by the accusation that he is incorporating unjustifiably determinate values into the child's social, political and moral education.

Walsh's attempt, therefore, to characterise a distinctive 'curriculum as a whole' for the church school seems to run into a range of critical difficulties from the liberal point of view.

What can be said, however, for the proposals which he makes in relation to the more specifically religious elements of that curriculum?

(b) The religious elements of the curriculum

Walsh's proposals in this regard seem to infringe quite clearly several of the principles embodied in the 'dual function religious school' conception.

First, Walsh does not distinguish in a clear way between the religious elements of the curriculum and its other elements. For Walsh, Religious Education is - ' ... the prophetic interpreter of the meanings of the curriculum in general'. (W:11) It brings to bear upon the other elements - ' ... the illuminative power of the word of God.' (W:11)

Second, within the religious element itself, no distinction is drawn between 'Education' and 'Catechesis'. For Walsh, the dominant form of Religious Education in the church school is - '...nurturing by explication.' (W:11) He writes - ' ... the good church school will be quite simple and straightforward about having as its ideal the nurturing in its pupils of a faith in God and in Christ that is explicit, clear, intelligent, articulate, open-minded and sincere' (W:12-13), and he adds that the school should - ' ... not be too defensive or embarrassed about this.' (W:13) Further, the religious education lesson, whilst it will be concerned with the provision and development of understanding, will stress that kind of understanding - ' ... that presupposes faith and tends to the promotion of a fuller faith.' (W:13)

Two problems arise concerning this, one relating to the loss of the distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis', and the other to worries about indoctrination and undue influence.

With regard to the latter, Walsh is aware of the charge of indoctrination that might be levelled at a proposal such as this, and he offers two replies to, and safeguards against, this charge. First, he insists that the educators in the church school must be fully aware of, and committed to, a conception of their task which makes it clear that they are concerned not with the development of faith of *any sort*, or by *any* means, but with faith responses which are 'intelligent', 'open-minded', 'sincere' etc. Walsh might therefore claim that the ideal he has provided for church schools sufficiently

incorporates a commitment to the autonomy of the child, so that an explicit and wholehearted commitment to this ideal by teachers and the school is likely significantly to allay fears of indoctrination. It is not clear, however, that Walsh's ideal does in fact fully include an adequate commitment to the fostering of autonomy. Words such as 'intelligent', 'open-minded' and 'sincere' in Walsh's formulation might be thought to cover and include this, but more emphasis upon the *criticism* and *informed judgement* that are distinctive of 'autonomy' is necessary.

Walsh is fully aware, of course, that fears of indoctrination are not dispelled by merely asking teachers and schools to make an explicit commitment to an ideal, however it is characterised. Thus his second point is that - 'Ideals are of the utmost importance but only if we relate them to messy reality, in this case the reality of children who are in many cases from only nominally believing backgrounds, or who have no obvious faith even if their parents have, or who have quite natural doubts, difficulties and problems even if they still think of themselves as believers.' (W:13) Walsh holds that the position of these children must be respected and protected. For Walsh - ' ... the good church school will respect the unbelievers and searchers in its own midst.' (W:14) He therefore insists that the school embody certain safeguards such as freedom of speech, the availability of other options of studying and responding to religion, such as a purely anthropological approach (even for the whole school career of the pupil) and so on.

Does this go far enough in satisfying liberal demands? One difficulty is that Walsh gives the impression in places that he sees the concern for indoctrination as centrally arising in relation not to *all* the pupils in the school, but only those who as a contingent matter of fact, in virtue of their 'doubts' or home-faith backgrounds, fall outside the 'norm' for the pupil body: i.e., children who are practising believers of the religious faith fostered by the school. There is no *explicit* acknowledgement that independence of mind needs to be guaranteed for children who are currently believers, and not just for those whose faith is in some sense problematic.

Walsh does seem to go some way towards acknowledging this when he writes that the school should have an ecumenical dimension (W:17) and when he insists that - ' ... real faith is always a personal and free response to God, and will be hampered, humanly speaking, by an atmosphere of compulsion and fear - by any attempt at thought control. We want to convey to our pupils a picture of the life of faith as adventurous, searching, big with intellectual honesty - as a living by the truth.' (W:14) This kind of statement seems to be applicable to *all* pupils, and yet Walsh does not outline ways in which the autonomy of all can be guaranteed. How far, for example, are pupils other than those who begin to display a positive lack of faith, encouraged to criticise in a fundamental way?

Problems of undue influence are connected to the second problem which we identified, namely Walsh's reluctance to draw a distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis'. Walsh claims that if a *sharp* distinction between these two notions *were* to be drawn, it would undermine to a large extent the very rationale of church schools. (W:12) If one grants that the form of catechesis advocated by Walsh is compatible with liberal demands,in that it respects the autonomy of the child, does it matter that he does not distinguish it from education?

In order to explore this question, it is useful to look rather more closely at Walsh's use of the term ' Education'. He outlines in another paper (Walsh,P 1985), a general point that the concept of education is many-sided and complex, and that it is not possible to identify just one central meaning of the term. (See also Walsh,P 1988). But does this mean that the distinctions that Hirst stresses so much can simply be dispensed with or easily re-interpreted?

The major difficulty here concerns the tension that has to be preserved between the commitment to the truth of a particular religious position that is distinctive of catechesis (however liberally and rationally it is conducted), and the rather different commitments of education which leave it rationally open on religious questions. This tension is well brought out in Walsh's characterisation of the religious education lesson in the church school. Walsh holds that what is needed in this context is the teacher

fostering a critical spirit in pupils - '...whilst keeping alive, in herself and in her class, a sense that the *norm* remains the pursuit of an understanding of faith within a community and a tradition of faith.' (W:14. Emphasis in original) What Walsh seems to have in mind here is the notion of a norm as a *starting* or *reference* point, not as something that is insisted upon in terms of acceptance and belief. It is presented *as true* to the students but in an open way. There are clearly difficulties with this strategy, but are they irresolvable?

Walsh argues quite explicitly that - ' ... a genuine open-minded nurturing in Christian truth and relationships is about the most profound educational experience one could have'. (W:12)

It is interesting to speculate on exactly what Walsh is claiming here. If 'Education' is being used in a way which captures key elements in Hirst's definition - a commitment to reason, personal autonomy etc. - then is Walsh claiming that a particular form of religious upbringing is precisely the way in which the critical faculties are most profoundly fostered? Is this claim being made for children *in general,* or just for those from certain religious backgrounds? The more modest claim may well have some strength. It would be interesting to explore just how such a claim might be argued and defended. (For a discussion of the contribution of religious education to the personal development of students see Grimmitt,M 1987:Part 1).

I have now completed my critical look at Walsh's attempt to outline and defend the notion of - ' ... an education and a school that would *as wholes* stand up to Christian criteria of the good.' (W:18. Emphasis in original), and at the possibility that this notion might be compatible with liberal ideals.

I have examined two contrasting conceptions of a religious school that might be seen as compatible with liberal demands. Both conceptions have their strengths and their shortcomings from a liberal point of view. The 'Dual Function' religious school has as a positive feature that it manages to preserve and embody certain important and central distinctions in a very clear way, but at the possible expense of the overall

coherence of the school. The 'Organic-Holistic' religious school, on the other hand,

seeks to achieve that overall coherence at the possible expense of the distinctions.

Neither conception as it stands addresses other important features of schooling such as

ethos.

In the next section, I shall seek to defend the 'Organic-Holistic' conception of the

liberal religious school. This will involve in the process, amongst other things, a

challenge to the rigidity of Hirst's distinctions.

(3) A Defence of the Organic/Holistic Conception of the Liberal Religious School

It seems clear that the 'Dual function' religious school is likely to be regarded as

too stark and inadequate a conception by religious bodies which advocate separate

schools. Even where their overall conception of Education is one which contains

significant elements of a liberal kind, there is an insistence by them on features of a

religious school which can only be captured in an organic/holistic model.

For example, in their response to the proposals of the 1988 Education Reform

Act, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales accuse the Government of removing

from the Governors of Voluntary-Aided schools the right to determine the school

curriculum - '...in the light of their understanding of the whole educational process.'

(Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, 1988:5) In their comment on this matter, the

Bishops write -

> *Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject among many*
>
> *but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values*
>
> *it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life. It*
>
> *should provide the context for, and substantially shape, the school*
>
> *curriculum, and offer living experience of the life of faith in its practical*

expression. Religious Education is not simply a body of knowledge co-terminous with Religious Studies, nor merely to be 'fitted in' after time and resources have been allotted to the ten Core and Foundation subjects prescribed in the Bill. Rather, it stamps the Catholic school in every aspect of its operations with its distinctive Catholic character.

(ibid) (5)

And this 'holistic' conception is seen too in the criteria offered by them in their recently published guidelines for 'Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School.' (Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988b:See, for example sections A,C,G,H,L,N).

Just pointing to the requirements of religious bodies does not, of course, mean that these requirements are coherent or justifiable from the point of view of a liberal conception of education. However, they are a background to my claim that it is indeed the organic/holistic conception which does in fact satisfy both liberal and religious demands.

Defending this claim involves attention to Hirst's distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis' and it is to this that we now turn.

(a) A challenge to the distinction between 'education' and 'catechesis'

An obvious first move against Hirst is to suggest that his definition of 'education' is an exercise in arbitrary stipulation. For example, with regard to the early formulation of his distinction, can 'education', as Hirst seems to suggest, be legitimately regarded as autonomous in the same way that activities such as mathematics, engineering and farming are? Surely, Education is crucially involved with evaluative questions - about its aims, for example, - which are controversial and complex in character and which cannot be seen as insulated from wider moral, political (and religious?) debate? Thus

John White argues that the question 'What is the good for man?' is implied in any account of education, and must be faced directly by philosophers of education, rather than being concealed and side-stepped by reference to the 'concept' of education. (White,J 1982:Ch1) Similarly, Anthony O'Hear writes - ' ... it is not at all clear that education is something in its own right, in the way science may be. For the aims of science are clear and generally accepted by all scientists...but in education many disputes range around just what educational aims should be.' (O'Hear,A 1981:2) This is a point made against Hirst by John Hull in his paper - 'Christian Theology and Educational Theory : Can there be connections?' (Hull,J M 1976) Hull argues that whilst 'pedagogy' may be seen as - ' ... a conglomerate of technical skills applied in the education of children' (Hull,J M 1976:135), 'education', - ' ... offers the ideals, the purposes and the values which guide this application.' (Hull,J M 1976:135) And these ideals, purposes and values require a 'philosophical anthropology' to which theological reflection is at least relevant and not to be excluded *a priori*. Hull writes - 'When it comes to the question, What is man?, theologians are also men, (sic), and if, like philosophers, they are sensible and rational men, their theological reflections need not be silenced.' (Hull,J M 1976:135) (6)

This kind of challenge arises particularly from the way in which Hirst presented his argument in its early form (with its reference to the 'autonomy' and self-sufficiency of the 'concept' of education).

It is important to note, however, that Hirst, whilst acknowledging that he is indeed engaged in stipulation, supports his specificity about the use of the term on moral, rational, practical and educational grounds. Moral, because Hirst regards it as unacceptable that children should simply be told what to believe without the opportunity for them to develop and exercise their individual autonomy; rational, because it is on his view only the sophisticated concept of Education which does justice to the character of knowledge and reason; practical because it provides a clear indication of the educational function of state-run institutions and distinguishes the proper responsibilities of home, church and school with regard to the upbringing of children; and educational, because it

captures the distinctive features of education and marks off the concept from notions such as socialisation and enculturation.

Hirst's persuasive definition of education can be challenged, of course, by calling into question these supporting arguments - in particular Hirst's underlying substantive philosophical and evaluative position, with its commitment to rationality, personal autonomy etc. As a recent critic, Elmer Thiessen, rightly points out, Hirst's underpinning assumptions have been seriously and forcefully criticised, and from the point of view of such critics, he can be seen as (merely) imposing these assumptions and their associated values on everyone through his definition and characterisation of education. (Thiessen, E J 1987a:227-8; For a similar general perspective see Francis, L J 1983:155-159). However, since our argument is being conducted *within* these basic assumptions I shall not pursue this line of argument but shall show that even given the assumptions, a more nuanced relationship between 'education' and 'catechesis' and indeed a defensible notion of 'Christian Education' can be identified.

Care needs to be taken over the precise way in which this task is approached. A tempting, but in my view unsuccessful, line of argument about Hirst's distinctions is adopted by Elmer Thiessen in his article 'Two Concepts or Two Phases of Liberal Education?' (Thiessen, E J 1987a - Hereinafter EJT. For a related argument see Thiessen,E.J. 1989).

Thiessen challenges Hirst's claim that there are distinct conceptions of Education (Education I-IV) which differ from each other to the extent that they allow and provide scope for reason and rational autonomy. Education I-III involve, in different ways and to different extents, restrictions on that scope. (for an elucidation of the terms Education I-IV, see Appendix C). Thiessen considers it more appropriate to regard Education I and IV as two poles of a *continuum* applying to the whole process of Liberal Education. Thus, they are not - '...two radically different concepts of education, but rather...two equally important and necessary *phases* of liberal education.' (EJT:228. My emphasis) This is because, as Hirst would not deny, liberal education must involve a (merely) 'transmissionist' element, where a particular system

or content of beliefs is developed in the child. This initially uncritically accepted 'system', 'content' or 'tradition' is a precondition of the child's eventual achievement of the capacity for critical evaluation etc. From this, Thiessen insists that liberal education should be seen - '...as moving through a series of phases, starting with a nurture phase (Hirst's Education I), moving gradually to a phase where nurture and critical rationalism go hand in hand, and ending with a phase where critical rationalism (i.e. Hirst's Education IV) is dominant'. (EJT:229. Material in parentheses in original)

This approach to Hirst's distinctions has some clear affinities with my own position. However, although it contains some truth, there are certain important confusions and omissions in Thiessen's argument. (7)

In order to develop a more adequate argument against Hirst 'on his own territory' as it were, let us return to his argument. He writes - 'All valid theology can do is generate the view in which the autonomous enterprise of education fits. It cannot itself generate a view of any particular educational issues.' (Hirst,P H 1976:156) But is this true, even within the terms of Hirst's framework of discussion? Is he correct in claiming that such a theology will - '...give the Christian an important religious rationale for involvement in education, but ... will at the same time preserve him (sic) from improperly looking to religious sources for his educational principles'? (Hirst,P H 1976:157)

There is an ambiguity here in what is meant by the notion of 'educational principles'. This term could have at least two interpretations: (a) Fundamental principles concerning the *basic aim and character* of the educational enterprise (its commitment to the development of rational autonomy, for example) and (b) more subsidiary principles concerning the *means* by which (a) are to be realised. Since we are arguing within the basic framework of Hirst's argument, let us accept that (a) cannot be determined by religious considerations. They can merely illuminate or contextualise, as Hirst suggests, these principles. So the notion that education should aim at rational autonomy etc. is accepted. This point is neglected by Thiessen in his attempt to blur the distinctions between Education I - IV. But is it not possible to

render this acceptance compatible with the claim that religious considerations might be allowed to determine principles in sense (b), the *means* by which education is brought about? Religious considerations, then, have a 'non-control' relationship (to use John Hull's terminology) with the *general character* of education, but are allowed some measure of control over means. And it is this area of permissible control which allows us to speak of a concept of Christian Education. Such a conception could be legitimately conceived as a process of 'Education' in a significantly Hirstian sense since principles in sense (a) are preserved, including the view of knowledge and belief implied - but it is 'Christian' because of the distinctiveness of the means (principles sense (b)) adopted.

What is meant by *means* here? Clearly to be compatible with (a), the means must in general involve elements which are harmonious with, and not in opposition to, rationality, autonomy etc. (For an interesting discussion of such elements see Bailey,C 1984:Ch 8). An important aspect of these means, however, neglected by theorists of liberal education, is the *starting points* that are used. This is where Thiessen's concerns can be seen to have application. Hirst seems to imply, through his insistence that education in religion can proceed without commitment to the truth of any particular religious beliefs, that there is one unproblematic *starting point* for the satisfactory conduct of education in this area. However, consistent with elements of my earlier argument, I would like to explore the notion that there may be a plurality of starting points for developing, through education, the autonomy of the child in the area of religion.

Before proceeding, rather more needs to be said about what I understand by the notion of a 'starting point'. This might be understood in one of two senses. In a weak sense, the notion might refer to the beliefs that the student actually brings into the class from his or her background, previous reflection etc. These existing beliefs are the 'starting point' for the educational enterprise in that (roughly expressed) it is the 'material' that must be acted upon. There must clearly be a plurality of 'starting points' in this sense, especially since the range of beliefs brought to the class by students in the

common school might be very wide. However, I have in mind a stronger sense of 'starting point'. This is where the educational process itself starts off with the presupposition of the truth of a particular religious position which is presented as the 'norm' of belief and practice initially (in a sustained way similar to that suggested earlier by Walsh) and from which the search for critical independence proceeds. It is this, stronger sense of 'starting point' which is implied in my argument.

Hirst's major objection to this suggestion is that it fails to do justice to the rational status of religious claims - to their controversial character. Since 'education' must at all times be governed by what can be objectively known in the various forms of knowledge, it cannot seek, *qua education*, cognitive and behavioural acceptance of any determinate set of religious beliefs.

As outlined above, Hirst's concept of education is based clearly upon a 'critical rational' notion of reason. (See Chapter Six Footnotes 16 and 17; Appendix C Footnote 4). A central element in Hirst's argument is that (at least in principle) the critical rational approach can be extended legitimately into the field of religion, albeit in a way which involves a *distinctive* application of that approach. But if, in contrast to those critical of the possibility of any application whatsoever of such an approach in the religious domain (8), one accepts that this *is* a possibility, the question remains: what is the character of rationality in religion?

It is important to note that Hirst provides no detailed answer to this question, confining himself to rather schematic and general claims about the nature of the religious domain. Leaving to one side a number of these (9), one of Hirst's major points is that religion can only be accepted as a form of knowledge if it involves - '...expressions that have the features of true propositions...' (Hirst,P H 1974a:87) and public objective tests. In his writings over the years, Hirst has speculated about the precise character of what is being sought here. (10) His conclusion about the status of these beliefs in the light of this demand is clear, though stated with slightly different

emphases in various writings. He claims that - '...in the present state of affairs we must at least take the claim to knowledge seriously' (Hirst,P H 1974a:88) but that at present - '...there are no agreed public tests whereby true and false can be distinguished in religious claims...All that we can claim there is, is a domain of beliefs and the acceptance of any one set of these must be recognised as a matter of personal decision.' (Hirst, P H 1974a:181) (11)

Throughout his embryonic account of the matter, Hirst plays down the significance of the problem of involvement, commitment and belief in understanding, reasoning and assessment in religion, although care must be taken not to put this point too crudely. (12)

While Hirst acknowledges in several ways the significance of commitment, it is clear, however, that he would want to reject the possibility that education can proceed from a 'starting point' in the richer sense identified earlier - where it presents a substantive religious position as a sustained 'norm' of belief and practice, and from which the search for critical independence proceeds.

Can such a starting point be justified within the framework of Hirst's theory?

The only way in which this can be done is if it can be shown that such a starting point can be seen as a distinctive and important way in which understanding can be achieved in the religious domain. Understanding is crucial to education in any area. But how is it achieved in the area of religion? It can plausibly be claimed that there are perhaps two main ways in which an understanding of the religious domain might be gained:

(a)   From the 'outside in' - an exploration into the religious domain from the position of non-belief. (13) This exploration may involve (for example) looking at how a given religious framework is anchored in 'primary theory' of the sort discussed by Hirst, and gaining in general an external perspective on its

nature and character - attempting to link all the understanding gained to the perspective of the participants in the particular religion.

(b) From the 'inside out' - exploring as a believer and participant the spiritual resources of the tradition and its distinctive claims and 'world view' as revealed in its particular disciplines, practices, rituals etc., but attempting to locate in due course the understanding gained in a broader framework which goes beyond the particular tradition.

A number of thinkers assert the significance of (b). For example, John H Westerhof argues that, in addition to openness, which can lead to the 'pathology of anomie', a healthy pluralistic society should be concerned with 'identity' in religious matters. Indeed, for Westerhof, 'identity' must come first because - '...unless a person knows who he or she is and feels good about that self, he or she cannot be truly open to others.' (Westerhof,J H 1985:57) Westerhof urges that religious education must stress both openness and identity, but he does not explore in any detail the issues which are the concern of this chapter. (See also Nipkow,K.E. 1985; Hauerwas,S 1983: esp Ch1).

Whilst what is required psychologically in (a) for the achievement of objectivity in assessment is 'suspension of disbelief', the correlative attitude demanded in (b) is 'suspension of belief'. What seems to be demanded as an ideal for understanding for the purposes of appropriate rational assessment of a given religion (or religion in general) is *both* (a) *and* (b). Taken in isolation, they are inadequate. (a), for example, satisfies demands of perspective and 'distance' but at the risk of failing to encompass the 'heart' of religion. (b), whilst satisfying the 'internal involvement' criterion leaves itself open to the accusation that 'external' considerations are inadequately provided for. An adequate account of the conditions of understanding in religion would seem ideally to require *both* approaches. But since they are incompatible, which is to be preferred?

As we have seen, Hirst allows (b) a role in his theory only to the extent that the existing beliefs of the child are used as a resource in the educational process. But what is to rule out (b) as a starting point of the sort mentioned earlier? Is there anything in Hirst's account of the character of rationality in the religious domain which rules this out for parents seeking to provide for a distinctive kind of religious education for their child?

If it is the case that religion involves a distinctive form of rationality, then liberal education in religion, if it is to be both genuinely liberating and educative, must proceed in harmony with, and in the light of, that rationality. In fact, however, the logic of religion remains obscure and controversial - and Hirst is similar to other advocates of liberal education in failing to advance any detailed account of the nature of rationality in this sphere. But if we are unsure about the nature of rationality in religion, we must be equally unsure about the nature of liberal education in religion, in particular its starting point. (See Chapter Six Footnotes 16 and 17)

If this is accepted, then the possibility of religious education being conducted *from* a particular tradition emerges as a possibility. This might be described as Education IVB and Hirst's conception Education IVA. I am not claiming that Education IVB is *better* in some absolute sense than the other view. Both are inadequate when judged in the light of what is required to understand religion for purposes of critical evaluation. I seek merely to show that Education IVB exists as a *legitimate alternative* to Education IVA. Education IVA is not the *only* form which Education IV can take.

I suggest that Education IVB be available for choice by religious parents who wish their children's religious education to take place *from* a particular tradition as part of an extension of their parental rights discussed earlier. This is not a licence for such parents to indoctrinate their children or to illicitly mould them in some definitive way. This is because Education IVB *is* a form of Education IV. In other words, the demands

of critical rationality, - of challenge and criticism, - remain. But the critical task is conducted in a particular way: *from* a given tradition.

Hirst may question whether Education IVB can qualify as a conception of *Education*. This is because of the complex *aim* involved. Is it aiming at autonomy or faith? The answer that I offer to this question mirrors my answer to the queries about the intentions of parents engaged in liberal religious upbringing which I discussed in Chapters 1-3. I shall not repeat those arguments here.

What emerges from this discussion is support for the notion of 'educative catechesis' of the sort developed by Kevin Nichols, a writer who is sensitive to many of the concerns which preoccupy Hirst. (Nichols,K 1978. See also Nichols,K 1979;1985) (14)

Although further argument would be required to show that Education IVB requires *separate schooling* (See, for example, Hill,B V 1990), I hope to have shown that the concept itself is one that is not necessarily in opposition to liberal educational ideals. It can be therefore be used as an ingredient both in developing a case for the 'liberal religious school' and for defending an organic/holistic conception of it.

(b) Walsh revisited

Does the concept of Education IVB dispel the liberal concerns which were identified earlier about a conception of the religious school of the sort offered by Walsh?

A general point is that these concerns are considerably alleviated when Hirst's insistence upon a sharp distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis', together with its implications for the character of a defensible religious school, is seen as not necessarily demanded by liberal principles. Education IVB allows scope for liberal education to proceed in a holistic way from a religious base in broadly the way that Walsh suggests, with the provisions he makes for the preservation of a liberal impulse throughout.

Aside from this general point, what can be said about the specific criticisms of Walsh's position? Although I have no space to return to these in any detail, some brief remarks are required.

Two initial points need to be made about Walsh's position. First, it is important to remember that it is highly sensitive to the liberal impulse, even if particular features and elements of the position require clarification and modification. Second, although fuller discussion would be required on matters of detail, I consider that there is no reason in principle why such clarification and modification should not render a general position such as that offered by Walsh acceptable.

Several examples can be given of the clarification and modification which I envisage here. With regard to the curriculum as a whole, the concerns about the use of religious examples (See (2) (a) (i) above) would be allayed by a clearer commitment to the disciplines remaining critical when dealing with examples chosen for their religious relevance or significance, and a sharper and fuller analysis of issues of breadth and balance in the choice of such examples, particularly in relation to interdisciplinary or modular areas of the curriculum.

However, I drew attention to more complex worries about the suggestion that the curriculum *as a whole* should be conducted in a certain spirit. (See (2) (a) (ii) above). These worries arose because of the perception that the whole curriculum is being used as a vehicle for the transmission of certain general religious attitudes and conceptions, with implications for the domestication of the disciplines to religious ends and for the transmission of an unduly determinate view of life. Two points can be made here. First, it is important to remember the liberal and critical impulse in Walsh's position. There is no suggestion that children are being forced into a mould. They should be able to exercise critical judgement both on the disciplines and on the specific view of them (and of life in general) to which they are being exposed. This exposure is open and clear, as is underlined by the explicitly religious character of the school. Second, what is the alternative? Is the common school significantly neutral in such matters so that it can be seen as the only option? What of the danger that such a school might (perhaps

covertly) transmit very general conceptions of life and of the disciplines and also embody an ethos which may in fact be hostile to religious values? I pursue this matter further in section (d) below.

With regard to the religious elements of the curriculum (See (2) (b) above) Walsh needs to strengthen the characterisation of the kind of faith he is aiming at so that it is quite clear that the stronger notions of criticism and informed judgement, as well as intelligence, open-mindedness and sincerity, are built into what is being sought. There needs also to be an explicit acknowledgement that independence of mind and the encouragement of fundamental questioning needs to be aimed at for *all* the children in the school, not just those from non-believing (or nominally believing) backgrounds. Walsh needs also to say more about what is required in curriculum terms to ensure that other views about religion are presented to pupils, say by an expansion of what he envisages as the content of the non-catechetical approach to religious education which he insists upon as an option in the religious school. Consistent with the last point, this should be seen not merely as an option, but as a feature in the programme of all students. These clarifications and modifications are needed in order to enhance the critical dimension of Walsh's position.

What of Walsh's failure to distinguish between 'education' and 'catechesis'? If the arguments in the previous section are accepted, then Hirst's rigid distinction between the two notions is not seen as crucial. But this leaves two problems, one relating to 'Education IVB' itself and the second to whether Walsh's position can be seen as falling within it. On the former, there remains a complex tension between promoting belief in a faith and critical assessment of it. As I explained in the last section, much of what I have to say in the first three chapters about this tension in the role of parents in liberal religious upbringing is relevant here. (See especially Chapter Two Section 3 & Chapter Three Section 5(a) above). Teachers are in a different position from parents, of course, and no doubt more needs to be said about their distinctive task. However, I trust that the general points I make in relation to parents sufficiently illuminate my general approach to this question. The second problem relates

to Walsh's account of how this tension should be dealt with in the religious education class in the church school. As explained earlier, he holds that what is needed is the fostering of a critical spirit in students whilst maintaining a 'norm' of religious faith and practice. It needs to be made clear that by 'norm' Walsh means 'starting or reference' point in the sense implied in Education IVB. Given the other elements of Walsh's argument this seems to be a wholly consistent interpretation.

In sum, therefore, I do not think that Walsh's proposals can be accepted just as they stand, and it is not my aim to provide a defence of his detailed view. However, I do consider that there is nothing in his general approach which in principle cannot be modified to make it acceptable within a liberal framework of values, and I have indicated ways in which my own proposed clarifications and modifications could achieve this.

I indicate some further supporting arguments for the notion of the organic/holistic religious school under (d) below.

(c)   Remaining   problems

A range of problems remain for attention before the concept of the organic/holistic religious school can be given full expression and defence. This chapter has addressed only one of the problems identified in Section 2 of the last chapter, and its treatment of that problem is itself incomplete. Much more also needs to be said about the character of a liberal religious school, including the neglected question of its ethos. (15)

There are also a range of practical questions about, for example, how such schools might be brought into being, and in England and Wales these are situated in the new context created by the 1988 Education Act and other recent legislation and developments. There is evidence in recent thinking amongst members of some faith communities of a desire to change existing religious schools in the dual system in directions harmonious with the conception of a liberal religious school. (See, for example, Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988a;1988b;1989; Catholic

Association for Racial Justice 1984; Chadwick,P & Gladwell,M 1987; General Synod of the Church of England 1985:Ch13; Hastings,P 1990; National Society (Church of England) for promoting Religious Education 1984;1985; Nichols,K 1978;1979). Educationalists are also beginning to focus attention on such matters. (See, for example, Burgess,R 1988). The concept of a liberal religious school is therefore not merely an abstract conception, but one which features, at least to some extent, in current policy discussion.

Many of the problems outlined in Section 2 of the last chapter remain to be addressed. There are other problems also, including a justification of the claim that such schools should be supported by public funding (16) and a precise assessment of the significance of the concept of the liberal religious school for the more general debate about the acceptability of religious schools. (17)

However, while fully recognising that these and other matters require more research, I hope to have established the conclusion that the liberal religious school is a concept worthy of serious consideration as one of the plural forms which liberal education can take, and in relation to which parental rights can be legitimately claimed and exercised.

(d) Some concluding supporting arguments

I conclude this chapter with a summary of some more general arguments which lend support to the notion of the 'liberal religious school'. These arguments have all been mentioned earlier, and relate to the need to acknowledge a plurality of 'starting points' for liberal education and of institutionalisations of it. One implication of these arguments is that it is impossible to insist that the common school is the only defensible context in which liberal education can be located; hence the parental rights over schooling defended in section 2 of Chapter Four.

These arguments come in a practical form, involving the claim that common schools might not, or do not, *as a matter of fact*, live up to their ideals, and that religion might not be fairly treated there. (See, for example, Chapter Four esp Footnote 2; Chapter Seven). I shall not dwell on arguments of this kind, but rather focus on arguments of a more theoretical character.

A number of such arguments has emerged and they call into question the suggestion that *in principle* the common school can be significantly neutral or objective. Relevant here are, for example, the arguments of Callan about the complex interrelationship between moral and religious forms of discourse (See Chapter Two Footnote 7) and of Crittenden about the inevitability of the common school endorsing *de facto* a secular ideal of human life. (See Chapter Four Footnote 14,15).

These arguments are supported by deeper considerations relating to difficulties facing the concept of liberal education itself. I outlined a number of these in Chapter Six, where I discussed the issues raised by Lloyd and Ward, and in Section (1) (b) (i) of Chapter Seven. These difficulties include a neglect of the rootedness of persons and of the role of involvement and engagement for the ability to understand and evaluate a world view such as a religious one; the danger of invoking an unduly abstract and a-historical conception of rationality, autonomy and the human agent; lack of specification of the character and range of autonomy; the need to encourage reflective commitment as a stage in the development of autonomy; an unreal model of the child as an abstract, rootless chooser, unchanged by the choices made; the problem of specifying criteria for choices; the value of the provision of some initial firm beliefs; the role of the shaping of dispositions and virtues in the development of autonomy; the need to acknowledge a hierarchy of values as an element in a person's self identity and self esteem; the dangers of disorientation arising from a 'babel of values' at school level; the significance of settled conventions for the education of the emotions; the difficulty in identifying a set of ethical principles to underpin the task of the common school and so on. Such

difficulties could no doubt be elaborated by reference to the arguments both of philosophers sympathetic to the values and benefits of tradition (18) and of communitarian critics of liberalism. (19)

I have tried to show, for example in my discussion of Lloyd and Ward, that criticisms of this sort do not amount to a complete undermining of the liberal educational ideal. However, they do cast doubt on the suggestion that there is anything straightforward about the conditions in which liberal education can best take place. Educating a child from the basis of a particular religious tradition in the way suggested in Education IVB, with its distinctive substantial starting point of belief, practice and value, yet its preservation of a critical impulse, can help to ameliorate some of these difficulties. It offers one way of balancing the demands of 'openness' and 'stability' in the conditions required for the development of autonomy. A full treatment of all these issues would need a much more extended argument. I offer in Appendix D a critical illustration and application of my general point to a particular and neglected aspect of the autonomy ideal advocated by some liberal educators; that of 'life-planning'.

However, although more argument may be required to elaborate and defend my general position, one conclusion is quite clear. The onus lies with opponents of liberal religious schooling to show that the difficulties with liberal education can be resolved in such a way that only one starting point and institutional form of liberal education can be specified and that the one I suggest as an alternative for parental choice should be ruled out either on grounds of incoherence or incompatibility with the liberal ideal.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have argued that is is possible to establish within a framework of liberal values the right of parents to give their children forms of religious upbringing, education and schooling which develop faith, and which provide the child with one of several bases or starting points from which their development of autonomy and their liberal education more generally can proceed.

I have claimed that these rights can be established even given a generous interpretation of the character and status of liberal values both generally and in relation to education.

Several themes have recurred throughout the thesis: the impossibility of specifying, even in principle, a single route to the development of autonomy and the state of being liberally educated, the significance of involvement in particular substantialities of belief, practice and value for this achievement (especially in the religious domain), the character of the requirements necessary if upbringing and education conducted from such a base are to satisfy liberal demands, and the right of parents to choose a distinctive starting point and route for their child's journey towards autonomy and liberal education, given their own beliefs and their relationship to their child. I have acknowledged that parental rights in relation to religious schooling are more difficult to establish in detail than those related to religious upbringing, because of the range and complexity of other issues which arise.

Although further discussion is no doubt required of many of the matters I address, I have claimed that the onus lies with opponents of the parental rights I discuss and the forms of upbringing, education and schooling related to them, to show that they should be ruled out either on grounds of incoherence or incompatibility with the liberal ideal.

The themes discussed in this thesis have, of course, significance far beyond the specific issues of religious upbringing, education and schooling, and have a bearing on the provision of a fuller and more adequate account of a liberal approach to such matters in general.

Many interesting questions and issues arise, of course, in relation to religious upbringing and education *beyond* the liberal framework of values. This work cannot explore these broader matters. I do hope to have shown, however, that *within* the framework of liberal values, it is difficult for liberals to avoid acknowledgement of parental rights in relation to at least certain forms of religious upbringing, education and schooling which, whilst they develop faith, are open to the achievement of liberal aims in a distinctive way.

APPENDIX A

The Compatibility of Christian Faith and Personal Autonomy

In approaching the BCC report (British Council of Churches Consultative Group on Ministry Among Children 1984) with reference to the question of the compatibility of Christian faith and personal autonomy, it is important to assess at the outset the extent to which it is in fact employing, and committing itself to, a notion of autonomy of the same sort that is invoked in my argument. I hope to show that, despite the need for caution in some respects, a positive outcome emerges.

A good preliminary indication of this outcome is that, in paragraph 47, the report shows that it is sensitised to the significance of the sorts of concerns involved in the argument. Thus it acknowledges that the following questions present problems for 'the thoughtful Christian' living in a pluralistic society -

What right have parents to decide their children's commitment?' ...Should children not be encouraged 'to make up their own minds?' 'How can we presume that that our own choice of the Christian faith is a choice other people should make, even our own children?

(BCC: para 47)

The report also makes distinctions between nurture, education, instruction and indoctrination which are familiar to philosophers of education, (even though the way in which the report draws the distinctions is occasionally rather imprecise). (BCC:para 49-57) (1)

The answer offered by the report to the questions outlined in the last quotation is similar to that offered in my argument in that it uses the notion of a religious upbringing as a *starting point*. In its account of this, the report distinguishes between personhood as a *gift* and as an *achievement*. The former element of personhood is characterised as the child being given - '...life, speech, conscience, awareness of sexual identity, and so on, along with the circumstances of his (sic throughout the report) birth - his nationality, his father's or mother's occupation, the locality in which they live'. (BCC:para 54) In contrast, personhood can be described as an achievement - '...in so far as a person is created by his own free decisions won against sufferings and disadvantages'. (BCC:para 54) (2) The 'gift' aspect of personhood (which may in the view of the report include a religious upbringing) is seen as important, but if it seeks to determine the child's future - 'beyond his own power of changing or creating it', then - '...that part of his personhood which should be his own achievement is denied him'.

(BCC:para 55) So, for the report, one of the important principles of Christian Nurture is - '...to give the past but not to close the future'. (BCC:para 55) In such a nurture, the 'past' of the child's inheritance - '...is not cancelled out, nor...used as a straight-jacket. It is a springboard, or a launching pad, or a womb'. (BCC:para 58)

The report holds that the very nature of Christian faith is such as to lend itself to this concern for critical openness (BCC:para 59-63), so that to abandon a concern for it is to lose something central to the notion of a Christian person. (BCC:para 150. See also paras 140-144). (3) The report strongly recommends critical openness as an aim that Christian parents should have in the religious upbringing of their children. To deny this aim, claims the report, would have the following implications -

...then either Christian parents think that critical openness is bad for everyone's

children, or they think it good for other people's children but bad for their own, or they

think it good for other people's children and good for their own except in the area of their

religious development.

(BCC:para 149) Emphases in original.

The report rejects all these implications, but especially the last. - '...the last position is the worst of all, since the young Christian is now given to understand that he may think for himself in every area except that which is expected to be his deepest commitment'. (BCC:para 149)

The notion of 'critical openness' clearly plays an important part in the report. Indeed the report claims that, without the notion, Christian upbringing in open, plural societies cannot be defended against the charge that it is indoctrinatory, and Christian adults cannot be formed so as to live 'freely and creatively' in such societies. (BCC:para 133) It therefore sees as a central problem - '...how Christian nurture is deliberately to promote Christian life and faith while possessing critical openness...'. (BCC:para 150)

But how does the report understand the notion of 'critical openness', and how is this notion related to that of autonomy? The report holds that these notions are - '...similar but not identical...'. (BCC:para 135) They are similar, it claims, in that both involve individuals 'thinking for themselves', but under the control of reason, so that 'thinking (just) what one likes' is excluded. A second feature is that both are achieved after a process of growth. (BCC:para 136) Some brief critical comments are perhaps called for in passing here. For example, it is not clear that autonomy *simpliciter* implies a life governed by reason; the similarity alluded to seems therefore to be between 'rational autonomy' [rather than (simply) 'autonomy'] and 'critical openness'. Further, the concept of growth has too many (merely) naturalistic associations to be seen as wholly acceptable to the philosopher as an account of

the process by which autonomy/critical openness is developed. Something with more emphasis on active construction and development seems to be required. But, these worries aside, how does the report characterise the *differences* between autonomy and critical openness?

The report claims that critical openness better captures several things which are implicit in 'autonomy' but more effectively 'highlighted' by the use of the notion of critical openness. (BCC:para 139) One is the role of reason and the notion of 'standing under the discipline of reason'. - 'To be open is to listen, to be ready to receive other persons, to hear new ideas, to re-examine one's own past, whereas autonomy could perhaps suggest a certain isolation, even a self-enclosed independence, or...individualism...'. (BCC:para 137) In contrast, critical openness - '...suggests that one is in a community, a learning community, in which one both speaks and listens, being both critical and receptive'. (BCC:para 137) Critical openness is also held to better capture the crucial notion of 'humility' and reaching out into the unknown. (For a further brief outline of qualities associated with critical openness see BCC:para 176).

Without dwelling too much on the details of the distinctions drawn by the report between 'critical openness' and 'autonomy', I shall focus on the question of whether the major thrust of the notion of autonomy is preserved in the report's concept of 'critical openness'.

How strong is this notion in the report? There are a number of points where one wonders about the extent to which it embodies the notion of autonomy in the full sense. Such concerns take two forms. First, about the *extent* of the autonomy that is envisaged, and second, about the *aspect* under which it is viewed.

Questions of *extent* arise, for example, in relation to the seemingly strong quotation in the report that, -

> *...when Christians seek to nurture their young into Christian faith, they literally do not fully know what they are nurturing them into. They only know what they are nurturing them out of, i.e. out of the Christian past. They know the resources but not the use which will be made of them. What we pass on to our children is not the painting but the paintbox.*

(BCC:para 63)

But does the 'openness to the future' that is alluded to include the possibility of the child losing belief, or is it only varieties of Christian belief that are envisaged? Can the child abandon the paintbox? This concern is perhaps underlined by the claim made a few paragraphs on in the report that

- 'The task of Christian nurture is to develop a future in which the uncertainty of doubt is replaced by the uncertainty of faith' (BCC:para 65), and later, in relation to the bible (BCC:paras 74-87) one might wonder also about the extent of the criticism that is envisaged. Further, in para 179, the treatment of the notion of doubt tends to portray it as a phenomenon *internal* to religious faith, rather than as something which calls religious faith itself into question. There are also paragraphs in the report which are rather difficult to interpret. For example, in para 127 the report states, of Christian Nurture, that - "...we do not think 'critical openness' is at all times and in all places its most important aspect. Love is greater'. (BCC:para 127) In two rather complex paragraphs, (BCC:paras 138-139), discussing further the distinction between 'critical openness' and 'autonomy', several points are made which might be thought to impart a rather determinate flavour to the way in which the term is used. They give rise to the worry that 'critical openness' as characterised in the report has certain ethical and, in particular, religious, assumptions built into it, which have a bearing on the character and extent of the criticism that is envisaged. Worries of this kind are enhanced by noting a further 'essential ingredient' of critical openness as an ideal, which the report outlines later:- '...an attentive (loving) receptivity to the wondrous world that is in principle without limits (that puts no *a priori* limits on itself)...'. (BCC:para 173, emphasis in original). This 'ingredient' is potentially worrying, depending on how terms such as 'wondrous' and 'loving' are to be understood.

All these worries could only be thoroughly dispelled by a detailed dialogue with the authors of the report.

But despite these rather problematic passages, the report taken as a whole seems to give grounds for the worries to be substantially laid to rest. There are a number of strong and fairly unambiguous statements in the report. For example, in paragraph 102 it is explicitly stated that - 'The aim of Christian nurture...is to enable the child in the end to face a radical challenge. The nurturer must have a real choice in mind: belief or disbelief'. (BCC:para 102) This statement as it stands, however, is not *wholly* satisfactory, because it might be interpreted as skewing a child to an unduly stark decision; ruling out agnosticism in its various forms, suspension of belief or indifference. But I think that it would be consistent with the stance of the report to see these as possible options also. In paragraph 188, we have the specific acknowledgement that the form of Christian nurture envisaged can - '... contemplate the possibilities of the collapse of Christian faith...'. (BCC:para 188) However, perhaps the strongest reassurance comes in the final paragraph of the report where it is asserted that - '...The idea of the rights of the child, especially his spiritual rights, has an important place in this discussion. The child has a spiritual right to use the framework provided by his religious upbringing or to reject it....'. (BCC:para 391)

What of the second ground for reservation about the report, the *aspect* under which it views autonomy? There are parts of the report, (e.g. BCC:para 104) where the impression is given that a concern for autonomy is seen as a response to the ineffectiveness of an over-protective approach in sustaining faith in the conditions of modernity; in other words, autonomy is seen as instrumentally - valuable to the achievement of a more effective faith, or a more fully appropriated one. (See BCC:para 103) But such fears are allayed elsewhere in the report where it is explicitly stated that the elements of critical openness should be seen as 'attractive in themselves', and not merely instrumentally; as means to further ends. (BCC:para 173)

It would seem, therefore, that despite the need for caution in certain respects, the report can be seen as embodying, and aiming at, the sort of autonomy that I have in mind in my argument.

Having established that the report is committed to the notion of autonomy in a significant sense, it is appropriate to turn now to questions of coherence arising in relation to a form of upbringing which can at one and the same time seek to promote critical openness and to - '...strengthen Christian faith and ... develop Christian character'. (BCC:para 145) As noted earlier, one aspect of the question of coherence concerns the intentions of the parents. Continuing to leave this issue to one side for the moment, I shall look now, with reference to the report, at the underlying question of the compatibility of autonomy with the notion of Christian faith.

On this matter, the report makes the claim that there is a Christian ideal of critical openness - '...which the Christian follows not in spite of his faith but because of it' (BCC:para 182), and which is not the result of that faith being domesticated to the various needs and demands of a secular context, but because it is demanded by its nature. (BCC:para 182) In paragraph 153 it is acknowledged that certain areas of Christian faith and life '...seem at first sight to be ill at ease with the spirit of Christian critical openness', but the report seeks to justify the claim that, when properly understood, - '...in fact they impel the Christian towards autonomy and criticism'. (BCC:para 153)

What are the potentially incompatible elements that are at issue here? Four of these are outlined in Hull's paper 'Christian Nurture and Christian Openness' (Hull,J M 1984:Ch18 See especially 212-213), and are taken up in Chapter 9 of the report. These are Finality, Authority, Revelation and Spirituality, all of which are argued to be compatible with critical openness.

On Finality, (the claim that the Christian faith is 'perfect' or 'final'), the discussion is rather complex (BCC:paras 154-160), although a striking feature of it is a concern to face up to the danger that devices may be used to limit the operation of critical openness.

On the question of Authority, a distinction is made between the 'authoritative' and the 'authoritarian', the former being characterised by dependence upon reasons and arguments, (presupposing criteria for evaluation and so forth), and the latter by the (mere) exercise of power. The report continues - 'But if there are criteria then they must be examined, compared, ascertained, and the pronouncement itself must also be examined to see whether it meets the requirements of the criteria. So if the religious authority is authoritative, then it demands scrutiny by its very nature'. (BCC:para 161) Thus critical openness is appropriate in relation to the mystery of God (BCC:para 163), and the notion of 'theonomy' is seen as having a properly autonomous element within it. (BCC:paras 164-165) Indeed, it is claimed - 'Either we have a dictator God, or we are called to a life of critical openness'. (BCC:para 166)

In relation to Revelation, it is claimed that far from that notion being inimical to the notion of critical openness, such openness is part of the revelation itself. (BCC:paras 168-169) Further - 'Man...in being critically open is, however imperfectly, in the image of God'. (BCC:para 174)

On the last feature, Spirituality, critical openness, when understood as not implying pride, and when conducted with proper motives etc. is seen as fully compatible with it. (BCC:paras 175-179)

Parallel to our earlier discussion, we need to look carefully at the degree to which the report is in fact committed to autonomy here. A worry arises in relation to some remarks in the report about the *status* of critical openness within the Christian belief system. Paragraph 180 contains the comment that -

...critical openness is not a basic Christian concept (such as the grace of God is) but a derived or consequential attribute of Christian living. It is derived from ideas such as the personhood of God, the nature of the divine image, the Christian hope in the future...and so on...

(BCC:para 180 Emphasis in original)

But once again, such worries are substantially allayed by other passages in the report. The report faces up squarely, for example, to the question of the limits to 'Christian critical openness'. What, for example, if criticism was to destroy faith? It may be thought that when we look at Christian materials, they allow a *certain amount* of criticism, but not to the extent of calling the faith itself into question. For example, in its discussion of the notion of critical openness in the New Testament the report concedes that, of a specific matter - 'The question was which was the wheat and which was the tares, not whether there was any wheat'. (BCC:para 144) But the report goes on in the same paragraph

to insist on a more radical and fundamental questioning and in para 183, it is uncompromising on the need for it. -

> *To restrain criticism because it seemed to be going in the wrong direction would be such*
>
> *an act of intellectual dishonesty that the ethics of Christian intellectual life would be*
>
> *destroyed in any case. After all, if criticism were justified in dissolving faith one would*
>
> *be left with something more approaching faith than one had before, whereas if criticism*
>
> *were restrained because of fear of unwelcome conclusions, one would be left with neither*
>
> *the best truth available nor the Christian faith (since its intellectual calling would have*
>
> *been betrayed).*

<div align="right">(BCC:para 183)</div>

Thus - '...the Christian must act *as if* it were *possibly* the case that his beliefs were false'. (BCC:para 184 - Emphases in original) (4) (For an application of this general approach to adults see Hull,J M 1985).

An interesting feature of the report's argument here concerns the role that it assigns to 'methodological dogmatism' in critical openness, which is roughly equivalent to my notion of 'tenacity of engagement'. I discuss this important matter in Section 5(a) of Chapter Three.

The notion of autonomy is, in fact, discernible in the positions of many Christian traditions, although its role may not be very fully characterised, and its implications drawn out. An example of this is that of the Roman Catholic Church. In recent official statements about Catholic religious upbringing there is a clear insistence that the *aim* of a religious upbringing is to produce a person who autonomously and freely accepts faith. Indeed such freedom of conscience and assent is seen as a central - indeed crucial - value in religious faith. Important in this connection are certain pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council. (5) The 'General Catechetical Directory' indicates that - 'Faith is a free response ... ' (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1971:3,14)- ' ... adherence on the part of those to be taught is a fruit of grace and freedom, and does not ultimately depend on the catechist.' (ibid:71,63) In the same vein, the document 'Catechesi Tradendae' states in relation to children as they approach maturity - 'Although the young may enjoy the support of the members of their family and their friends, they have to rely on themselves and their own conscience and must ever more frequently and decisively assume responsibility for their destiny. Good and evil, grace and sin, life and death will more and more confront one another within them, not just as moral categories but chiefly as fundamental options which they must accept or reject lucidly, conscious of their own responsibility.' (John Paul 11,Pope 1979:39,53)

Once again, parallel to our discussion of the BCC report, it is necessary to look closely at the role given to autonomy here. In relation to the last quotation, for example, the options confronting the chooser, 'Good and evil ... grace and sin ... life and death', with their extreme polarities, casts personal autonomy in a rather dramatic light; - as a matter of making unusual, momentous and clear-cut decisions rather than as the more recognisable subtle and complex business it actually is. Similarly in the section of the 'General Catechetical Directory' devoted to 'personal autonomy', the concept is presented in a rather negative way. Thus the directory states - '...in order to attain the autonomy which he very much desires, the adolescent often exaggerates his self-expression and at times finds fault with the pattern of life he has received from adults ... From this kind of autonomy there arises what can be called a 'temptation to naturalism', which makes adolescents tend to perform their actions and to seek their salvation by their own powers. The bolder the personality, the stronger will be an inclination of this sort. It is therefore, the task of catechesis to bring the adolescent to that personal maturity which will allow him to overcome subjectivism and to discover a new hope in the strength and the wisdom of God.' (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy 1971:86,73) There is little here which displays the positive value - religiously - of personal autonomy; that it is something to be sensitively formed, nurtured and respected rather than seen - when it questions faith - as an expression of 'immaturity'. (ibid) (6) The value of personal autonomy is obscured in this kind of way in much of the literature and there is a failure to give clear expression to a concept whose significance is entailed - I would argue - in fundamental principles concerning the freedom of the act of faith which, in other places, that literature fully expresses.

APPENDIX B

Bruce Ackerman's Concept of Liberal Education

As we have seen from our earlier discussion of his views, Ackerman shares with Bailey an insistence that the basic aim of liberal education is to equip the child for autonomy. Thus Ackerman writes - '...its goal is to provide the child with the materials he will find useful for his own *self-definition* ' (ACK:154. Emphasis in original) with - '...access to the wide range of cultural materials that he may find useful in developing his own moral ideals and patterns of life' (ACK:155-156) and a sense of - '...the very different lives that could be theirs - so that, as they approach maturity, they have the cultural materials available to build lives equal to their evolving conceptions of the good.' (ACK:139) Predictably, Ackerman distinguishes liberal education clearly from what he calls 'advanced forms of horticulture'. Parents are not permitted to view such an education as a process of - '...clipping their young sapling to achieve the pattern they most desire' (ACK:149), and nor is the state thereby enabled to - '...indoctrinate children in one vision of the good rather than another'. (ACK:159) (1)

For Ackerman - 'The liberality of an education is to be judged not by outcomes but by the extent that the growing child's question of legitimacy is taken seriously.' (ACK:159-160) It is interesting to speculate on whether *any* outcome would be acceptable to Ackerman here. What of a child who ended his or her liberal education with a fixed set of dogmatically held beliefs? Would Ackerman not want to insist that, while it is open for the child to hold the beliefs in question, they cannot be held *dogmatically* if they are to count as having been liberally educated? Are some sorts of beliefs - as distinct from the way in which they are held - ruled out as an acceptable outcome of a liberal education? What of a person who comes to reject liberal principles themselves; the value of autonomy, for example, or the importance of the 'neutral dialogue'? It is worth noting, however, that Ackerman has a particular difficulty in claiming without qualification that outcomes are not relevant to judging the liberality of an education. This is because, in contrast to Bailey, he places great weight on the child *actually raising* questions of legitimacy; on *conflict* between the child and his or her primary culture as the basis upon which the liberal educator works. This is why Ackerman holds that what makes liberal education liberal is - '...the extent that the growing child's question of legitimacy is taken seriously.' (ACK:159-160) But what if a given child raises no questions of this kind and experiences no conflict with his or her primary culture? Would not Ackerman have to insist that such a child engage at least in critical reflection about their position if they are to count as having been liberally educated? What seems to be operative here is a questionable (empirical?) assumption that

children can only (or best) be initiated into 'dialogic competence' through *conflict*. As we shall see, there is here an underplaying of the significance of the planned, general, educational experiences on which Bailey insists.

Ackerman holds, then, that - 'The ideal liberal education is one that permits the child to move from his initial resistances to an ability to define his own objectives in the light of the universal culture defined by all humankind.' (ACK:160)

There are a number of other points of contrast between Ackerman's account and Bailey's. One, for example, concerns the rather different epistemological and ethical bases that are appealed to. (2) I have no space here to explore all these contrasts. Instead I shall focus upon a contrast between Ackerman's and Bailey's attitude towards the content, methods and institutionalisation of liberal education, which has considerable significance for my developing argument.

Ackerman says little about content in his account of liberal education, placing great emphasis instead on methods. Thus he claims that no - '...single substantive curriculum can be imposed on all children attending a liberal school.' (ACK:156) This goes beyond the familiar point that in the light of individual differences between children, no detailed determinate curriculum can be imposed across the board on them, to the claim that planned general learning experiences themselves are to be avoided. There is heavy emphasis instead on the *individual* and on the liberal educator's task of *diagnosis* in relation to the child's current beliefs and values. Thus Ackerman writes - 'It is the liberal educator's task to take each child as he finds him and provide those cultural materials that will help the child interpret his own resistances and affirmations in a way that makes the most sense to him.' (ACK:156) The aim here seems to be one of helping the child to achieve *perspective* on his or her current beliefs and values with the aim of bringing about an awareness of the range of alternatives available in their current situation and state of mind. This emphasis on diagnosis in contrast to a generally provided curriculum represents a rather distinctive feature of Ackerman's position. (For a similar emphasis in criticism of Bailey, see Scrimshaw,P 1986). (3)

Ackerman's account of this matter is in clear contrast to Bailey's insistence that the child be introduced to what is 'fundamental' and 'general' in knowledge and understanding and to the range of appropriate content for Liberal education which he delineates.

This stress of Ackerman's results from his apparent commitment to the view that autonomy is not developed through a range of planned cognitive and dispositional learnings and achievements but rather through the experience by the child of certain kinds of *conflict*; hence the conception of the role of the liberal educator as a diagnostic and illuminative one in relation to that conflict. Thus, for Ackerman, the aims of liberal education are to be achieved not by the development of an appropriate, generally experienced, curriculum, but through the adoption of a range of appropriate pedagogical

strategies. I shall argue in due course that Ackerman's failure to emphasise the importance of a *curriculum* in liberal education raises crucial problems for his position. Before that, however, I shall illustrate Ackerman's stress on pedagogical strategy rather than curriculum by critically examining the four strategies he proposes as a response to what he identifies as a central problem facing liberal education. In the process, several key issues will emerge which will be considered more systematically later in this work.

The central problem which Ackerman identifies is related to questions of objectivity and neutrality in the diagnosis of the child's 'cultural resistances'. Ackerman expresses the problem in this way -

Each child's resistances can be given a large number of different cultural interpretations. Perhaps a girl's desire to play with trucks is a protest against her parents' overly bookish habits or rigorous sex typing; perhaps it is a sign of mechanical aptitude or some combination of these and other things. Even subtly different diagnoses may point the educator in very different directions as he searches for a curriculum that the child will find most useful for her problem of self-definition. Moreover, the liberal educator obviously cannot solve his problem of diagnosis by declaring that some ideals are intrinsically superior to others. But if he cannot do that, how is he to resolve his curricula problem?

(ACK:157. Emphasis in original)

Ackerman's proposed strategies are as follows:

(a)   The early years of secondary education will be concerned with - '...the elaboration of life-options relatively close to those with which the child is already familiar.' (ACK:157) Ackerman offers two grounds for this strategy. First, such an approach will harmonise with the kind of legitimate claims of parents to exercise continuing control and guidance over their children which was examined in Chapter Four. Second, 'working from the familiar' will provide a good basis for the child to grasp the idea that resistance to parental commands is not always unacceptable and that it may - '...represent a more satisfying way of expressing his developing self-understanding.' (ACK:157) Such a strategy, claims Ackerman, provides - '...a firm foundation ... for confrontations with cultural forms that provide more challenging interpretations of the youth's evolving pattern of resistances and affirmations.' (ACK:157) (Note the similarity here between this strategy and a similar one of Coons and Sugarman's developed in Chapter Four).

It might be objected at this point: What other alternative is there to starting from 'where the child is'? Is not Ackerman really invoking a necessary, common-sense - but mundane - pedagogical dictum? Must not any educator start from, and relate their teaching to, the child's existing beliefs and values?

To hold any interest, Ackerman's strategy must be interpreted as suggesting something more than this:- as involving a fairly extensive liaison with - and elaboration of - the values of the child's primary culture. For how otherwise can Ackerman claim that the strategy will harmonise with the legitimate control/guidance role of parents and provide a 'firm foundation' for the child's confrontation with other cultural forms?

Two observations arise from this speculation:

(i)   If Ackerman's strategy is interpreted in this more generous way, it is possible to appeal to at least one more ground on which it might be defended. This ground relates to the *substantiality* of the values and beliefs, the 'conception of the good', that can be presupposed and legitimately transmitted in liberal education. If a 'minimum' conception of this substantiality is held, then there is a problem of objectivity and neutrality, since, 'the brute facts of child development and education' require commitment, both on the part of the child and its educators, to a degree of substantiality which goes beyond that level. From such a position, one obvious way to avoid - or at least ameliorate - the problems of objectivity and neutrality is to work from, and with, the child's existing beliefs and values; the substantiality, as it were, that is already given. In this way, the 'substantiality' criterion will be met (and the liberal educator relieved from the burden of determining and justifying a substantiality to be imposed across the board on all children). Yet the liberal demand of getting the child to think about, and critically reflect upon his beliefs, will be met also, since the liberal educator works *from*, conducts his or her 'liberal task' in relation to, the child's existing stock of beliefs and values. This does not wholly resolve all problems of objectivity and neutrality, of course, since there remains the difficulty of justifying the basis of the liberal educator's 'operation' upon these existing beliefs and values. And, as we shall see, this problem arises acutely for Ackerman with his notion of the *diagnostic* role of the liberal educator. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the strategy of 'working from the child's existing beliefs and values'

might have some merit in alleviating, to some extent, concerns about objectivity and neutrality in relation to the requirements of necessary substantiality.

(ii) What does Ackerman's strategy actually involve in terms of detailed methodology and institutionalisation? What would it mean to put this strategy into practice in a 'common' liberal school? Ackerman probably has in mind here an extensive use of individualised learning. But what is to be done about the general ethos of the school, which must necessarily embody substantive values, at least potentially inimical to the aim of making 'an extension of the child's primary culture' a basis for liberal education? This point can perhaps best be brought out by using as an example a case involving the liberal Asian parents described in Chapter Four. On Ackerman's strategy, the liberal education of the child of such parents should begin *from* - and only gradually transcend - the 'primary culture' provided by the parents. The parents are happy to accept this strategy. But when their child is sent to a 'common' liberal school, the child finds that, despite individually tailored learning experiences, the whole of the general context of the school acts (perhaps unconsciously) as a constant challenge and contradiction to the values of the family in which he or she has been brought up. And this applies not just to the values built into the organisation and ethos of the school, but also to the fact that the child is surrounded by other children from different 'value backgrounds' reinforcing the atmosphere of challenge and contradiction. Can such parents, on liberal grounds, be seen as having the right to choose a particular, distinctive, *context* for - at least the beginning of - their child's liberal education? (Such a claim could be strengthened by invoking some of the other arguments deployed by the parents in Chapter Four - relating, for example, to the need to counteract the constant 'challenge and contradiction' to their family's values emanating from society at large.) Ackerman's proposed strategy provides a basis upon which such a claim could be advanced.

Further argument would be required, of course, to determine the *kind* of specific context that might be legitimately available for parental choice. It does not straightforwardly follow, for example, that a specific *school* is such a context. There are alternatives, (such as special classes, 'supplementary experiences' of one kind and another etc.) which might be appealed to in order to allay the fears in question, without the need for the abandonment of the idea of the necessity for all children of the common school. These are all matters for further discussion. What has emerged from Ackerman is a central

consideration relevant to the assessment of the common 'pluralist' school as the only legitimate form of liberal education.

(b)   Ackerman's second strategy concerns the need for the liberal educator to beware of an - '...overconfident diagnosis of the child's cultural needs.' (ACK:157) Ackerman seems to imply here that the diagnosis should be open enough to avoid an unduly determinate or specific conception of them. The child must be provided with - '...skills that he may find useful in a variety of self-definitions' (ACK:157); with nothing less than the requirements for personal and moral autonomy.

It is difficult to see how Ackerman can secure the necessary learning here without emphasising the importance of all children experiencing an appropriate planned and systematic curriculum. Surely an emphasis on *diagnosis* - independent of such a curriculum - carries with it a host of dangers as far as objectivity and neutrality are concerned. We will outline some of these in relation to (c), which is also concerned with diagnosis.

(c)   The third strategy emphasises the *ongoing* character of that diagnosis. This is seen as determining the learning experiences of the child - 'The child's responses during one year should guide the curriculum he receives in the next.' (ACK:157) This strategy adds strength to the worries expressed in (b) about the absence of a generally planned and experienced curriculum. For now it can be seen that considerable weight is being placed on diagnosis - and on the nature of the child's 'responses' - as determining what is to be learnt. There is nothing here about the role of the curriculum in providing a broad background of knowledge, understanding and experience in relation to which such 'diagnosis' and 'pupil response' can be truly informed and situated. It is appropriate to look now more closely at some of the worries concerning the notion of 'diagnosis'.

(i)   Despite Ackerman's concern to ameliorate problems of objectivity and neutrality in relation to 'diagnosis' by appealing for the diagnosis to be 'ongoing' and not 'over-confident', it is not clear that these appeals in fact accomplish that aim. There remains the problem of the objectivity of the perspective, the 'point of view', from which the diagnosis is made. It is true, of course, that this problem arises also for the notion of a curriculum - but not with equal force, I suggest. This is because, by its very nature, the curriculum - as a planned and executed enterprise - is a much more 'public' affair than

'diagnosis'. It is therefore (at least potentially) much more open to public assessment and evaluation as far as its objectivity and neutrality are concerned. Its content, associated methods and - to some extent - the resultant experiences of the children, can be examined and calls for justification can be made. We have noted the difficulties involved, as far as objectivity and neutrality are concerned, with the *context* in which liberal education takes place (the school and its ethos etc.). To place, as Ackerman does, so much emphasis on diagnostic activity, is to transfer those difficulties into the heart of the learning being offered to the child.

(ii)   Another worry concerning Ackerman's emphasis on 'diagnosis' is that it increases the likelihood of conflict with parents. Whilst parents might be happy to let their children be exposed to an appropriate planned and systematic curriculum, incorporating demands of objectivity and neutrality, they are likely to be much more resistant to liberal educators actually diagnosing the 'cultural resistances and affirmations' of their particular child. This is because such a procedure has connotations of the educator actually engaging with the individual child in an unacceptably close way, examining his or her personal beliefs and values; areas of his or her life (such as relationships with family) which are really beyond the educators generally conceded sphere of direct concern. Liberal parents will be happy for educators to challenge and extend the beliefs and values of their children, but they will want them to adopt an appropriate *professional distance* in their work; to accomplish their liberal task primarily by means of a *curriculum* rather than by such direct action upon individuals. That is not to deny, of course, that liberal educators have *some* duty to ascertain the child's existing beliefs etc. It is difficult to see how any educative process could get off the ground without allowing scope for the educator to discover to some extent 'where the child is'. The worry here concerns the *extent* of the 'discovery' involved. I suggest that even liberal parents are likely to object to the extent of the scope allowed by Ackerman - where the whole liberal education enterprise seems to be based on quite a close engagement of the educator with the beliefs and values of the individual child.

These concerns are similar to those currently voiced in relation to the practice of 'Pastoral Care' in schools. Here questions are raised such as: What is the degree of 'involvement with the life of the child' implied on the part of the teacher? What professional mandate does the teacher have for this involvement? Is the teacher straying into the territory of the

family? What principles guide the provision of the 'care' that is offered? What is the relationship between this 'care' and the curriculum:- and liberal education generally?

(d) Ackerman's fourth strategy calls for the child to be allowed increasing control over his curriculum as he matures and - '...gains increasing familiarity with the range of cultural models open to him in a liberal society...' (ACK:158) Thus, Ackerman writes - 'More and more, the educator, like the parent, becomes simply a guide whose authority depends solely on his greater experience with the flood of meaningful symbol and action generated by a liberal society.' (ACK:158) This principle seems a reasonable one, although it is difficult to see how the child will achieve the necessary *breadth* of understanding without the kind of systematic curriculum which Ackerman neglects.

It will be recalled that Ackerman offered his four strategies as an answer to problems of objectivity and neutrality. I have outlined some of the difficulties in the strategies which cast doubt on their validity as answers to the problems at issue.

Ackerman raises a further problem relating to objectivity and neutrality to which he offers another solution. Both the problem and the proposed solution raise questions of interest.

The problem arises out of the possible controversiality of the educator's initial diagnosis of the child's 'cultural resistances and affirmations'. Those members of the liberal community who question the validity of the initial diagnosis may not find completely adequate as an answer to their question of legitimacy, the offer of access to the child at a later stage of her development:- '...for the partisans of a particular culture may properly argue that they have lost the chance to carry their messages to the child at a time she is most impressionable.' (ACK:158)

The question of the significance of *particular stages* of the child's life for impressionability is an important one. For clearly, the particular influences to which a child is exposed during stages of high impressionability are likely to have an advantage over influences exerted at other times. How can objectivity and neutrality be protected in this situation?

Ackerman acknowledges that this problem can never be completely solved, but proposes as a partial solution to it, the approach of 'systematic diversity' -

...the entire secondary educational system, when considered as a whole, can be more liberal than the sum of its parts. An effort can be made to expose children with similar primary cultures to different secondary environments: while the educational diagnosis

of a girl's delight with trucks is interpreted in one way in one case, it can be interpreted
quite differently in the next.

<div align="right">(ACK:158. Emphasis in original)</div>

What is meant by the approach of 'systematic diversity'? Ackerman argues that -

While each child's entire curriculum will be organised on liberal lines, he will
typically confront particular educators with the most diverse set of skills, passions,
and beliefs. Indeed, many secondary educators will be confident that the lessons they
teach, both in words and actions, represent the truth for humankind.

<div align="right">(ACK:159. Emphases in original)</div>

Ackerman goes on to claim that - 'Such intolerance may often be pedagogically useful - so long as it is not permitted to envelop the child for too long a time, it will often be best for the child to assess a culture's strength when it is presented by its wholehearted enthusiasts.' (ACK:159)

This notion of 'systematic diversity' gives rise to a range of critical questions, some of which have already been raised in relation to a similar notion developed by Coons and Sugarman which was discussed in Chapter Four:

(i) Are there limits to the kinds of 'wholehearted enthusiasts' that can be allowed to present their views to the children in this way? Presumably liberal principles would demand restrictions on both (a) the kinds of belief and value transmitted (racist or neo-nazi views would have to be ruled out, for example) and (b) the kinds of intention and method adopted by the enthusiasts. (They could not be allowed to indoctrinate the pupils, for example, as distinct from presenting their views to them as strongly as possible. This advocacy, while it is clearly from a particular point of view, respects the autonomy of the child).

(ii) How, on this approach, is *understanding* to be developed and - in particular - the evaluative and judgemental skills essential to autonomy? Clearly mere exposure to powerfully advocated views will not achieve these objectives. What is needed is for this exposure to be located within a general framework of planned teaching and learning providing a perspective on the views being presented and facilitating understanding, evaluation and judgement on the part of the children. A framework of control is also needed to monitor the range and balance of the views being presented. The problem

now, of course, becomes: Can the objectivity and neutrality of this 'situating framework' be guaranteed? Who is to determine it?

(iii) The question in (ii) becomes more complex if considerations concerning the necessary non-neutral substantiality of liberal education are invoked *viz*: the place of character, dispositions, virtues, etc. For the child's cognitive capacities (as exercised in relation to the systematically diverse and strongly advocated views presented to them) cannot be divorced from these other aspects of his or her personal development. And to the extent that the views in question cannot be understood and evaluated independently of the specific character, dispositions and virtues associated with each view, then the problem of objectivity and neutrality becomes more acute. How can objectivity and neutrality be achieved in relation to the formation of character, dispositions and virtues? Here the solution of 'systematic diversity' seems unavailable. For what coherence is there in the notion of developing in the child a succession of 'systematically diverse' qualities of character, dispositions and virtues? One solution to the problem would be open if it could be shown that there is a *direct* relationship between a person's beliefs on the one hand and his or her character, dispositions and virtues on the other, such that as beliefs change, the other qualities change also. Then it could be claimed that, if the conditions for the formation of the child's beliefs satisfy requirements of objectivity and neutrality, then those requirements will be satisfied in relation to the formation of character, dispositions and virtues also. But the relationship in question is not as simple as that.

Another solution might be for educators to claim that they are concerned only with the cognitive aspects of the child's development. There are at least three difficulties with this solution. First, as we have noted above, the development of an appropriate character, dispositions and virtues might be a *pre-condition* of understanding the various views being presented. Second, even if it were possible for the child to confront 'systematic diversity' at a cognitive level and make some kind of judgement about the beliefs in question, this process has to be related to the child's character, dispositions and virtues if *autonomy* is to result. A third reason why educators cannot claim to confine their activity merely to the 'cognitive level' is that the challenging and questioning of beliefs have implications for character, dispositions and virtues. Not, as was outlined above, that the implications are *direct* in form. To change a belief is not *necessarily* to change a disposition or virtue. But it is not necessarily to leave the disposition or virtue just as it was, either. So as educators transform the mind of the child, they are in an unpredictable way transforming the child him or her self. The significance of this point can be brought out by sketching another complaint from our fictional Asian liberal parents. They might say - 'We are happy that our daughter has looked at a range of different beliefs and values - had her mind 'expanded' and 'opened' as it were. As a result, she remains intellectually convinced of the truth of her

own religion. But, unfortunately, in the process she has been subjected to several changes in her character, dispositions and virtues which now make it very difficult for her to practise that religion. Because she has been exposed to alcoholic drink and dancing, for example, she now finds it difficult to give them up, despite her freely formed intention and desire to do so. Her liberal education has provided a foothold for human weakness. And because of the incoherent package of dispositions and virtues that have been shaped in her, she has had great difficulties in not only coming to her decision about her 'life-ideal', but also in orientating herself successfully within it. At times she is a mass of contradictory dispositions and virtues.' Such a claim might make us wary of the view that exposure to 'systematic diversity' will develop the personal and moral autonomy of the child.

As Ackerman himself acknowledges, the 'systematic diversity' strategy is not a complete answer to the problem arising in relation to claims to the right to influence children during their most impressionable years. Without further modification and development, the strategy remains incomplete as an answer to the more general problems of objectivity and neutrality also.

Ackerman says little about school-level issues. He argues that the institution of the school is necessary to liberal education since - 'Without special institutions devoted to the ideal of liberal education, the social pressures on children to conform to the received wisdom of their particular concrete environments will seem overwhelming.' (ACK:162) However, beyond denying that the liberal school will be a - '...bland and colourless place' (ACK:159) - (largely because of his strategy of 'systematic diversity') - Ackerman says nothing about the problems of objectivity and neutrality arising in relation to the ethos and context of the school. (For an interesting critique of Ackerman see Crittenden,B 1988:139-154).

APPENDIX C

Paul Hirst on Catechesis, Education and the Religious School

(1)   Catechesis

A key passage for a preliminary understanding of Hirst's notion of catechesis is as follows. (1) Hirst writes - 'What I want for a child, whether he (sic) is at home, in church, or at a state school is that he should come to believe that there are reasons for believing, accept that there are reasons for accepting and commit himself to nothing because I say so'. (Hirst,P H 1972:10)

This might be interpreted as implying that Hirst, in stressing that reason and autonomy are very general values which have to be applied to every situation where influence is brought to bear upon a child, is absolutely opposed to the substantive religious upbringing of children in any context, and is claiming that it is unacceptable for the home and church, as well as the state school, to go beyond - '...the measured, objective consideration of different religions...'. (Hirst,P H 1972:10) But this is not the case. Hirst is prepared to admit, although on grounds which he does not make fully explicit, that kinds of substantial religious formation, including certain kinds of 'catechesis', can be defensibly given to children. The crucial criterion for defensibility here is whether the influence exerted upon children respects both the demands of reason and rational autonomy. (2) In addition the context is important; there are differential mandates for the exercising of influence over children possessed by parents, religious leaders, teachers in common schools etc.

For Hirst, only what might be called 'rational catechesis' is acceptable. This activity presents to children, and involves them with, substantive religious beliefs and practices from the standpoint of a particular faith, and with the aim of bringing about- '...the free response in decision and faith by the pupil,and where that has occurred the development of the committed life.' (Hirst,P H 1981:89) Although Hirst insists that this activity respect the demands of reason and personal autonomy (indoctrination,for example, is unacceptable wherever it takes place), catechesis qua catechesis does not face the demand that it introduce the child to a broad range of possibility of religious belief, or that it adopt a neutral stance both about its own substantive commitments and those it seeks from the children it addresses. Catechesis, though governed by the demands we have outlined, is committed; is conducted from the basis of a particular point of view, and with a particular aim in mind; the development not just of rational understanding but also of rational belief in, and commitment to, a particular religious

faith. For Hirst, such an activity, when it satisfies the conditions he specifies, is 'quite proper' (Hirst,P H 1972:11), although he does not make clear why, on his view, this is so. (3)

There is a need to achieve clarity about one of these conditions; that of voluntariness. Hirst claims that, since catechesis presupposes a particular religious position it is - '...appropriate only for those who share that as a conclusion'. (Hirst,P H 1985:14) It seems reasonable to assume, however, that Hirst is prepared to accept that children can be exposed to catechesis even though they are not in a position to give their explicit voluntary consent to this, at least in its early stages. Although he does not address this issue directly, it would be interesting to speculate about the extent to which Hirst would support the general character of the argument in Chapter One about voluntariness being seen as something which can emerge at a later point in a child's religious upbringing - in terms of a reaction or response to an initially provided substantiality of belief, practice and value.

Hirst is insistent that the activity of catechesis be sharply distinguished logically and practically from that of 'Education', fully understood, which is also necessary for the formation and life of the rational religious person. How, then, does Hirst conceive of 'Education'?

(2) Education

Hirst's early work on the relation between catechesis and education involved his drawing a distinction between a 'primitive', or unemancipated, concept of education, and a 'sophisticated' or emancipated concept which most adequately embodies our contemporary understanding of that notion. (Hirst,P H 1972)

On the 'primitive' view, education is simply seen as - '...passing on to children what we believe, so that they in turn come to believe it as true.' (Hirst,P H 1972:7) On this view it is possible to refer to 'Christian (or Jewish, Islamic etc) Education' identified as such by the content of the particular beliefs to be passed on. But for Hirst, such activities do not really represent adequate forms of *education* at all, as well as being objectionable on other grounds. In contrast, on the 'sophisticated' view of education, what is learnt is not determined by what any group simply believes, but - '...by what on publicly acknowledged rational grounds we can claim to know and understand'. (Hirst,P H 1972:8) On this view, Education, like many other human activities, has become 'emancipated' from determination by religious considerations, and is now governed by its own, autonomous, principles. These indicate that education is concerned with - '...passing on beliefs and practices according to, and together with, their objective status. It is dominated by a concern for knowledge, for truth, for reasons, distinguishing these clearly from mere belief, conjecture or subjective preference, *even when the latter*

happen to be justifiable.' (Hirst,P H 1972:8. Emphasis in original) What is sought in pupils on this view is not mere uncritical assent, but (as far as possible) independent rational judgement and belief; indeed, the development of a certain kind of person - '...an autonomous human being who will be responsible for his own judgements as far as he can, certainly on controversial areas of importance to him (sic)'. (Hirst,P H 1972:10) From such a perspective, then, education in religion is not concerned with the transmission of any one set of religious beliefs, or with the formation of a 'religious person' more generally, but with the attempt to introduce pupils as fully as possible to the process of examining, and evaluating in an appropriate way, the objective status of religious claims in their various aspects, and to the task of developing their own considered judgement of, and response to, these claims. Given the uncertain status of religious truth-claims, religion must be seen as a 'private' matter on which - '...education can help the individual as far as objective considerations permit, but on which it has nothing further to say.' (Hirst,P H 1974b:86) Therefore, the character of education on this sophisticated view - '...is not settled by any appeal to Christian, humanist or Buddhist beliefs. Such an appeal is illegitimate, for the basis is logically more fundamental, being found in the canons of objectivity and reason'. (Hirst,P H 1972:8) From the perspective of the sophisticated view, Christian (etc.) Education becomes a 'nonsense', a 'huge mistake' and a 'contradiction in terms.' (Hirst,P H 1972)

In his most recent work on the subject, Hirst has offered a development and refinement of his analysis of 'Education'. (Hirst,P H 1985) In this later analysis, Hirst anchors his distinctions more explicitly in epistemological considerations (Hirst,P H 1985:See especially 7-14) than in what might be seen as a questionably stipulative definition about the *use* of the term, with its value-laden notions of primitiveness and sophistication. In his reformulation Hirst distinguishes four notions of education (Education 1 - 1V), which differ from each other to the extent that they allow and provide scope for reason and rational autonomy. Education 1 - 111 involve, in different ways, and to different extents, restrictions on that scope. (Hirst,P H 1985:6-12) To use Hirst's earlier terminology, they include different mixtures of 'primitive' and 'sophisticated' elements. Only Education 1V (Hirst,P H 1985:12-14) fully embodies the 'sophisticated' concept and - '...does justice to the very nature of human knowledge and belief'. (Hirst,P H 1985:16) I have no space to discuss the details of this reformulation here (4), although I refer to aspects of it in Chapter Eight.

It is very important to avoid misunderstanding of Hirst's favoured conception of education, and to note adequately the features he supplies to it. (Hirst,P H 1985:12-14) Thus, for example, there is no suggestion that the aim of such an education is to produce a general state of doubt on the part of the pupil, as distinct from rational commitment in belief and practice, and so on. (5)

(3)   The Relationship between 'Education' and 'Catechesis'

Despite his insistence on a sharp distinction between them, Hirst holds that education and catechesis, in the sense he understands these notions, are compatible with, and complementary to, each other. This is because catechesis presupposes the more general understanding provided by education, which can be regarded as a form of 'pre- catechesis', and because catechesis of a rational kind involves acknowledging the importance of 'education in natural reason'.(Hirst,P H 1981:90) Underlying these points is a more general thesis about the potentially rational character of religious belief itself and the compatibility and complementarity of the relationship between religious beliefs and beliefs of other kinds. (Hirst,P H 1981:88-89)

But Hirst also insists that education and catechesis be distinguished from each other in the sharpest possible way both conceptually and practically. (6)

Hirst holds that the two activities have different aims and intentions. But this should not be understood too crudely. It is not, for example, simply that education aims at autonomy and catechesis at commitment. On Hirst's view, both education and catechesis must aim at, and respect, autonomy; and both must be concerned with (rational) commitment. What then is the crucial difference? This would seem to be in terms of the ultimate aim of the two activities, beyond the other aims and values which they share in common. Education does not aim at the achievement by the student of *any particular commitment*, but rather at the more general goal that the student's commitments, whatever they may turn out to be, satisfy general conditions of rationality and autonomy. Granted that rational considerations permit a genuine plurality of belief in certain areas, then 'Education' is content that the student's rationally autonomous judgement lead him or her to become committed to any view within the range of plurality licensed by reason. (7) 'Education' qua 'Education' is indifferent to the particular commitments that the student might make within this range. In contrast, as we have seen, 'Catechesis' seeks as its aim the achievement by the student of a rational commitment of *a determinate sort* within the range.

Hirst's rather rigid distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis' has, not surprisingly, been subjected to critical challenge. (See, for example Hull,J M 1975;1976, Francis,L J 1983).

(4) 'Education', 'Catechesis' and the Religious School

One obvious conclusion for schooling arrangements that might be drawn from Hirst's distinction is that schools should be mandated to deal only with the task of 'Education' (in the 'sophisticated' or 'Education IV' sense) and that religious parents and communities should be concerned with the provision of 'Catechesis' additional to the work of the schools. This is Swann's 'differentiation of responsibilities' principle, discussed in Chapter Seven. Whilst Hirst is clearly sympathetic to this principle, he is reluctant to concede an *absolute* status to it. In part, this is because of his awareness of the impossibility of deriving conclusions for matters of practical educational policy directly from considerations of a (merely) philosophical kind. (On this general matter,see, for example, Hirst,P H 1974a:1). Important factors of other kinds have to be taken into account before any detailed policies about schooling arrangements can be formulated. These include the need to take into account the way in which particular institutions are currently operating in particular contexts, and the practical implications of various kinds arising from proposals for change. In considering these, Hirst acknowledges that religious communities might have legitimate grounds for complaint if the 'differentiation of responsibilities' principle were imposed under current circumstances. (Hirst,P H 1981:92-93) (These circumstances include, for example, certain inadequacies in the treatment of religious education in common schools). Hirst insists that flexibility is needed in relation to the determination of the institutional arrangements appropriate for the provision of 'Education' and 'Catechesis' respectively, and that there is - '...no one clear, simple, institutional answer in our present (social) context.' (Hirst,P H 1981:93) He is therefore prepared to concede, (though less explicitly in later writing;see Hirst,P H 1985:14-16), that a certain kind of religious school might be a coherent, though problematic, way in which the demands he characterises might be met. What conditions must such a school satisfy in his view in order to meet these demands?

It clearly could not offer a general, unified form of 'Christian (etc.) Education', which Hirst regards as indefensible. (For a recent statement of such a concept, see McClelland, V A 1988b. Compare Pring,R 1968). Instead, it must satisfy in some way the demands arising from the distinction between 'Education' and 'Catechesis', and his claim that - 'It is essential.... that 'education' and 'catechesis', as I am using those terms, be seen as activities with quite distinct aims conducted by agents operating from within quite distinct positions.' (Hirst,P H 1981:89-90) For more detail on how Hirst envisages the religious school achieving this see Chapter Eight Section (1).

APPENDIX D

Life-planning and the Significance of a Plurality of Starting Points

In this appendix I shall, by reference to the notion of 'life-planning', offer a critical illustration and application of my general point that, even if one accepts a generous interpretation of the liberal educational ideal, there is a necessary plurality about the starting points from which that ideal can be achieved.

I shall outline and defend the notion of 'life-planning' and shall claim that is indeed part of what a liberal education should be concerned with (sections 1-3). I shall also try to show, however, (sections 4-5) that an exploration of what is involved in the notion illuminates some of the complexities and difficulties concerning liberal education, and gives support to my claim that there is a need to recognise the significance of a plurality of starting points for its achievement, with the implications this has for parental rights.

(1) 'Life-planning' in Theories of Liberal Education

Gerald F. Gaus in 'The Modern Liberal Theory of Man' (Gaus,G 1983) has argued that central to that theory is a stress upon the *integrated* development of the various elements and aspects of the nature of individuals. Modern arguments for liberty assume not only that the individual can and must make reasonable decisions about *particular matters* of belief, value, action etc., but also that they can and must locate these particular decisions within a rational life plan concerned with the coherent development of their aspirations and capacities. Modern liberal man has the task of organising these into a coherent individuality.

Gaus traces the history of the notion of 'life-plans' through Rawls, Hobhouse and Dewey back to the Idealists Royce, Bosanquet and Green - and even as far as Mill himself. (Gaus,G 1983:See esp 32) Gaus thus claims that the notion - ' ... was present at the birth of the modern liberal conception of individuality.' (Gaus,G 1983:32)

For the modern liberal, then, atomistically exercised autonomy is insufficient. Autonomy must be exercised too in relation to the formation of life-plans, where the watchwords are planning, integration, harmony, unity and coherence.

Most theorists of liberal education fall short of explicitly emphasising the notion of 'life-planning'. They incorporate a holistic element into their thesis by stressing breadth and balance of curriculum content; of educational experience to be presented to the child. But this falls short of an insistence that the child must actually *construct* for him or her self a unified 'life-plan'. In many accounts of liberal education such as that of Charles Bailey, for example, such a notion is implicit, but never really fully developed. (Bailey,C 1984:See, for example, 107-108) In 'Personal and Social Education in the Curriculum', Richard Pring acknowledges that central to the achievement of autonomy by a person is that person having a thoroughly assimilated and appropriated - ' ... consistent and integrated set of values ...' that are defensible and provide an - ' ... integrated sense of purpose' (Pring,R 1984:74) - and a contribution to a further important element in the achievement of autonomy: the development of an appropriate sense of personal identity. Robin Barrow, in 'Commonsense and the Curriculum', acknowledges the importance of a different aspect of the holistic requirement: that the child should be introduced to the importance of the various general 'interpretative attitudes to the world'; attitudes which lie at the root of different 'world views'. (Barrow,R 1976:51) However, this point is not developed; and certainly not in the direction of the notion of 'life-plans'.

The only liberal educator who has given a central place to the notion of 'life-planning' is John White. The notion is prominent in White's early work - 'Towards a Compulsory Curriculum' (White,J 1973), even though in this book the term itself is not used. There White argues that children must come to an understanding of - ' ... the many different ways of life which they and others may pursue ... of the different kinds of guiding principles by which men (sic) may conduct their lives.' (White,J 1973:43-44), as well as merely the distinct particular activities that they might engage in. White calls into question the value of pupils acquiring knowledge, but not reflecting on its significance in the development and construction of their ways of life. He is surely right in his claim that an education which concentrated upon developing understanding of activities in an isolated way without attempting to promote understanding of how such activities could be woven into overall 'ways of life' would scarcely be an education which led to the achievement of autonomy in any full sense. He is right too in his claim that the 'construction of a way of life' rather than the 'structure of knowledge' should constitute the 'integrative ideal' of education. (White,J 1973:See esp 51-52)

For White, mere *understanding* of possible ways of life is insufficient. The child must compare and assess them critically, and this not merely as an abstract exercise, but in the realisation of the importance of his actually *deciding* which one to follow. Hence, the most specific 'integrative task' of education on his view is that of helping pupils to 'reflect on how the elements of their life fit together' and of helping them to construct - ' ... a coherent pattern of life.' (White,J 1973:52) White therefore sees the educational task as engaging with the *person* in a more intimate and holistic way than many

other accounts of liberal education. The formal educational process, on his view, does not merely

provide the child with the materials for the construction of his or her 'way of life' but also actually

assists them in that construction. It is easy to see how conflict with parents might emerge here, with

disputes about the respective rights of teachers and parents to become involved in the lives of their

pupils in these ways. This conflict was mentioned in Chapter Four in relation to Ackerman's notion

of the 'diagnostic' role of teachers, and Patricia White's comments on the division of responsibility for

this 'integrative' educational task.

This stress on the significance of the notion of 'life-planning' is continued and developed by

John White in 'The aims of education re-stated'. Perhaps the most notable change in this later work is

that it is argued there that an individual's conception of his or her well-being - and hence their 'life-

plan' - should be understood in an 'expanded' sense to include leading a life of moral virtue. (White,J

1982:See esp Ch 4,5) This develops the rather embryonic treatment of the moral aspects of 'life-

planning' in 'Towards a Compulsory Curriculum'.

If 'life-planning' is given such a central role in the concept of liberal education, it is vital that

certain questions be faced concerning the notion, both in itself, and in its functioning in an educational

context.

(2) Difficulties in the Notion of 'Life-planning'

The notion of 'life-planning' has recently been subjected to philosophical criticism, and an

examination of this criticism should help in developing an adequate conception of the notion.

(i) The first criticism is one of two developed by R.P. Wolff in 'Understanding Rawls'.

(Wolff,R P 1977) It amounts to the claim that the notion of 'life-planning' is culture-bound and linked

to - ' ... certain unexpressed assumptions that give ideological expression to a particular socio-

economic configuration and set of interests.' (Wolff,R P 1977:137) It presupposes a stable society

with a certain level of wealth and holds up as a conception of a rational human life one that is

associated with the professional middle classes; with those holding a 'liberal-humanitarian-utopian'

mentality. This criticism does not seem to me to be too damaging to the notion of 'life-planning'. (1)

(ii) Wolff's second criticism raises a more fundamental objection to the notion of 'life-

planning', by claiming that it - '...conflicts with the organic, developmental character of a healthy

human personality'. (Wolff,R P 1977:137) It conceives persons more as industrial firms to be

managed in the light of an economically based plan of profit-maximization, than as the natural, living

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creatures that they in fact are. Wolff argues that a person passes through various stages of life (infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood etc.) and what is 'rational' for the person changes as the stages are passed through. Thus he writes

An adolescent who formulates a life-plan, complete with sinking funds, contingency

allowances and a persistent concern for a solid pension plan, will almost certainly miss

much of the joy and satisfaction that life holds out for us.

(Wolff,R P 1977:140)

He invokes Michael Oakeshott to illustrate the point that the role of reason in living a life must be conceived in an appropriate relationship with our natural qualities as creatures, and with notions such as emotion and habit. Wolff suggests that Kant's attitude to marriage (twice losing potential wives whilst engaged in a long process of rationally calculating the benefits and disadvantages of marriage) indicates not prudential life-planning, but an unsuitability for the married state.

There seem to be two elements in this criticism of the 'unnaturalness' of life-planning: (a) The point that persons change during a lifetime and that the notion of 'life-planning' is rendered incoherent because of this fact and (b) the more general point that 'life-planning' goes against our nature by illicitly emphasising reason and calculation over other important aspects of our human being (desire, instinct etc). It will be useful to explore these points in more detail in order to determine the defence which a proponent of 'life-planning' might be able to mount against them:

(a) is developed by Michael Slote in his book 'Goods and Virtues'. (Slote,M 1983) There Slote argues that 'life-planfulness' is not a virtue as applied to childhood and adolescence, in the context of a general argument about goods being non-transtemporal, their value being relative to a particular timing in relation to other aspects of a person's life - or, more generally - to a given period of such a life. Slote therefore distinguishes between 'period-relative' and overall human goods, and consigns 'life-planfulness' to the former category. Thus he argues

...however valuable some (perhaps limited) form of life-planfulness is in adulthood, the

possession of a worked-out life-plan is undesirable and positively counter-productive in

childhood...it is an anti-virtue with respect to childhood.

(Slote,M 1983:3)

Amongst the points made by Slote are: that it is better to do without a life-plan altogether until one's future desires or abilities come into focus; that conditional decisions in the absence of this information can distort and limit freedom and affect adversely how things turn out; that life-planfulness

in children is unnatural and a sign of excessive pressure or anxiety; that an attitude of 'unreflective 'trustingness to the future' is an appropriate one for children, and so on.

Does Slote's position here constitute a major difficulty for a thesis such as White's? (Hereinafter described as a W-thesis). This is difficult to determine, because of certain ambiguities in Slote's argument. Slote does not distinguish very clearly, for example, between children and young adolescents. Whilst the W-thesis does not claim that children must have life-plans, it would seem that it does require adolescents to have the beginnings of them. There is a developmental aspect missing from Slote's argument. If he admits that there is some value in 'life-planning' in adulthood, he must allow, at least in adolescence, a growing appreciation in the individual of the significance of this task. Another, related, ambiguity in Slote is that he fails to distinguish between having a life-plan and *having a disposition to form* such a plan. He argues that *both* are inappropriate to childhood (adolescence?). But it is not so clear that the arguments he deploys against *having* a life-plan in childhood, apply with equal force to the *disposition* to form one. Whilst the W-thesis may well accept much of Slote's argument about the former, it must resist the latter, it seems to me. For its conception of education is precisely one of appropriately preparing the child for 'life-planfulness' - a task in which the laying of 'dispositional foundations' is taken to loom quite large. (White,J 1982:See, for example, 59-60, 121-2, 126-8) Given Slote's acceptance of 'life-planning' in adulthood, it is difficult to see how he can coherently object to the laying of such a dispositional foundation - one which must necessarily begin in childhood. (This is distinct of course from objections to the laying of *certain kinds* of dispositional foundations: unduly determinate or restrictive ones for example). The W-thesis admits that an appropriate 'life-plan' may well not have been formed until well into adulthood - but it urges that the ground be prepared in childhood and adolescence for the capacity of the individual to form such a plan.

If, *contra* Slote, it is accepted that at least the foundations of 'life-planfulness' can be laid in childhood, many of the worries that he (and Wolff) raise against the notion under point (a) can be met by stressing that life-plans (and particularly the embryonic life-plans formed in adolescence) are *flexible* in character.

The need for such flexibility is strengthened by observations such as those of Alasdair MacIntyre about the sources of systematic unpredictability in human social life (MacIntyre,A 1981:89-99), and also by the fact that, in principle as well as in practice, life-planning could not involve a choice between options involving clearly understandable and isolatable ideals, principles etc. with direct implications for practical life. Tacit elements inevitably intrude. (2)

White, in common with other philosophers who discuss life-planning, does in fact lay this stress upon flexibility, claiming that - 'Having a life-plan is not necessarily having a blueprint filled in

detail from the start. The overall picture may well be built up gradually, shaped and reshaped by experience'. (White,J 1982:46) It is more a question, he argues, of having a 'picture' of the kind of life one is to lead which may well be - '...something relatively inchoate, with broad outlines only, the details to be filled in as one goes, and even the broad outlines revisable if later reflection or changed circumstances warrant this'. (White,J 1982:125) White's reference to flexibility here seems a *conditional* one; (a blueprint is not *necessarily* involved; the plan *may well* be built up gradually etc). Indeed, White explicitly states that a given plan - '...*may* have more of the blueprint about it - I can see no reason for ruling this out as one option...' (White,J 1982:125 Emphasis in original) But this seems to be an inconsistency in White's argument. There are elements in White's thesis which call out for flexibility to be seen as a *necessary* condition of life-plans. (3)

Invocation of the notion of 'flexibility' would seem to be a major way in which the difficulties expressed in (a) can be ameliorated. This notion gives rise, however, to some fundamental questions about the nature of life-plans themselves. What, if life-plans are to be flexible, is the principle of unity which holds a given life-plan together? What is to stop a given life-plan from deterioration, in the light of 'flexibility', into no 'life-plan' at all - just a policy of pragmatic reaction to circumstances and events? Clearly much more analysis is needed of the notion of a life-plan, and, in particular of the elements of such plans. These will be of different kinds; (overarching general principles or 'views of life' acting as structuring devices of the life-plan as a whole; 'ground projects' (to use Bernard Williams' phrase) which have fundamental motivational force for the agent, moral principles or ideals; strategic long or short term plans of varying significance concerning matters such as careers, hobbies, desired experiences etc; goals for the achievement of certain personal qualities such as personality traits, dispositions etc; aims concerning personal relationships and so on.)

The notion of a life-plan remains under-analysed. Yet it is only in the light of a fairly comprehensive analysis of the notion that many of the questions we are discussing can be appropriately tackled.

Before returning to a preliminary attack on this matter, it is appropriate to turn to our examination of the second criticism raised above concerning the notion of 'life-planning': that it goes against our nature by illicitly emphasising reason and calculation over other important features of our human being.

(b) Does 'life-planning' conceive of the person, as Wolff suggests, more as an industrial firm than as a living creature? Part of this worry is eased by the incorporation of the notion of flexibility, as outlined above. But this only meets some of the difficulty. An account has to be given of the

process of life-planning which coherently relates it to our 'natural' and distinctively human features such as emotion, desire, character etc.

Such an account is needed to defend the notion of 'life-planning' against critiques such as those of Bernard Williams, who in the context of arguing in his paper 'Persons Character and Morality' (Williams,B 1981:Ch1) that a Kantian approach to ethics with its stress on impartiality fails to allow sufficient weight to individual character and personal relations in moral experience, claims that the Rawlsian notion of life-planning employs an unduly 'external' view of one's own life. It is seen as a 'rectangle' that has to be 'optimally filled in' but without stressing that the 'rectangle' is intimately connected with one's personal character (motivation, current perspective etc.) - and is determined by that character, and the facts of human nature with which it is necessarily associated. (For a development of this general perspective see Williams,B 1985)

Can an account of 'life-planning' be given which accepts points such as these? In order to determine this, it is appropriate to look at the attempts of several writers to characterise the 'natural' or 'personal' side of this matter.

Francis Dunlop writes in his book 'The Education of Feeling and Emotion' (Dunlop,F 1984) that, although an appropriately conceived form of autonomy is the 'culminating feature' of any emotional education, it must be acknowledged that it is the - ' ... whole stratified person ... ' (Dunlop,F 1984:108) that is involved in the achievement of self-rule, not merely one aspect - such as the reason or the will. Thus, the self, in seeking this achievement, must be engaged not merely in the application of 'rational criteria but also in 'listening' - ' ... to the various 'voices' of itself, feeling its path towards the goal in ways that it cannot give a public account of.' (Dunlop,F 1984:108) For Dunlop then,

> *Self-rule, or self-management ... is a deeply mysterious thing of which no satisfactory*
>
> *account can be given, except in vague terms like 'maintaining a balance' between the*
>
> *strata, or 'integrating' the various 'parts of the soul', and so on.*
>
> (Dunlop,F 1984:108)

Dunlop's thesis is (perhaps inevitably given its subject matter) rather obscure in places. Nevertheless, it reminds us of the necessity of locating a process such as that of 'life-planning' within the context of a broad understanding of what life as a human being is actually like. (For a similar general perspective see, for example, Cooper,D E 1983:esp 20-25).

Such emphases are by no means lacking in White's account. He holds that the 'reflective' element of 'life-planning' should be conducted in a balanced relationship with 'natural' aspects of our

existence; desires, enthusiasms, attractions, commitments, etc. The notion of 'balance' is a crucial one for White here. He points to the fact that too much stress on the 'natural' aspects can lead, for example, to ignorance of the liberating perspectives and possibilities revealed by reflection, whilst too much reflection can lead to, amongst other things, a paralysing and fruitless 'search for comprehensiveness': for an understanding of all the aspects of all the possibilities that might be open to an individual.

In fact, White seems to favour weighting the balance more heavily in the 'natural' direction. For White

> ...*reflectiveness is not an end in itself, but subserves desire-satisfaction. Primarily we should do the things we most want to do: that is what life-planning is all about.*
>
> (White,J 1982:57)

One aspect of White's thesis is in fact very similar to a point stressed by Dunlop. Dunlop stresses the importance of 'self-discovery' and claims that, as part of his development towards self-rule, the child must be encouraged - ' ... to find what he *really* wants, what gives him the *deepest* satisfaction, what most *thoroughly* satisfies him.' (Dunlop,F 1984:109. Emphases in original) Dunlop insists that - ' ... they will in the end only find the answers by looking within themselves.' (Dunlop,F 1984:110) In a parallel way, White stresses that, ultimately, a metaphor of depth of 'self-exploration' has to be employed in order to characterise the way in which an individual comes to make ultimate decisions about his or her life-plan. White writes

> ...*he has to dig beneath his surface inclinations, steel himself against unthinking acceptance of ideals of life which he has picked up from others, penetrate to more fundamental layers of his being, to his 'deepest needs'. Complete self-knowledge will reveal to him his most basic orientations.*
>
> (White,J 1982:54)

White also stresses the need for 'life-planfulness' to be associated with the development of appropriate dispositions and qualities of character.

Do such moves in fact succeed in meeting the criticisms outlined against 'life-planning'? In order to discover this, it is necessary to look more closely at the details of the arguments. These details emerge most clearly when we ask the question: what is it to form a life-plan?'

Before proceeding, however, it is useful to outline in brief some considerations supporting the idea that 'life-planning' (in some appropriate form) (hereinafter LP) is a necessary feature of the 'personal autonomy' ideal.

(3) The Significance of Life-planning

(i)   LP's are necessary so that the individual is able to exercise his or her potential. As Gaus puts it, modern liberalism postulates in each individual - ' ... a unique capacity repertoire, all parts of which cannot be fully developed or indeed ever known.' (Gaus,G 1983:103) So it is necessary that planning take place to facilitate the optimum actualisation of potential. This is a point developed by Rawls. (Rawls,J 1973:87 quoted in Gaus,G 1983:32) It is linked to modern liberalism's reluctance to (a) speak of individuals possessing a determinate human nature, with a fixed set of inbuilt structured capacities linked to predetermined ends and, (b) to concede the implications for human choice and freedom springing from such a view.

(ii)   Without an appropriate LP, an individual is not going to be able to exercise his or her autonomy fully. This is because they are going to be at the mercy of their immediate desires and attractions, short-term strategies etc. - and may well be substantially trapped in these; unable to achieve autonomous control over his or her life as a whole. This is clearly a substantial restriction on autonomy.

(iii)   An LP is necessary for an individual not only to achieve his or her self-regarding projects (as in (ii)) but also to be able appropriately to relate these to moral demands.

(iv)   Since conflicts of various kinds are an inevitable feature of life (especially modern life), an LP is necessary in the attempt to resolve them.

(v)   The roots of the activity of forming an LP is an important part of our nature. Thus, following Midgley, White points out that we are equipped not only with wants and conflicts between them but also with - ' ... higher order propensities to resolve these conflicts.' (White,J 1982:50. See also Gaus,G 1983:39). In 'Beast and Man' Midgley writes

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*People have a natural wish and capacity to integrate themselves, a natural horror of being
totally fragmented, which makes possible a constant series of bargains and sacrifices to
shape their lives.*

(Midgley,M 1980:190)

For Midgley, our human nature demands integration of this kind. It is not, as it were, a maxim
or demand imposed on individuals from outside themselves, but something which answers to some of
their most basic wishes, capacities and needs. R W Hepburn holds that the task of discovering meaning
in one's life is closely concerned with unity and 'the struggle to unify' (Hepburn,R W 1982) (4), and
Alasdair MacIntyre stresses the connection between finding life meaningful and planning and engaging
in long-term projects. (5)

(vi)   The adoption of a successful LP can be associated with the achievement of necessary qualities
        of self-mastery, self-esteem etc., which are intimately associated not only with effective
        autonomous agency, but with well-being in general.

For these - and other- reasons, the notion of 'life-planning' can be seen as *prima facie* part of the
'personal autonomy' ideal, and we can agree with White about the inescapability of the child reflecting
on his or her wants, ordering them in relation to some overall scheme and therefore achieving - ' ... a
settled, integrated scheme of preferences' (White,J 1982:50) to guide him or her through life. The
'imposition' on the child of the virtue of 'life-planfulness' can be seen, in an important sense as non-
arbitrary.

As we noted earlier, however, there are complexities in determining the extent to which these
kind of arguments have force. What kind of 'life-planning' is thereby licensed? What sort of 'life-
plans' should children be legitimately encouraged to form? What is meant by the notion of a 'life-plan'
exactly?

Clarification of these matters will bring into focus some of the concerns of critics such as Lloyd
which were considered in Chapter Six.

(4)   Elements of Life-plans

An issue which demands attention here straight away is:- 'What exactly is meant by the notion of a life-plan?' As noted earlier, this remains a substantially unanalysed - or at least seriously underanalysed - notion.

White, for example, gives little attention to the different kinds of elements that will be present in a successful life-plan. These might include:

(a)   *Basic structuring principles for the formation of the life-plan*

We might borrow the term 'architectonic' from John Finnis (Finnis,J 1983:144) to describe these principles, since it brings out clearly how they function in a crucial way in determining the structure of the life-plan; its basic shape and main outlines. The 'ways of life' outlined by White in 'Towards a Compulsory Curriculum' seem to be presented as largely architectonic in character *viz*:

> *...a way of life devoted to artistic creativity ... a way of life devoted to others's good: the*
> *altruistic way of life ... a religious way of life, premised on the belief that this life is*
> *only a preparation for an after-life ... a way of life devoted to a Thoreauesque return to*
> *nature ...*

(White,J 1973:44)

and so on. This, as I shall hope to bring out later, is a rather heterogeneous list of what White refers to as 'guiding principles' or 'life ideals'. But all the members on the list do seem to have in common one feature which marks them out as architectonic: they are all presented as single, dominant, over-riding and (largely) exclusive master-aims. A life-plan formed in the light of any one of these principles will be significantly shaped by it. For example, the 'altruistic' master-aim is architectonic in the sense that it determines the subordinate elements that might be admitted into the plan; their character, balance and relationship to the major elements. Individuals with such a plan may permit themselves a certain amount of self-regarding activity or pleasure, but this will be within clear limits. It is important to note, however, that principles can be architectonic in different ways, and have radically different characters. It is worth sketching some of these differences out briefly:

(1)   Some architectonic principles (hereinafter APs) function in this way because they are over-riding desires of a quite straightforward sort. Their 'dominance' is one of desire-preference, simply conceived. Thus, to give examples from White's list, a '... way of life devoted to

physical prowess and adventure' and ' ... a life devoted to the acquisition of goods' would seem to fall fairly straightforwardly into this category. APs such as these (let us refer to them as AP1) seem to share several features:

(i) They are fairly readily understandable 'from the outside', as it were, since their elements are part of our ordinary common experience. APs are not connected in any complex way to associated total world views of various kinds; they are not imbedded within ramified ideologies or systems of beliefs, for example. Therefore AP1s can be seen as falling into what White in 'Towards a Compulsory Curriculum' calls 'Category 2' activities: those understandable without direct participation in or involvement with them. Thus, granted that a child has a ready understanding of 'physical prowess and pleasure', 'the acquisition of goods', and so on, it is a straightforward matter to illuminate to the child in a range of ways the possibility of his giving any one of these principles supreme significance in his or her life-plan; of giving it architectonic status. A reasonably straightforward kind of judgement on the part of the child seems to be called for here. The judgement involved is a weighing of the strength of desires. (For White's subsequent acceptance of criticisms of the Category 1/2 distinction see White J 1985:133).

What seems to be involved here is what Charles Taylor in his paper 'What is human agency?' calls 'weak' evaluation, where for something to be judged good it is sufficient that it be desired. (Taylor,C 1985a:18)

(ii) AP1s are related in a fairly straightforward way to the subordinate elements of a life-plan in which they play an architectonic role. Thus, a life dedicated to 'physical prowess and adventure' has straightforward implications for diet, exercise, behaviour patterns, priorities amongst activities and so on. Again, all this is something that can be readily understood 'from the outside' to a significant extent. AP1s do not act as the structuring principles of elaborate 'systems' or 'world views' in any real sense, but as the dominant desires which shape the 'package' of desires that the person chooses to satisfy.

(iii) AP1s are readily combinable with each other in their architectonic role. Indeed it would be odd for a person to base their life on one supreme AP1. It is this which White has in mind, I think, when he acknowledges, in relation to his 'life ideals' that - ' ... it may be unusual to find any of these displayed in a pure form in any one person's life.' (White,J 1973:44), and that people will tend to produce a personal life-plan articulated by a balanced range of such ideals. (On the dangers of a person adopting a single all-unifying ideal in their lives and neglecting the demands of diversity see Hepburn,R

W 1982:122-123). It is not difficult to imagine how AP1s can be combined in their architectonic role. Even seemingly opposed AP1s can be brought into a balanced relationship. Charles Taylor brings out how, in weak evaluation, when a desired alternative is rejected - '...it is only on grounds of its contingent incompatibility with a more desired alternative.' (Taylor,C 1985a:19) Given the right contingent circumstances, the 'weak' evaluator could satisfy both desires, if he or she wanted to.

(iv) AP1s are readily harmonious with the demand noted earlier that life-plans should be flexible in character. It is not difficult to see that a given person could change his or her plan as circumstances change, re-prioritising their AP1s as necessary. Thus, as a person ages, a life dedicated to 'physical prowess or adventure' may wane as an AP1, to be replaced by more realistic or congenial dominant desires. It is not difficult either to conceive of a person forming a life-plan articulated by AP1s in the kind of hypothetical way demanded by flexibility: (*viz*: 'I will seek to achieve this AP1 - or this combination of AP1s - granted favourable circumstances x, y, z, etc.) Commitment to a plan of life, articulated by an AP1 does not change a person's fundamental character or self-understanding in a profound way. ('Profound' should be emphasised here, since it cannot be denied that some degree of change is involved.) There are few problems, therefore, in conceiving of persons changing their AP1 - articulated life-plan as circumstances change.

(2) In contrast to AP1s, however, it is important to note the existence of a second kind of 'architectonic principle', which I shall call AP2. AP2s gain their architectonic status not in virtue of their being statements (simply) of the person's most significant desires, but because of their connection with what Charles Taylor calls 'strong' evaluation on the part of the human agent. In contrast to the 'weak' evaluator, who is merely a - '...simple weigher of alternatives...'(Taylor,C 1985a:23) a 'strong' evaluator is one who employs a language of evaluative and qualitative contrast ranging over desires. Thus some desires or desired outcomes can be seen from the perspective of strong evaluation as bad, base etc. in a significant sense. Also relevant to 'strong' evaluation is the notion of *truth*. An example of an AP2 from White's list involving a matter of truth in a clear way is - 'A religious way of life, premised on the belief that this life is only a preparation for an after-life.' (White,J 1973:44) This AP2 clearly seems to involve questions of belief about what is taken to be true. It is not just a statement about what the agent's most dominant desires happen to be, although clearly desire must enter into the situation.

The features of AP2s significantly contrast with the correlative features of AP1s identified in (i) - (iv) above. I shall use as an example of an AP2, the religious way of life, conscious that what

applies to that particular example of an AP2 may not hold true of all AP2s (at least not to the same extent). Thus;

(i) AP2s are not readily understandable 'from the outside'. Their elements are not fully part of our ordinary common experience. In the religious way of life, for example, there are concepts, attitudes etc. which, whilst they may be anchored in some sense in ordinary, common experience, go beyond it in significant ways. Further, religious ways of life are typically associated with a complex total 'world view'. (For one illustration of this see, for example, Sutherland,S 1984:Ch6,7,12, where it is argued that 'a perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* on human affairs' and 'giving grounds for optimism' are distinctive features of the Christian world view).

For these - and other reasons - it would seem plausible to claim that AP2s fall into White's 'Category 1' activities : those that cannot be adequately understood without direct participation in them.

(ii) AP2s are related in a complex way to the subordinate elements of a life-plan in which they play an architectonic role. A religious AP, for example, is likely to exercise a very wide-ranging influence over these other elements, generating specific subordinate elements unique to the religious way of life. The whole 'package' of the way of the life articulated by a religious AP is not easily understood 'from the outside', connected as it is with, for example, 'tacit' awarenesses and judgements about the 'balances' and 'relationships' to be made between the various elements of the life-plan.

(iii) AP2s are, unlike AP1s, not readily combinable with each other in their architectonic role. In contrast to 'weak' evaluation, contingent incompatibility of desires is not at stake. As Taylor puts it,

..I refrain from committing some cowardly act, although very tempted to do so, but this
is not because this act at this moment would make any other desired act impossible, as
lunching now would make swimming impossible, but rather because it is base.

(Taylor,C 1985a:19)

Courageous action is *constitutive* of a certain way of life, and of the sort of person one aspires to become. The avoidance of cowardly acts is therefore non-contingently *part* of this 'broader package'. Thus Taylor insists

Being cowardly does not compete with other goods by taking up the time and energy I

need to pursue them, and it may not alter my circumstances in such a way as to prevent

my pursuing them. The conflict is deeper; it is not contingent.

(Taylor,C 1985a:21)

What is at stake here, to use a phrase which Taylor introduces later, is - '...a conflict of self interpretations'. (Taylor,C 1985a:22) For example, the religious AP2 is incompatible as an AP2 with a life devoted (merely) to the acquisition of goods, or the pursuit of physical pleasures, for example. Such an AP2 may, of course, allow scope for such activities as part of the subordinate elements of its life-plan - but none of them can be raised to architectonic status. AP2s make a claim for exclusivity and completeness which is not true of AP1s.

(iv) AP2s are harmonious only to a limited extent with the claim that life-plans should be *flexible* in character. Whilst the religious AP2 is compatible with a considerable amount of flexibility at the level of the subordinate elements of its life-plan, that flexibility does not extend so readily to the AP2 itself. Unlike AP1s, AP2s cannot be *easily* modified and changed as the person progresses through life. This is partly because of the nature of AP2s themselves. They are not merely concerned with *dominant desires* such that, as the desires change, the architectonic principles can change also. Some AP2s, as we have seen, involve a perception about a very general and high-level truth about the human condition, or human life. They cannot readily be cast off without considerable re-thinking and re-orientation. Commitment to a plan of life articulated by an AP2 *changes* a person's fundamental character or self-understanding, sometimes in a profound manner. Such a plan shapes a person in a rather distinctive way with pervasive specific dispositions, virtues etc. which constitute in an important sense the *person* that the individual has become. Changing AP2s - while not impossible - is much more difficult than the kind of re-arrangement of dominant desires involved in the changing of AP1s.

Apart from these 'architectonic principles' another element in 'life-plans' are principles of a lower or subordinate kind.

(b)   Lower-level   subordinate   principles

These (hereinafter referred to as SPs) can be of various kinds and consist essentially of plans or 'projects' of different sorts housed within particular APs. As noted above, the character of the AP involved is important in determining the kinds of SPs adopted, and their balance, relationship with each

other etc. Their range is wide, involving plans concerning occupation, life-style, leisure activities, civic obligations and so on. Flexibility would seem to be of the essence here. For example, occupational opportunities are notoriously unstable at the moment - and in relation to many decisions, a prudent person is likely to frame a general plan of a hypothetical sort; if x occurs, then y etc. This has a bearing on the issue raised earlier: What is to be the principle of unity of a life-plan, granted so much flexibility? What is to stop a given plan from losing its planfulness altogether? It would seem that these 'principles of unity' are supplied by APs rather than by SPs.

This preliminary examination of the nature of a 'life-plan' has significance for our subsequent discussion.

It is appropriate to turn now to the crucial question - 'What is involved in the formation of a life-plan?'. This will enable the educational questions that are our concern to be brought into sharper focus.

(5)   The Need for a Plurality of Starting Points

A preliminary point to make is that a basic element that one might consider to be part of the activity of persons forming an autonomous life-plan is they are aware of - and give consideration to - a range of *alternative possibilities* for choice for both APs and SPs. This seems a basic requirement too for the underlying notion of rational autonomy. (For the more fundamental point that belief is relative to alternatives see Swinburne R, 1981:Ch1). How could a person who was unaware of the *range of choice* legitimately open to him or her be described as rationally autonomous? But this seemingly basic requirement for autonomous agency has been called into question by D.I. Lloyd as part of his critique discussed in Chapter Six.

Lloyd uses the example of a boy living in a fishing town who becomes strongly attracted to boat-building, the occupation of his ancestors. He successfully resists the attempts of his educators to interest him in other occupations or ways of life and eventually enthusiastically becomes a boat builder himself, with a lack of concern (or even awareness) of other alternatives. Lloyd claims that - ' ... it seems odd for someone to think that this child could not achieve autonomy unless he was first compelled to learn about all those occupations or ways of life.' (Lloyd,D I 1980 - Hereinafter RCC:339)

But it is Lloyd's position here which seems rather odd. One way in which Lloyd supports this position involves a misunderstanding of White. This is where he accuses White of undervaluing working class occupations and values, and espousing an 'intellectual' criterion of worth; of assuming that middle class white collar jobs are superior to working class ones. (RCC:339-340) But this is a

mistake. White is explicitly not favouring any substantive conception of the good life. His stress on reflection and autonomy is merely procedurally necessary to putting the child in a position to make genuinely autonomous choices. Another argument used by Lloyd is that it is difficult to conceive of the boy in the example as having been harmed in any way by his course of action. He is completely satisfied, content, and so on. (RCC:333-334) But even if we interpret 'lack of harm' as 'satisfaction', it is not clear that Lloyd's argument is convincing. For might not the boy have found something *more* satisfying had he taken a serious look at alternative possibilities; even another form of boatbuilding in a slightly different environment? It is hard for Lloyd to sustain his conviction that the boy's unreflectively pursued 'immediate interest' is the one which will bring him *most* satisfaction. (For a discussion of this case see White,J & White,P 1986:157-159).

But, in any case, 'lack of harm' cannot be straightforwardly equated here with 'satisfaction'. From the liberal point of view, 'wants' cannot be straightforwardly assimilated to 'real interests'. Personal autonomy is a crucial value, as we saw earlier in relation to Steven Lukes' arguments. (Lukes,S 1974:23-24) Lloyd does not address any arguments of this kind - and nor does he acknowledge the importance of autonomy in the development of personhood.

It is also difficult to see how Lloyd equates 'being satisfied/happy/fulfilled etc' with being *autonomous.* The boy in the example may well be *satisfied* and so on, but why does Lloyd claim that he is autonomous? Surely a minimal condition of a person's being autonomous is that they have a developed capacity for choice; for discrimination between alternatives - and a disposition to use and act upon that capacity. It seems as though Lloyd is talking in his argument not of autonomy but of a concept such as that of 'enmeshment', where the emphasis is mot upon independent thinking but on notions such as 'adjustment'. Lloyd's 'fishing' case is better seen as a challenge to the unrestricted conception of the nature and value of autonomy, rather than as an example of a form of autonomy itself.

It does seem, then, that the formation of an autonomous life-plan involves in some way a process of *choice between alternatives.* Far from being a heavily rationalist account of the matter, breadth of choice is stressed also in existentialist inspired accounts of 'authentic living'. Thus, David Cooper, in 'Authenticity and Learning' brings out Heidegger's insistence that an authentic person is one who lives - ' ... in full awareness of the possibilities of action, belief and purpose that are in fact open to him.' (Cooper,D E 1983:19) (Although such accounts do not stress 'planning' in 'authentic living', their key notion of 'authenticity' is sufficiently similar to that of autonomy for their stress on breadth of choice to be felt by proponents of autonomous life-planning).

(For an interesting discussion of whether in general it can be argued that more choice is better than less, see Dworkin,G 1988:Ch5).

However, if this is conceded, there still remain problems about how these plans are formed by a person, and here some of the concerns expressed by Lloyd earlier come into focus.

(a)   Criteria for choice

If *choice between alternatives* is seen as central to the formation of an autonomous life-plan, what criteria is the child to use in constructing his or her plan? White acknowledges the difficulties here when he writes, concerning the product of his proposed form of education:

> ..*Innumerable doors have been opened for him; but what tells him which ones to go through? Is he to tot up anticipated units of satisfaction from different routes he might take and go for the one which gives him most? If not, which criteria does he use? Does he just 'plump' for a specific way of life with such-and-such constituent ingredients? There is nothing in the theory which gives us a lead.*

> (White,J 1982:41)

White's solution to this problem, in 'The aims of education re-stated', is to enrich the theory by locating it in the context of a fuller understanding (in the light of the work of Mary Midgley) of the 'natural' character of many of our basic desires and wants. When choice is set in this context, White argues, it is

> ...*not at all a matter of sticking a pin in a list of possible satisfactions. One chooses against a background of wants which one already has, the most basic of which are part of one's natural constitution and inalienable.*

> (White,J 1982:52)

For White, then, the process of forming a life-plan is one of consulting desires; not in any crude way, of course:- White makes a thoroughgoing and comprehensive form of *reflection* an essential part of the process; reflection which is informed by a wide range of cultural resources - and, in particular, by a systematic exposure to children of the range of choices open to them. Nevertheless, the reference to *desires* as the final criterion of choice comes through clearly. (I shall leave to one side the argument White uses to incorporate 'living a life of moral virtue' as a master-aim of each individual's life-plan). Concerning the formation of a life-plan, White writes

I can only think this through in the full knowledge of what kind of creature I am and what
sacrifices I would be making in other parts of my nature if I adopted a particular course of
action.

(White,J 1982:52)

- and, referring to the process of choosing itself, he claims that it involves

...weighing relative importances, preserving a balance between different satisfactions so
that natural needs - for sociability, security, honour etc. - are not thwarted.

(White,J 1982:52)

There is a range of difficulties associated with this account by White of what is involved in the choice of a life-plan.

(i) It assumes that one's wants and desires are *given* - and therefore available for straightforward consultation - in a much stronger sense than they in fact are. Midgley is surely correct in claiming that we do not choose our ways of life by making and studying a list of possibilities, and doing an impartial cost-benefit analysis of their likely effects. (Midgley,M 1980:120) Our structure of instincts, and our natural feelings and tastes, do indeed constitute central reference points. For Midgley

...our basic repertoire of wants is given. We are not free to create or annihilate wants,
either by private invention or by culture. Inventions and cultures group, reflect, guide,
channel, and develop wants; they do not actually produce them.

(Midgley,M 1980:182)

Therefore - 'The choice we have is a choice between better and worse ways of expressing them. There is no such choice as dropping them altogether.' (Midgley,M 1980:76) They therefore offer substantial guidance to a person seeking the formation of a 'life-plan'. (Although Midgley says little about 'life-planning', it seems likely that she would describe its task as similar to the one she assigns to moral philosophy; one of - ' ... attempting to understand, clarify, relate, and harmonize so far as possible the claims arising from the different sides of our nature.' (Midgley,M 1980:169)).

Whilst there is much that is persuasive in Midgley's and White's account, there are central difficulties in this line of argument. One potential source of difficulty is anticipated by both of them. This is that wants are significantly shaped by culture - so that it would be naive to imagine that they

are simply 'given'. Neither White nor Midgley deny this (Midgley in particular stressing the indispensable significance of culture) although they claim that each culturally shaped want is attached in some sense to a deeper inalienable 'natural' want. White can easily cope with this difficulty for his view by insisting that the process of 'reflection' engaged in by an individual encompass these matters. So, in forming a life-plan, individuals must ask themselves questions such as: - 'What are my real - as distinct from culturally manipulated - wants?' Indeed White makes provision for just this kind of 'deep' reflection in his theory. (White,J 1982:54)

The more difficult questions concern two issues: (a) What is involved in shaping the wants into the 'system', 'scheme of priorities' etc. upon which both White and Midgley place so much emphasis? As we saw earlier, they both explicitly insist on the role of *thought* in this process. Midgley rejects, for example, the suggestion that moral conflicts can be solved - ' ... by the pulling and hauling of mere unordered feeling'. (Midgley,M 1980:184) What is needed is a thoughtful process of - ' ... painfully and methodically searching for an order that will make the scene more intelligible.' (Midgley,M 1980:184) But is their account of this process as the weighing and balancing of (largely) given desires a convincing one when applied to the basic shaping of a life-plan? We will take up this issue below. (b) Do White and Midgley pay sufficient attention to developmental aspects of the so-called 'givenness' of desires? That is, do they sufficiently allow for the way in which architectonic principles of the sort outlined earlier shape, determine and transform the subordinate elements in life-plans (and also the wants and desires from which they arise?) The consequence of this is that, at any given moment, the person's 'wants' are not available for 'neutral' consultation.

(ii) Both Midgley and White, as we have seen, favour *consultation of desires* as the criterion for determining a 'life-plan'. Two central notions employed in this position to specify the criteria used to determine the plan are *balance/proportion* and *importance* of desires. I shall look at each of these in turn:

By balance and proportion, Midgley does not mean anything unduly limited, conventional or cautious but a matter of - ' ... attaining one's full growth.' (Midgley,M 1980:192) Exactly what this involves seems unclear on Midgley's account, although she seems to have in mind something like Aristotle's doctrine of virtue as a mean. Part of her view also seems to be that no one part of our nature should be neglected, or be allowed undue prominence. Interestingly, she holds that the notion of balance/proportion is compatible with a life devoted to some overriding aim. Thus she claims that a monk is one who satisfies the balance/proportion criterion since he is not one who suppresses aspects

of the range of his human faculties, but one who expresses these in distinct ways. Thus Midgley writes that such a man

> *...does not totally reject love ... He concentrates with peculiar intensity on the love of*
> *God and the general love of mankind as his creatures. He does not reject freedom either; it*
> *is to avoid servitude to the World, the Flesh, and the Devil that he accepts the obedience*
> *of the cloister.*

<div align="right">(Midgley,M 1980:192-193)</div>

This is an interesting case, because it illustrates how uninformative an appeal to the notion of balance/proportion can be in the process of 'life-planning'. For what constitutes an *expression* of balance/proportion seems dependent on the specific character of the life-plan adopted; and, in particular, on the 'architectonic principles' articulating that plan. From the point of view of the hedonist, for example, the life of the monk is both unbalanced and disproportionate.

In our terminology, the monk is a man who has adopted a life-plan articulated by an AP2. But what kinds of consideration would lead him to take up or adopt one AP2 rather than another? Quite apart from the fact that matters of *truth* rather than (simply) desire are involved here, the notion of balance/proportion seems of little value or help in the choice, since what is *meant* by the notion cannot be given clear sense (at least in practical terms) independent of a particular 'architectonic principle'.

Might the choice of APs be aided then, by appealing to the criterion of the *importance* of desires?

Midgley outlines the principle of importance as follows

> *Calling something important means that it concerns us deeply, that it means or*
> *imports something essential to us, is linked with a central part of our nature. So to*
> *decide which thing is more important, we have to weigh the facts about that nature and*
> *look for its central needs.*

<div align="right">(Midgley,M 1980:193 Emphasis in original)</div>

In the event of conflict between important desires of this kind, we have to resolve it by - ' ... deciding which ... strikes nearer the core of our being.' (Midgley,M 1980:193)

It is not difficult to see the complexities which arise in relation to the notion of 'nearness to the core of our being', and the suggestion that it is any more independent of a particular 'architectonic principle' than the notion of balance and proportion.

What follows from these difficulties concerning the specification of criteria for choice? These difficulties do, I think, reinforce worries about children experiencing the kind of disorientation and lack of direction referred to in Chapters Seven and Eight when exposed to the kind of educational experience concerning religion and overall views of life more generally, that might be offered in the common school. At the very least, it tells against the claim that there is one significantly neutral context, replete with clear procedural criteria, from which the process of life-planning can proceed. Given complexity and disagreement about the criteria to be used in the making of choices, the onus lies on proponents of such a context to justify their claim.

The criteria for choice housed within particular, substantial, traditions are themselves, of course, controversial. But why should not the process of life-planning *begin* from such a tradition, provided that a critical dimension is preserved, which extends ultimately to an overall evaluation of the tradition itself?

(b) The position of the chooser

There can be no easy identification of a neutral position, or even a significantly neutral position, from which the task of choosing (and forming a life-plan more generally) can proceed.

This can be further illustrated by looking at the four features of AP2s identified in the last section: (i), their lack of openness to 'external' understanding and inspection, reinforces the point that a degree of participation in a way of life is necessary for the ability to grasp significantly what is involved in it and for being able to evaluate it. (ii), the complex and tacit relationship between such an overriding principle and subordinate principles which it generates lends further support to this point about involvement. (iii), the fact that AP2s cannot readily be combined with each other in their architectonic role and (iv), the fact that they do not easily admit of flexibility because of their intimate connection with a person's character and self-understanding, resonate with Lloyd's point that children cannot 'stand back and choose' in a neutral way from among alternatives, because the starting point from which they begin their search is already in place and exerts an influence, and because experiences *change* people in significant ways.

All these considerations do not, of course, licence without qualification any form of religious upbringing and education. But perhaps they do emphasise the point that no one starting point is to be favoured. There are worries about children being unduly 'trapped' in a particular AP2. But these must be balanced against other dangers, which include the possibility that the child might be 'trapped' in an alternative view of one sort or another. Provided that a significant liberal impulse is preserved, parents can choose that their children be given a determinate starting point in upbringing, education and

schooling that offers them a particular initial context from which their life- planning can proceed. Again, the onus lies with opponents of this view to provide an account of an 'ideal position of choice' which would be preferable to the plurality of starting points which I advocate.

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter One

(1) On the wide ranging matters relating to personal and moral autonomy, liberalism and liberal values see, for example, Ackerman,B A 1980; Almond,B 1987:esp Ch4,10,11; 1990; Chamberlin,R 1989; Cohen,B 1981; Cranston,M 1967; Crittenden,B 1982:esp Ch2,3,4; 1988:Ch6,7; Dearden,R F 1975; Dworkin,G 1988:esp Pt1; Enslin,P 1985; Feinberg,J 1980a; Gaus,G 1983; Goodin,R E & Reeve,A 1989a; Gutmann,A 1980;1987; Hampshire,S 1983; Harris,J 1982b; Hauerwas,S 1983:esp Ch1; Haworth,L 1986; Haydon,G 1986;1988; Hayek,F A 1973; Hobhouse,L T 1964; Horton,J & Mendus,S 1985; Kekes,J 1988;1989; Kerr,F 1986; Kymlicka,W 1989; Lee,S 1986; Lindley,R 1986; Lukes,S 1973;1974; MacIntyre,A 1981;1988;1990; Macpherson,C B 1977; Manning,D J 1976; Mendus,S 1989; Mill,J S 1974; Murdoch,I 1970; Nagel,T 1979:Ch9;1986; Nozick,R 1974; Nussbaum,M 1986; O'Neill,O 1989a; Oakeshott,M 1962; Phillips Griffiths,A 1983; Rawls,J 1973; Raz,J 1986; Rorty,R 1989; Sandel,M J 1982; Schauer,F 1982; Scruton,R 1980a;1980b;1983; Strike,K 1989:esp Pts1,2;1990; Taylor,C 1989; Walzer,M 1983; Ward,K 1983; Weil,S 1952; White,J 1973;1982;1989a;1989b; Williams,B 1985; Wolff,R P 1977; Wollheim,R 1984; Young,H 1988; Young,R 1986.

(2) For an account of parents' educational rights and duties from this perspective see White, P. (1983:esp Ch5).

(3) For an interesting discussion of Lukes' argument see White,P. (1983:19-30).

(4) See Matthews, G B (1980a) for an account of the philosophical significance of the questioning of young children and the importance of adult encouragement of this embryonic philosophising for the enhancement of the spirit of independent intellectual enquiry in children.

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter Two

(1) Two fairly straightforward clarifications emerge from Gardner's critique. (Gardner,P 1988 - Hereinafter G) First, he calls into question a 'tendency' in discussions of autonomy (including mine) to regard - or perhaps, more accurately, to give the impression of regarding - beliefs as things we can (simply) choose. Gardner is rightly wary of such tendencies. The role of 'choice' in the context of belief has to be sensitively outlined so that the impression is not given that the person is engaging in wholly capricious acts of the will in relation to their beliefs, unconstrained by the demands of rational assessment, truth etc.

Gardner offers the following account of the (normal) role of choice in the realm of belief - 'What we clearly can choose to do is to assess, examine, ponder, reflect and so on. We may not choose the outcome of our deliberations and, hence, we may not choose what we come to believe, but we can choose to deliberate'. (G:90) There is perhaps more to be said here about the role of choice and the will in relation both to belief in general (See, for example, Dearden,R F 1984:Ch8; Glover,J 1988:Ch15; Helm,P 1989; Williams,B 1973:Ch9) and to religious belief in particular. (See, for example, Ferreira,M J 1980; McPherson,T 1989; Pojman,L P 1986; Stump,E 1989). But without entering into a detailed discussion of such matters, I agree that, unless important qualifications are supplied, 'choice' is a potentially misleading way of referring to the kind of judgement about belief that is the outcome of the process of reflection. The terms favoured by Gardner, 'reflection about' and 'assessment of' beliefs, rather than 'choice' of them, cover what is in fact implicit throughout my argument.

The second issue raised by Gardner which can be straightforwardly clarified is the relationship between being autonomous and being informed. Gardner points out that the autonomous person need not, simply in virtue of being autonomous, be in possession of (well grounded) information or knowledge about 'alternatives', 'opportunities' of various kinds, or be capable of rational decisions in relation to them. For Gardner, 'well-informed and autonomous' is not a tautology, and he seeks to underline this by favouring the conjunction of the terms 'autonomy' and 'well-informed'. (G:90-91) This point refers to assumptions within my position. Autonomy *simpliciter* does not imply the possession by the person of a rationally-grounded perspective on objects of choice, in contrast to 'rational autonomy', the notion presupposed in my view and seen in the stress that I lay on reasoning etc. throughout.

(2) On this point, Callan argues that I base an argument which is 'clearly fallacious' on the claim that religious understanding may be impossible without religious practice. (C:118) But the claim I made is the more modest one that practice may be *significant* or *important* in relation to religious understanding. (McLaughlin,T H 1984:82) It is not clear that the argument I develop embodying this claim involves a fallacy.

Nor is it clear, as Callan alleges, that a second argument I develop is fallacious. This argument arose from the observation that it is not possible to separate out moral from religious discourse and values in a clear way. From this Callan seems to interpret me as arguing the very general thesis that the acquisition of an acceptable set of moral values requires religious faith, and that the religious elements of a child's primary culture can therefore take on in an unproblematic way the same status as the moral elements. I was, however, seeking to make the more limited claim that parents whose substantive moral commitments are closely related to religious considerations may find it impossible to provide the basic framework of moral values which are essential to their child's primary culture without transmitting to the child the religious context in which their values are 'housed'. This point I made against the suggestion that religious elements be removed completely from upbringing, and by way of illustration of the complexities to which such a demand would give rise (see footnote (7) below).

(3) One such complexity is that it is an integral part of many religions that children be brought up within the particular faith. So it is not possible in the way Callan assumes to separate out easily 'freedom to practise one's own religion' from 'prohibition from bringing one's own children up with substantive beliefs'. Freedom of religion is a more complex notion than Callan admits. It is true that, given liberal assumptions, parental freedom of religion cannot be *unlimited*. But surely it is possible, as I suggest, to achieve a more satisfactory balance between the rights and needs of parents and those of children by acknowledging that parents have the right to provide their children with an initial substantive religious culture - but not in a way which violates the development of autonomy.

(4) Gardner seems to agree with my evaluation of Callan's notion of 'weak' religious upbringing. He claims that it is a solution to the problem of the reconciliation of liberal values and religious upbringing which might be advanced by those - '...who probably know little about children, families or religions'. (Gardner,P 1990:5-6) However, Gardner's major objection to the notion of 'weak' religious upbringing is rather different from mine in that it arises from the observation that, in practice, unless the parents avoid telling their children what their religious beliefs are, conceal (through lying?) their religious practices and avoid their religious commitments having any bearing on family life, 'weak' religious upbringing is going to be indistinguishable from its 'strong' counterpart. This is because - '...children tend to believe what their parents do...'. (Gardner,P 1990:5) Gardner does not offer a solution to the dilemma about religious upbringing confronting liberal parents who are themselves religious.

(5) For Gardner - '...indoctrination involves the production of a certain effect,...a reluctance to change even in the face of arguments and reasons to which no response is forthcoming or in the face of arguments and evidence which, to an outsider, may seem overwhelming'. (G:94) It is important, however, to note that it is an attitude towards (the possibility of) change of belief, rather than change itself, which characterises the indoctrinated state of mind. Gardner is aware of this, and concedes, in an earlier article on indoctrination to which he makes reference, that - '...adopting a critical attitude to one's...beliefs may lead to, but does not necessitate, rejection. The person who was indoctrinated into Christianity may cease being an indoctrinated person, but still be a Christian. What has changed are not his beliefs, but the way he holds them and his grounds or reasons for accepting them'. (Gardner,P 1982:3) But Gardner's general characterisation of indoctrination in terms of a 'reluctance to change' might, in emphasising the notion of *change* rather than critical evaluation, obscure this point to some extent. In this respect, perhaps Callan's characterisation of the indoctrinated state of mind is preferable to Gardner's.

(6) See Laura,R S & Leahy,M 1989:253-255, who report me as committed to the 'unshakable belief' account of indoctrination.

(7) This can be seen in several ways. For example, in his article 'Faith, Worship and Reason in Religious Upbringing' (Callan,E 1988b - Hereinafter FWR), which will be considered in more detail later, Callan concludes that - '...there can be no painless reconciliation of Athens and Jerusalem, either in the way we conduct our own lives or in the way we rear our children'. (FWR:191) This is because there is a conflict between commitment to the 'virtues of the examined life' (involving the critical/rational principle) and the life of religious faith (especially worship). Callan claims that this arises from the fact that any application of the critical/rational principle is likely, at the very least, to stir serious religious doubts in the person and thus undermine the assured beliefs on which their religious life depends. Yet the conclusion that Callan draws from this for the acceptability of religious upbringing is a more measured one than in his earlier writing. Indeed Callan explicitly acknowledges that a line of reasoning he develops in the article requires a 'more hospitable attitude' to the encouragement of religious faith than liberals such as he have taken in the past. (FWR:192)

This line of reasoning arises from the fact that there are two closely related ideals in educational liberalism: a commitment to the examined life (involving notions such as rational autonomy, criticism etc.) and to the maximisation of choice between possible (worthy) lives. Whilst the two ideals converge in the notion of rational autonomy (which removes obstacles to choice by, for example, removing ignorance), if Callan's arguments about the conflict between the critical/rational principle and religious life are correct then the ideals of educational liberalism themselves come into conflict in this case. Callan outlines the resultant dilemma in this way: - '...if the examined life requires something approaching strict fidelity to the rational-critical principle, coming to live that life would make the option of religious practice virtually ineligible; and where that option does more or less disappear, it is not clear that one enjoys an ampler range of choice than the indoctrinated zealot who cannot seriously consider alternatives to his faith'. (FWR:192)

Callan is unwilling to countenance a liberal response that simply accepts the demise of religion in this situation, since he is uncomfortable with a - '...glib dismissal of a form of life which has been deeply alluring for human beings in almost every culture'. (FWR:192) The passage which contains Callan's outline of the central problem here is interesting in that it seems to accept the force of some of the points in my rejoinder to him. Callan writes - 'The problem seems to be that in order *seriously* to reject, much less accept, the life of faith one needs to examine it from a

perspective other than the disengaged outsider's. One needs to enter, at least imaginatively, into a way of seeing the world where some central beliefs are sustained more by heroic (or foolhardy?) hope than by anything that could properly be described as evidence and argument. Yet this experience presupposes an ability to set aside the rational-critical principle, to regard that, too, as just one possibility among others as one searches to discover the best way to live. If we educate our children in such a way that they never develop that ability, their rejection of religion may indeed be as unfree an act as the acceptance of faith by the indoctrinated zealot'. (FWR:192. Emphasis in original) Callan insists that this does not license 'business as usual' in religious upbringing, since it is still necessary to make the tension between 'the examined life' and faith clear to children. However, it seems to open the possibility for 'strong' (in my sense) - and not merely 'weak' - religious upbringing to be given a foothold. ('Weak' religious upbringing would be insufficient for children to develop a sense for the religious, which Callan now concedes as important).

Callan insists that - 'The experience of examining religious propositions in the often harsh light of reason will sometimes, perhaps commonly, lead to their rejection, but without that experience our children remain ignorant of the reality that confronts them in accepting or rejecting lives grounded on such propositions'(FWR:193), and concludes with the interesting remark: - 'Those whose faith can survive the experience will not be entirely at home in either Athens or Jerusalem, but if there is a faith worth having, they are the ones who have it'. (FWR:193)

Callan's position here differs somewhat from my own in that he tends to overstate the tensions between critical rationality and religious practice. However, in conceding the value of an exposure to religious belief 'from the inside', it represents a considerable shift in his perspective.

Another recent article of Callan's, 'Godless Moral Education and Liberal Tolerance' (Callan,E 1989 - Hereinafter GME) contains elements which can be seen as further evidence of such a shift. Callan here argues against what he calls the 'neutral thesis' concerning moral education. On this influential thesis religious considerations are seen as independent from, and not required by, morality or moral education, the latter being seen as capable of being defensibly conducted in a secular way that is 'neutral' with regard to religion.

In the light of the range of his arguments against this thesis (GME:267-275), Callan concludes that - '...the complete secularisation of moral education would strike at the heart of theistic forms of life'. (Callan,E 1989:275) He concedes that theists are right in seeing their faith as generating distinctive moral values and perspectives in relation to which secularised moral education is not neutral but rather corrosive.

What then is to be done about moral education in the light of this? Callan's own solution to the problem is that secularisation should be 'strictly confined' to - '...that portion of moral education which pertains to the responsibilities of liberal citizenship' (GME:275); there can be 'Godless politico-moral education'. Callan does not give a full account either of the character and defensibility of this notion, or of how the remaining, more directly controversial, aspects of moral education are to be treated. (He notes that his view might give some comfort to supporters of denominational schools, although he is resistant to this - See especially GME:279).

Leaving to one side these issues at this point, however, it is clear that Callan's insistence that the moral and the religious domains are closely intertwined, and that the area of 'neutrality' here is strictly circumscribed, points up how difficult it is defensibly to separate the moral from the religious elements of upbringing. This undermines claims that liberal religious parents can either excise religious elements from their children's upbringing, or give them a 'weak' form of religious upbringing, without loss. (See (iv) at the end of Chapter One for my invocation of the inseparability of moral and religious discourse and values in my original argument).

(8)   See Kenny,A (1983:esp Ch1,2). Kenny writes - '...it may be rational to accept a proposition though it is neither self-evident nor evident to the senses, nor held on the basis of any reasons.' (Kenny,A 1983:15) - '...there are some beliefs which must be basic for everyone. Among my basic beliefs is the belief that other human beings sleep. If this is false then my whole noetic structure collapses...including the whole methodology of distinguishing true from false...Let me try to suppose that no one else has ever slept: that throughout my life anyone who has appeared to me to be sleeping has in fact been awake, and that everyone has been united against me in a gigantic and unanimous hoax. If I could seriously entertain that supposition, what reason would I have to trust anything I have ever been told by others, or to trust the ways I was taught to tell

one thing from another, or the meanings I have been told of the words I use?...Because of this, my belief in a fundamental truth such as this is unshakable ... In the noetic structure of anyone who has reached the use of reason such truths have a role which is incompatible with their resting as conclusions on the basis of evidence which is better known'. (Kenny,A 1983:21-23) See also Wittgenstein L 1969. I have no space here to enter into more detailed discussion of criteria for determining which beliefs should be seen as basic. One issue which arises concerns the question whether a particular *content* of beliefs is to be seen as basic, or merely that *some* beliefs must fulfil the logical role of the basic.

(9) See G:105 footnote 36. On a point of related significance, Gardner also holds that reasoning requires certain habits: See (Gardner,P 1981:72) - 'In the practical sphere, for example, thinking before leaping, considering the consequences, considering whether anyone is likely to be hurt by a proposed course of action, remembering what happened last time and so on have to become second or ten times nature if we are to reason successfully and effectively.'-

(10) On this see, for example, Gardner,P 1981;1983;1984. In Gardner,P 1983:127, there is the admission that - '...valuing freedom is not incompatible with favouring some cases of paternalistic interference'. Gardner concedes that some features of a compulsory curriculum might (under certain conditions) be justified on the grounds of the prevention of harm. Included here is - '...moral education, education about the environment and political education in order to prevent or guard against learners harming others and in an attempt to cultivate learners who will act to prevent harm, just as one might recommend health education to prevent individuals from harming themselves'. (ibid.) Presumably Gardner is not unduly concerned about children developing some persistent beliefs about these matters.

In Gardner,P 1981:69, there is some discussion of the implications of the alleged long-term effects of childhood experiences. Of these, Gardner writes - 'Someone might respond...by saying that we will avoid the undesired long-term consequences if we avoid inculcating habits in the young. But...if early childhood experiences shape the subsequent adult, then the adult will be shaped, in some way or other, whatever we do, and the attempt to inculcate some good habits, while it may not facilitate the achievement of the desired end (autonomy), will, or so it can be argued, enable us to achieve the best of the available alternatives.'

In Gardner,P 1984:77-78, criticisms are made of the notion that teachers (and presumably parents also) can coherently adopt a neutral approach with regard to moral education.

(11) That Gardner is not really concerned with the sort of basic beliefs we have been discussing is seen in his remark that - '...early beliefs may vary from person to person...' (G:95) which could hardly be the case, at least to any great extent, with basic beliefs as I (roughly) characterise them here. His real concern is shown, for example, in his statement that - '...if one wants individuals to take...(a)...reasoned decision about a host of competing views, we should avoid developing in them a commitment to a particular set of those views'. (G:96)

(12) See Gardner,P 1980:164 - '...some form of moral education seems unavoidable in education, although this is not true of religious education; furthermore, although it may be paradoxical to argue against moral education on the basis of problems about establishing what is true, no such paradox arises when we consider similar objections to the teaching of religious beliefs'.- We can assume that what Gardner says here about education he would be willing to apply also to upbringing.

(13) See G:105 footnote 36. Also in Gardner,P 1981:69, he points out that a deterministic perspective on such matters may lead to an end such as 'autonomy' being seen as impossible, regardless of the means used to bring it about. In view of Gardner's commitment to the development of autonomy, we can safely infer that he eschews such a perspective.

(14) On this see, for example, Michael Goulder's contribution to Goulder,M & Hick,J 1983:esp Ch1. Also Kenny,A 1986. It should not, of course, be assumed that a person who has achieved independence of mind about religious issues is necessarily one who has rejected religious faith.

(15) It is clearly important that, in the case of both rejection and criticism of religious faith, the person should not be subject to a residue of negative emotions etc. such as guilt. Several of the features of my concept of religious upbringing are designed to guard against this. I discuss this further in the next chapter.

(16) I do not underestimate the complexities involved in any empirical research into this matter. One of the many complexities here is how empirical research could distinguish between beliefs which persist because of rational assent and those which persist for non-rational reasons.

(17) See, for example, Phillips,D Z 1988a:esp Ch1; Kerr,F 1986.

For criticisms of the Wittgensteinian perspective see, for example, O'Hear,A 1984:Ch 1; Mackie,J L 1982:Ch 12.

(18) See, for example, G:93-94;96-98;101-103;104 footnote 26;105 footnote 47.

(19) The qualification 'to an appropriate degree' is important here because there are obvious difficulties in the suggestion that children must be aware of the full meaning and implication of their beliefs and the conflicts between them. This is intensified when it is noted that what is at issue are (complex) *systems* of belief. On the notion of systems of belief see, for example, Mitchell,B 1973:135 - 'It is characteristic of any such system that it is highly ramified, and that it is capable of further articulation and development. Moreover, no single individual can comprehend all of it, even to the extent that it has at present been worked out; no one can fully apprehend its intellectual structure or completely appropriate the attitudes that go with it. There are, therefore, great variations in the way individuals are related to it. Some have a more synoptic view than others; some have penetrated more deeply than others; there are differences of interpretation and emphasis as well as varying degrees of practical involvement'. See also Glover,J 1988:Ch.15.

(20) My use of the term 'settled' here is not intended to imply any inappropriate degree of rigidity or fixedness, but rather a degree of relative stability following reflection etc.

(21) Anthony Kenny defines 'noetic structure' as - '...the assemblage of beliefs a person holds, together with the various logical and epistemic relations that hold among them...' Kenny,A 1983:12.

(22) There are a number of other problems facing Gardner's thesis about Multi-Cultural Education. Gardner emphasises the notion of truth. But many matters with which multi-cultural education deals do not concern matters of truth at all (at least in any straightforward way) e.g. questions of custom such as dress, diet etc. To present these as involving matters of truth or falsity is to invite misunderstanding and offence. Further, there are problems of a moral sort here. In Gardner,P 1989a, Gardner claims that thinking that other people are mistaken is compatible with respecting their beliefs. (See also G:104 footnote 23). It is not easy to see quite why, and in what sense, a person should respect a belief they regard as false. And this has implications for the broader question of respect for the persons holding the beliefs.

(23) See also, Robinson,W D 1983, and Kenny,A 1983:6.

Kenny writes - 'It is important for human beings to strike the right balance in belief. One can err by believing too much or believing too little. The person who believes too much suffers from the vice of credulity or gullibility; the person who believes too little is guilty of excessive incredulity or scepticism. If you believe too much, your mind will be cluttered with many falsehoods; if you believe too little you will be deprived of much valuable information...The rational human being is the person who possesses the virtue that is in contrast with each of the opposing vices of credulity and skepticism'. (ibid:5. See also 43-44)

(24) On the role of doubt in the religious domain see, for example, Ferreira, J M 1980.

(25) Gardner here claims that the notion of degrees of indoctrination is one of the most neglected aspects of the topic. Gardner rejects as unacceptable the claim that all indoctrinated beliefs must be equally deeply and resolutely held. There are degrees, for example, of - '..reluctance or preparedness to question and reject beliefs..'. Gardner,P 1982:2. This would seem to apply to beliefs in general, and not merely to indoctrinated ones.

(26) On this issue, Trigg writes - 'I can remain committed while my beliefs are being challenged. If my doubt reaches the point where I lose my beliefs, it is true that I must lose my faith...(but)...faith does not imply certainty. It is much more a determination to remain committed in spite of apparent difficulties. Although it must involve the belief that the

difficulties do not provide genuine obstacles to faith, if the faith is to be rational, faith can exist in spite of seeming facts as well as because of them. There is no contradiction in my facing up to the possibility that my beliefs may be mistaken, while in the meantime holding firmly to my faith. I can be totally committed and at the same time admit that I might be wrong. I am however basing my life on the assumption that I am not.' Trigg R 1973:55.

(27) The precise timing of this cannot of course be specified in detail in the abstract, but is rather a matter for sensitive judgement by the parents.

(28) Not merely instrumentally.

(29) For an outline of the claim that 'critical openness' is compatible with, and demanded by, (certain forms of) Christian faith, see British Council of Churches consultative group on ministry among children 1984. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

(30) Gardner also makes the claim that it would be 'irrational' - '...for parents who accept that early beliefs tend to persist and who agree that a religious upbringing is likely to predetermine subsequent beliefs to be committed to McLaughlin's approach and his goal...(I)t is irrational for people to aim for a goal while pursuing a course of action which they believe may well prevent their achieving that goal...'. (G:96) The second part of this quotation is doubtless true, but the first part does not accurately represent the beliefs held by the parents in my argument about the effects of a religious upbringing of the sort I discuss. It does not seem to me, therefore, that in giving their children such an upbringing, they are being irrational.

(31) Presumably, 'practice' here is to be construed richly, as involving more than, say, (mere) conformity to the requirements of religious ritual and observance.

(32) For criticisms of Gardner's argument which overlap to some extent with my own criticisms, and which were published after this chapter was written, see Laura,R S & Leahy,M 1989.

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter Three

(1) See, for example, his paper - 'Reason and Habit : the Paradox of Moral Education' (Peters,R S 1974:Ch13) where he claims that - 'I have only tried to explain and to resolve the theoretical paradox of moral education, not to develop a positive theory of rational child-rearing'. (ibid:279) For critical discussion of Peters' account of this paradox see, for example Gardner,P 1981;1985.

(2) On this matter, see, for example, John Hull's paper 'Christian Nurture and Critical Openness'. (Hull,J M 1984:Ch18) Hull notes that what are at stake here are questions of 'conceptual coherence' within particular religious belief structures. Thus, for him, a central question is - '...whether critical openness can be accommodated within the framework of Christian belief'. (ibid:212)

(3) See, for example, James Joyce 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'; Antonia White 'Frost in May'; Edmund Gosse 'Father and Son'; Anthony Burgess 'Little Wilson and Big God'; Bill Naughton 'On the pig's back' and 'Saintly Billy: a Catholic boyhood'; Carol Clewlow 'Keeping the faith'; Jeanette Winterson 'Oranges are not the only fruit'; John Walsh 'Growing up Catholic'. See also C.D. Broad's account of the effects of the religious upbringing of Axel Hagerstrom. (Reference in Nielsen,K 1982:209 footnote36)

(4) For a similar perspective, see Anthony Flew's paper 'Against Indoctrination'. (Flew,A 1968) Commenting on the epistemological status of religious beliefs when compared to, say, astronomy, Flew writes - '...while we need have little fear that if we introduce a mature adult to astronomy he will reject the conclusions of the astronomers as unwarranted or false, everyone - and most especially the indoctrinator - is very well aware that with religion unless you catch them young you are nowadays most unlikely to catch them at all. Notoriously, it is the exception rather than the rule for adults who without benefit of earlier teaching as juveniles set themselves to examine the evidence for (any set of) religious doctrines to become persuaded that the evidence really is adequate to justify belief; and even of those few who do thus as adults 'see the light', most seem to be converted at periods when there is good independent reason to think that the balance of their minds is disturbed'. (ibid:90-91)

See also Robinson,R 1964:section 2.8 for the claim that religion and reason are significantly opposed to each other. e.g. - 'Christians do not take the attitude of reasonable enquiry towards the proposition that there is a god. If they engage in discussion on the matter at all, they seek more often to intimidate their opponent by expressing shock or disgust at his opinion, or disapproval of his character'. (ibid:115)...- 'The main irrationality of religion is preferring comfort to truth; and it is this that makes religion a very harmful thing on balance, a sort of endemic disease that has so far prevented human life from reaching its full stature... ..The religious impulse encourages all the fallacies'. (ibid:117)

(5) Gardner also alludes, though only very briefly ,to a similar kind of difficulty in noting that (religious) faith-states involve much that cannot be the result of choice and decision of an autonomous, dry and analytical kind. (Gardner, P 1990:18-19) He writes of these states - '...I cannot decide autonomously or otherwise to be excited or feel zestful or enchanted. Equally, I cannot autonomously decide to love a certain being or to feel loved or to experience the humility and awe of being part of a divine plan...This is why those who have experienced faith-states may well argue...(that)...talk of autonomy in the realm of religion is at best inappropriate'. (Gardner, P 1990:19) However, Gardner does not develop this point.

(6) Callan holds that even if a compelling rational case could be made for a set of religious beliefs, worship excludes these beliefs being held in strict conformity to the rational-critical principle, because - '...the trust we should display towards... god presupposes a certain willingness to depart from the rational-critical principle in some beliefs we maintain about him, even when evidence and argument is strong enough to make any departure epistemologically unnecessary'. (FWR:185)

(7) Callan considers the possibility that a conception of religious faith as trust can alleviate the conflicts and difficulties he has pointed to, but denies this because of the irreducible element of religious belief involved. Further, the very concept of trust itself, in all contexts, goes beyond the critical-rational principle. (FWR:189-191)

(8)   Callan does refer to Anthony Kenny's claim that it is not irrational for an agnostic to pray. However, Callan denies that such actions constitute 'full blown worship', since the crucial notion of the glorification of God, which requires a firm belief in God, is absent. (FWR:188)

(9)   For further discussion of matters of compatibility see Gardner,P1990:Sec 3. One of the assumptions (in its expanded form) I supplied to my argument is 'that no one set of religious beliefs can be *shown* to be objectively true, but that reasoning, evaluation, truth and therefore rationally autonomous faith are not in principle impossible in the sphere of religion'. (See Chapter One) Gardner interprets me as arguing that it is *impossible* to achieve knowledge or certainty on religious matters. (Gardner,P 1990:11-12) I am not however necessarily committed to this view, as distinct from the view that *at present* such claims to knowledge and certainty are unwarranted. Contra Gardner, I would therefore regard claims that decisive arguments may be possible in the domain of religion as compatible with my position.

Gardner asks that if the verdict on thousands of years of study and research into the religious domain is that, at the moment, no claims to knowledge and certainty are warranted, then - '...shouldn't liberals reason inductively and proceed to discourage the kind of epistemic optimism which is fuelled by the liberal ideal?' (Gardner,P 1990:29) It is not clear why Gardner should single out religion for attention here, given the range of other domains (such as aesthetics and ethics but not excluding Science) in which claims to knowledge and certainty are still disputed.

In his broader discussion of the question of compatibility, Gardner interestingly rules out not just religious positions which are autonomy-incompatible but also those which - '..even if autonomy-compatible, are so autonomy-minimising, that they conflict, if not with the letter, at least with the underlying values, of the ideal'. (Gardner,P 1990:13. See also 15-18). Gardner seems to see any decision (even if autonomous) which restricts the scope for the subsequent exercise of private judgement as autonomy-minimising. An example he gives of such a decision is accepting a certain text or person as authoritative. However, granted that the person keeps their decision under critical review it is not clear that it is necessarily one which is autonomy-minimising.

(10)   For general comments on nurture for independence see, for example, BCC:paras 280-285.

(11)   See also BCC:Ch13 esp paras 266-280;286-287 and Bailey,C 1984:Ch8 esp 159.

(12)   On the categorisation of elements of religious upbringing compare BCC:para 71.

(13)   For a view of a religious way of life, and associated upbringing, which emphasises practice rather than belief, see Rutter,M 1983:esp 41-43;77-85. Rutter does not hold, however, that a concern for beliefs can be jettisoned in a Quaker upbringing. (See p.85 for concern that such an upbringing might falsely give the impression that Quaker values are independent of religious beliefs).

(14)   For an account of the introduction of children (a) to prayer, see Bullen,A 1972:Ch.5; Brusselmans,C 1977:Ch.7; (b) to liturgical worship see Bullen,A 1972:Ch.11; Brusselmans,C 1977:Ch.9; (c) to the sacraments see Bullen,A 1972:Ch.15,16.

(15)   See, for example, Ainsworth,D n.d. and Watson, B 1987:Ch12.

On the notion of 'religious development' see Brusselmans,C 1980:Pt11; Oser,F 1980; McDonagh,E 1980; Kohlberg,L 1981:espCh9; Power,F C and Kohlberg,L 1980; O'Donohoe,J A 1980; Kegan,R G 1980; Hauerwas,S 1980. For an interesting discussion of 'spiritual development' see Bailey,C 1982. See also Straughan,R 1989b.
For criticism of the notion of 'religious development' see Diorio,J 1978. Compare Fowler,J 1981.

(16)   For examples of the kinds of questions asked by children see Brusselmans,C 1977:Appendix II.

(17)   See also BCC:para 196.

(18)   Matthews,G B 1980a:Ch 7. On a different but related point see Eaton,T 1987 for reports that some students found that studying Philosophy at 'A' level led to disorientation and cynicism rather than clarification of their thoughts.

(19) Of interest here is Gareth Matthews paper 'Ritual and the Religious Feelings'. (Matthews,G 1980b)

(20) This is not therefore a matter of compromise on the part of the parents in my argument. The following remarks by Brenda Almond about compromise on religious matters do not therefore apply to them. - '...how...can anyone opt for compromise where the nearest, most sensitive and most important aspects of life - particularly those encompassed by the religious and the moral - are concerned? To be.a compromising Christian is hardly to be Christian at all; while to be a Moslem or a Jew who compromises with regard to the rituals and practices deemed most important for a Moslem or Jew is to be, at least, neglectful in terms of those religions'. (Almond,B 1988a:102)

(21) For a brief recent overall assessment of Cupitt's work see Cowdell,S 1988.

(22) Underlying such strategies is an assumption that a positive concept of 'God' is being conveyed to the child. The question of how a child comes to have an understanding of God is a complex one. For a psychological perspective on the significance of parental figures in the child's formation of the concept of God (and in the religious development of the child more generally) see Vergote,A 1980. For a further outline of the psychological foundations for belief in God see Rizzuto,A M 1980. On helping young children towards some understanding of the Christian concept of God see Watson, B 1987:164-169.

See also Paul Hirst's neglected paper 'Talking about God'. (Hirst,P H 1963) Hirst asks - 'What...do we say to a young child who asks the apparently simple question 'Where is God?' This question is so logically complex that it engenders paradox upon paradox. How do we steer children through the intricacies of the fact that God is not only not 'here' and not 'there' but he is not 'nowhere' either? Or what of the fact that he both is and is not 'object-like'? (ibid:10) In answer to this Hirst suggests that children come to understand such matters - '...in learning the proper use of religious language, within the context of their experience and not by being taught them directly through logical considerations'. (ibid:11)

(23) For a perspective which confirms my line of argument in general against Callan see BCC:para 48.

(24) For an interesting account of changes in a particular religious community which have considerable significance for this issue see Archer,A 1986.

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter Four

1) For a claim that the language of children's *rights* is unhelpful in thinking about ethical issues in children's lives see Onora O'Neill's paper 'Children's rights and children's lives'. (O'Neill,O 1989b)

(2) To illustrate something of this complexity, let us imagine that our Asian parents are in fact committed to the value of moral autonomy for their daughter. Operating *within* Ackerman's basic framework of reference, there are at least two kinds of ground on which they could continue to advance their claim to control their daughter's secondary education.

First, they might call into question the adequacy of the notion of liberal education, arguing that under the guise of presenting a range of life-ideals to children, there is in such an education an unintentional transmission of western, secular, capitalist values which effectively undermines the values of their own culture and fails to present them adequately for consideration and appraisal by children. Note that the claim in this example is consistent with valuing the principle of pupils coming to their own autonomous decision about life ideals. It is that a liberal education falls short of the principle by failing to present alternatives fairly and fully. In its strong form, the claim asserts that this is a *necessary* feature of liberal education. (See, for example, Theissen,E J 1982). In the light of such an argument, our Asian parents might claim that they have the right to expose their daughter to an educational experience which conveys more adequately the values and beliefs of her own culture, and which constitutes a firm basis from which she can be encouraged to look at alternatives and autonomously to develop her life-ideals; a basis which ensures a fair exposure to an alternative to western culture. The parents will be quite happy to acknowledge that the 'guidance' they give to their daughter must aim at her eventual autonomy, but will claim that what is required in terms of formal education for the achievement of this goal has been seriously misunderstood. They must, they claim, retain the right to choose a form of education which aims at autonomy via immersion in the child's culture; not, of course, an education which indoctrinates the child in that culture, but one which approaches the development of her autonomy *from* that basis.

A weaker form of this claim represents the point not as a *necessary* feature of liberal education, but as one arising from the contingent features of 'common' schools which actually exist at present. (Such a position seems to be the ground on which the 'minority report' of the Swann Committee objects to the stance of the main report on the undesirability of religious schools. Swann Report, 1985:515. See also McLaughlin T H, 1987 and Chapter Seven of this thesis).

Second, the parents might on the basis of their intimate knowledge of their child invoke considerations relating to her current stage of development and readiness for exposure to 'extra-family' influences. Thus they might argue that their daughter is too immature / impressionable / vulnerable *at the present time* to have her fundamental existing beliefs challenged and perhaps destroyed. Once again, the parents here acknowledge the principle that, ultimately, the autonomy of their daughter is what must be aimed at. Their point, is that *at the moment* their *particular* child requires a rather specific educational environment. This point, it is claimed, is one which follows on directly from the right of parents to provide 'guidance' in Ackerman's sense. For how can parents guide their child to autonomy when her school experience is completely disorientating her?

(3) On rights in general see, for example, Feinberg,J 1980a; Finnis,J 1980; Fried,C 1978; Gaus,G 1983; Gutmann,A 1980; Haydon,G 1987d; Hobhouse,L T 1964; Kamenka,E & Erh-Soon Tay,A (Eds) 1978; Kymlicka,W 1989; Lee,S 1986; Lomasky,L 1987; MacIntyre,A 1981:esp Ch6; Melden,A 1977; Meyers,D 1985; Paul,E F *et al* (Eds) 1984; Rawls,J 1973; Raz,J 1986; Sandel,M 1982; Schauer,F 1982; Sumner,L W 1987; Swidler,L 1990; Waldron,J (Ed) 1984; Walzer,M 1983; Weil,S 1952; White,A 1984; Wringe,C 1981.

On rights in relation to children and parents see, for example, Aiken,W & LaFollette,H (Eds) 1980; Almond,B 1988a; Bigelow,J *et al* 1988; Bishop,S 1980; Bridges,D 1984; Callan,E 1985a;1985b; Chamberlin,R 1989; Cohen,B 1981; Coons,J E & Sugarman,S D 1978; Crittenden,B 1988; Feinberg,J 1988b; Fisher,D 1982; Flew,A 1987; Forster,K 1989; Franklin,B (Ed) 1986; Freeman, M D A 1983; Gutmann,A 1987; Harris,J 1982b; Hamm,C 1982; Henley,K 1979; Hobson,P 1984; Houlgate,L 1979; Lindley,R 1989; Manley-Casimir,M (Ed) 1982; Marples,R 1987; McCrum,M 1987; O'Neill,O & Ruddick,W (Eds) 1979; O'Neill,O 1989b;

Rosenak,J 1982; Scarre,G (Ed) 1989; Schrag,F 1978;1980; Sieghart,P 1986; Slote,M 1979; Snook,I & Lankshear,C 1979; White,P 1983:esp Ch5;1988a; Wringe,C 1981; Young,R 1980.

(4) For a similar perspective, see Seldon,A 1986; Cox,C et al 1987b.
For a critical outline of the legal rights which parents now enjoy as a result of the 1988 Education Act (and its predecessors) see Maclure,S 1988:esp Ch2,4; 1989; Partington,J and Wragg,T 1989.

(5) The report states - 'Parents should be free to withdraw their children from schools that are unsatisfactory, and to place them in the schools of their choice'. (Cox,C et al 1986:10)

(6) O'Hear favours - '...numbers of different types of schools in each area, each self- governing and each promoting its own vision of what a good education should be...'. (O'Hear,A 1987) He does not consider at all the question of the autonomy of the child in his discussion, and seems to rely completely on Millian arguments to establish his case. For an interesting reply to O'Hear, which stresses this point, see Marples,R 1987. O'Hear's earlier views have a different emphasis. See, for example, O'Hear,A 1986.

(7) On this, see Flew,A 1987:esp 15-16.

(8) The rationale for the determination of this national curriculum is not provided, and the notion that one element in such a rationale is the development of the child's autonomy is not considered. The nearest that the manifesto gets to this is a rather vague claim that the body of knowledge referred to can - '...broaden the mind and the experience of anyone who has the good fortune to be initiated into it.' (Cox C et al, 1986:7) Hillgate is suspicious of the concept of state provision of such a curriculum, mainly because of the lack of a consensus about the aims of education, and the resultant coercive character of any decisions made by the state. In their later report 'The Reform of British Education' (Cox C et al, 1987a), the Hillgate Group discuss the concept of a nationally recognised pupil entitlement, but again this is not sketched out in any detail. That it is not exactly something which is aimed at autonomy in the sense intended in this argument is indicated by, for example, an insistence that multi-cultural elements be viewed sceptically (Cox C et al, 1987a:9) and that the entitlement be seen as something which should be subject to control by parents, within rather unspecified national constraints. (Cox,C et al, 1987a:41) Flew also seems to be in favour of a core curriculum which is - '...basic, outline, ideologically inoffensive...' (Flew,A 1987:23) for the same Millian reasons as those invoked by O'Hear and he is similarly suspicious of state control.

(9) On this see, for example, Michael McCrum's concept of 'Citizens' Educational Advice Bureaux'. (McCrum,M 1987:32)

(10) Gutmann expresses the principle of 'non-repression' in this way:
- 'The principle of non-repression prevents the state, and any group within it, from using education to restrict rational deliberation of competing conceptions of the good life and the good society...(It)...is not a principle of negative freedom. It secures freedom from interference only to the extent that it forbids using education to restrict *rational* deliberation or consideration of different ways of life...(It)...is therefore compatible with the use of education to inculcate those character traits, such as honesty, religious toleration, and mutual respect for persons, that serve as foundations for rational deliberation of differing ways of life...Although it secures more than a freedom from interference, the 'freedom to' that it secures is not a freedom to pursue the singularly correct way of personal or political life, but the freedom to deliberate rationally among differing ways of life'. (Gutmann,A 1987:44. Emphasis in original) Although Gutmann does not hold that 'rational deliberation' is *neutral* among all ways of life, she claims that it is the form of freedom 'most suitable' - '...to a democratic society in which adults must be free to deliberate and disagree but constrained to secure the intellectual grounds for deliberation and disagreement among children. Adults must therefore be prevented from using their present deliberative freedom to undermine the future deliberative freedom of children.'. (Gutmann,A 1987:45)

She describes the principle of 'non-discrimination' as - '...the distributional complement to non-repression...' (Gutmann,A 1987:45) and sums it up in this way: - '...all educable children must be educated...No educable child may be excluded from an education adequate to participating in the political processes that structure choice among good lives' (Gutmann,A 1987:45), since the effect of such discrimination is often - '...to repress, at least temporarily, the capacity and even the

desire...to participate in the processes that structure choice among good lives'. (Gutmann,A 1987:45)

For complexities in the application of these principles to particular educational questions, see Gutmann,A 1987:Ch 3-5. For a criticism of Gutmann's overall position see Sher,G 1989.

(11) Cohen's aim in her argument is to - ' ... re-assert the importance of the individual and the family in the area of education' (Cohen,B 1981:Preface), and in particular to assign crucial educational rights to them.

She discusses a range of cases of families who for one reason or another object to and reject the state schooling provided for their children. (Cohen,B 1981:25-27) Whilst in general siding heavily with the families in their claim to the right of choice and control, she acknowledges that parents cannot be given *unlimited* rights of this kind (for example, the right to bring their children up to be domestic slaves) and nor can the currently expressed wishes of children be decisive since these are coloured by the close emotional relationship between children and parents. She therefore acknowledges the need, in assigning educational rights, for a principle of *balance* - '... Inevitably therefore, the problem must be recognised as one of compromise, or drawing a line between parental authority and children's interests as seen by the rest of society.' (Cohen,B 1981:28) Besides the superficial similarity, it is important to note the difference between this principle and the fuller 'tension' derived from Ackerman outlined earlier, which embodies a much more specific conception of exactly what children's interests are taken to be.

This can be brought out by looking at how Cohen characterises the rights of children in this context. She argues that these consist - ' ... in their claim not only to share the freedom of their parents, but also to educational development - to be equipped to participate in the adult society of which they must ultimately form a part.' (Cohen,B 1981:28) The corresponding rights of parents are seen as arising from their duty to provide for their children - 'reaching maturity and the kind of independence that social circumstances make necessary.' (Cohen,B 1981:30-31) Lacking here is an adequate and explicit characterisation of the ideal of the autonomy of the child, such as that provided by Ackerman. Notoriously, the concept of 'being equipped to participate in adult society' is ambiguous. What weight is being given to the notion of 'participation' here? Is it used in a sense which requires autonomy on the part of the participant? And what kind of 'independence' do 'social circumstances make necessary'? Is it merely contingent social circumstances which make 'independence' a valued state, or does it have a justification more closely linked to liberal values themselves? This rather muted and shadowy treatment of the principle of child autonomy runs throughout Cohen's discussion of parental rights. Thus she finds 'compelling' the aim that children - ' ... should be allowed to mature into independent adults with their own view of life,' (Cohen,B 1981:34) and admits that - ' ... a parent who, convinced of the rightness of his own point of view, attempts to shield his child from contact with all other viewpoints, is indeed, on a personal level, doing his child a disservice.' (Cohen,B 1981:34) But the terms in which Cohen acknowledges the force of these points paves the way for her failure to follow through the implications of taking them seriously for parental rights. For surely more is required for the development of independent (autonomous?) adults than the rather passive process of 'allowing them to mature'. What of the significance here of planned educational experiences? And is 'doing a disservice' something that has significance only 'on a personal level'? What of the point that autonomous individuals are central to the notion of a liberal political community?

Cohen's failure to be more explicit about the nature and significance of the principle of valuing the autonomy of the child results in her refusal to assign to any extra-family body the responsibility of ensuring that autonomy is developed, in the face, if necessary, of extreme cases of parental indoctrination. In relation to the state, for example, Cohen argues that its role is a purely residual one, equivalent to the duty of other members of society acting collectively to take the place of the parents in the provision of basic care and nourishment. Thus - '... it may therefore act as in a smaller community a group of neighbours having the interests of a child at heart might legitimately act - rescuing the child who risks death at the hands of a violent parent, for example, or educating and caring for the child whose parents are dead or have deserted him. But where such a group of neighbours would hesitate to intervene, there ought the organised state to hesitate also.' (Cohen,B 1981:31)

Cohen's wariness about giving the state a more substantial responsibility here, derives in part from her unduly restrictive conception of what such state responsibility would involve. Thus she claims not only that parents should have complete freedom in their choice of education but also

that - ' ... it is preferable that the autonomy of the child should be violated in certain cases by his parents' (Cohen,B 1981:34), since the only alternative is that - 'the state should compulsorily supply the correct perspective.' (Cohen,B 1981:34) But, Cohen throughout her argument characterises 'the state' as necessarily totalitarian in character, ignoring the possibility that it could be a *democratic* one, subject to familiar democratic controls and concerned through its education system to promote not a determinate 'correct perspective' but the liberal value of personal autonomy. Perhaps parental indoctrination is preferable to state indoctrination, but this is not the only alternative; the role of the state becomes more acceptable - even necessary - when it is seen as the guardian of the child's autonomy.

There is, in fact, something of an inconsistency in Cohen's argument, since in the chapter of her book concerned with the nature of education in a liberal society she commits herself much more explicitly to the development of the autonomy of the child as being of fundamental importance. (Cohen,B 1981:Ch 8) For example, she writes - '...there is a clear implication of liberal thought that the first condition for education in a free society - one based on tolerance and individual self-determination - is that it should be critical rather than conformist, and that it should aim at individual autonomy rather than social control'. (Cohen,B 1981:81) Here Cohen affirms that 'self-determination' and 'autonomy' are amongst the 'primary values' of liberalism. (Cohen,B 1981:84) But if these *are* primary values in liberalism, then they must play a crucial role in the determination not just of the nature of education in a liberal society but also of the nature of the rights that parents can be allowed to claim in relation to that education (and in relation to their children generally). As John White argues, controls must exist to prevent parents decisively frustrating the progress of their children towards self-definition and autonomy.

This discussion raises complex issues, of course. At one point, Cohen seems to be basing her opposition to the downgrading of parents' educational rights on an argument similar to that employed earlier by our fictional Asian parents; namely the incoherence of the notion of 'uncontroversial liberal education'. (Cohen,B 1981:34) There are genuine problems of this sort which need to be examined. But it seems to me difficult to proceed with an examination of these kinds of issues in the context of an argument such as that of Cohen, where failure to acknowledge in the determination of parental rights the weight of the principle of developing the autonomy of the child, makes a balanced judgement of the issues rather elusive.

(12) Coons and Sugarman are sensitive also to questions of equity and justice arising from differential parental economic resources, and, in a gesture towards egalitarianism, they provide as a further control that in their 'regulated family choice' scheme parents be - '...assured the economic capacity to pursue their educational preferences' (EFC:14) beyond the 'politically determined essentials'. This includes a recognition of the need for 'additional collective action' regarding subsidies for disadvantaged parents. Coons and Sugarman propose particular financial arrangements to secure these egalitarian objectives. The complex details of these arrangements need not concern us here, except to note that it is by no means clear that the proposals meet charges of inequity and injustice. (On the proposals see EFC part IV esp Ch 11). The role of some 'private' schools not participating in the proposed scholarship scheme, for example, gives grounds for concern. (See esp EFC:209-211). At this point, however, it is sufficient to note that Coons and Sugarman are at least aware of, and prepared to take seriously - problems of injustice arising from the economic status of parents. This is an issue insufficiently addressed by Hillgate, Flew and Cohen in their attempted defence of parental rights.

Other controls proposed by Coons and Sugarman recognise their awareness of the need to safeguard the decision-making rights of the child. They claim that their reference throughout to 'family choice' rather than 'parental choice' emphasises their recognition of the role of the child in the decision-making process. Indeed, they specifically acknowledge that the maturing child has - '...both a growing capacity and need for independent choice' (EFC:63) - and that the child's emerging rights here need legal backing. Thus they propose a redistribution of legal authority so that by the age of fifteen or sixteen the child would have the legal right - '...to choose among all options recognised by the society as meeting his minimal needs' (EFC:63) without parental veto. Although Coons and Sugarman acknowledge the difficulties involved in ensuring that the child's choices here are in fact completely unconstrained, they argue that - '...whatever its practical limits, legal recognition of the child's own rights could give parents of elementary pupils an additional incentive to make the process of decision from the earliest years a shared activity with the aspiration that such sharing among generations would become a lifetime habit.' (EFC:64)

Amongst other controls proposed by Coons and Sugarman are provisions for families to have full access to information about educational possibilities and an insistence upon mandatory professional counselling concerning certain aspects of educational decision making. (EFC:52) They also discuss the possibility of a kind of 'inspectorate' which might monitor the educational failures of particular families and have legal powers to remedy the situation where necessary. (EFC:67) Coons and Sugarman are also aware of the implications of their view for the development and maintenance of the consensus necessary for sustaining a pluralist democratic society, and devote particular attention to the issue of racial integration. (EFC:Ch6,7) Although one may find much to disagree with in their claim that a liberal perspective on these matters can be satisfied by a 'family choice' system, it is clear that Coons and Sugarman have at least squarely attempted to confront their view with some of the implications of that perspective.

(13) This can be illustrated by two examples. The first was mentioned in Chapter One of this work. Coons and Sugarman argue that one of the main reasons for giving the family rights of decision-making over their children's education is that there is difficulty in determining what is actually in the interests of children. Thus they write - ' ... society at large often cannot know the best interest of the child. What then is the state to do? How can the best interests of the child be pursued by society when there is no collective perception of that interest?' (EFC:45) Granted this - '...societal indeterminacy as to the child's interest' (EFC:68), they argue that it is only the family which is in a position to make a judgement about the interests of its particular child members. The weakness of this argument, however, is that there is no attempt here to distinguish between what is in a child's interests *in general* and what is in the interests of a child *in detail*. Of course, there is likely to be considerable dispute about the latter, since, apart from the need to appeal to complex and sometimes conflicting bodies of opinion about the value and efficacy of particular activities, judgements need to be made about *particular* individuals - their needs, talents, capacities etc. In this sense, Coons and Sugarman are right to point to the 'elusiveness' of the child's interest.(EFC:Ch3) But is what is in the *general* interest of children so 'elusive'? Could not a wide measure of agreement be secured on the claim that it is in the general interest of all children that they be enabled to become in some sense autonomous? This possibility, and its implications for parental rights, is never fully considered by Coons and Sugarman, who base their claim for these rights on an unanalysed and confusing notion of the 'indeterminacy of the child's interest'.

Indeed, at the beginning of the chapter in which they raise the question of what is in the child's interest (EFC:Ch3), they move straight away to a consideration of what is in a child's *educational* interest. Clearly the latter question cannot be adequately considered without some prior discussion of the former. And in their discussion of the child's educational interest itself, they fail to make an adequate distinction between the ends and means of education. Thus they claim that - 'Among the many who claim to speak for children, there is a fundamental conflict concerning both the ends and means of education.' (EFC:36) But is it not possible to produce a substantial consensus on the view that at least one end of education should be the development of capacities for self-definition?

It can be seen, therefore, that one of the foundations of Coons and Sugarman's defence of family rights - the claim that they can legitimately be asserted in the light of the absence of any justifiable conception of the child's general or educational interest in broad terms - depends upon their failure to (a) tackle the fundamental issues involved and (b) inform the discussion with their own substantive commitment to the principle of autonomy, which appears at a later point in their argument, and then only in a muted way.

The second example which illustrates the consequences of the failure of Coons and Sugarman to make explicit the status of autonomy in their thesis arises in connection with their view on whether a parent should be forced to choose a school which will foster the autonomy of their child. Thus they write - ' ... direct political solutions generally involve a good deal of compulsion. In the absence of consensus we see no reason to impose on minorities even the preference for autonomy. In fact, under any circumstances, there is something manifestly contradictory about ordering the pursuit of autonomy.' (EFC:85) This statement is unsatisfactory in several ways. First, it is not clear why a 'manifest contradiction' arises here. Clearly it would be odd to (merely) order an individual to become autonomous, but this is not what is being suggested in this example. Rather what is at stake is the case of parents being forced to send their children to an environment which will seek to develop their autonomy by exposing them to extra-family elements. There seems to be no *contradiction* involved here. Second, the statement avoids the crucial issues of principle which arise in cases such as these. Of course, there are

practical problems arising from the use of compulsion which make one wary of its use. But in seeming to make 'the existence of consensus' the criterion for imposing the principle of autonomy on minorities, Coons and Sugarman fail to follow through the implications of their own commitment to autonomy. For if it is an 'indispensable intellectual and ethical ideal', what *principled* basis can there be for allowing some parents to frustrate its development in their children? There are of course several complex issues here, but Coons and Sugarman's confused discussion of the matter does little to illuminate the problems.

This equivocation on the status of the principle of autonomy creates problems throughout Coons and Sugarman's argument.

14) For example, Brian Crittenden in his book - 'Parents, the State and the Right to Educate' (Crittenden,B 1988 - Hereinafter PSRE), writing broadly within a perspective valuing the critical independence of the child and the tradition of open rational enquiry, regards the demands of neutrality upon common schools as 'relatively severe'. Thus, apart from -... 'basic social morality and the essential values of a pluralist democracy' (PSRE:122), common schools may not 'endorse or reject' any particular way of life consistent with these values. Therefore, such ways of life should be presented descriptively and impartially and the common values themselves should not be presented as a preferred way of life. - 'Where disputed issues reflect different interpretations of the human good (assuming that they are consistent with the common values of liberal democracy), teachers are required to ensure that all positions are presented impartially and adequately. When teachers cannot do this themselves or through representatives of the various points of view, the issues should not be included for study in the school curriculum'. (PSRE:215)

However, Crittenden holds that it is not possible for common schools to achieve complete neutrality on beliefs and values which are legitimately contested. Specifically, in attempting this task, common schools will in his view *de facto* endorse a secular ideal of human life in its various aspects. - 'Depending on the outlook of the particular teachers in a school and on other factors, the perspective from which knowledge is interpreted may vary from that of scientific rationalism to romantic relativism; and in relation to the values of life more generally, it may range from possessive individualism to egalitarianism'. (PSRE:217-218) He argues that state schooling should for this reason not be assigned responsibility for every aspect of the education of children and adolescents, and should not be engaged in 'education of the whole person'.

Crittenden expands interestingly on the reasons for the inability of the common school to achieve neutrality on matters of conflict. For example, he points out that a commitment by the common school to 'critical enquiry' does not avoid problems of neutrality since the tradition of critical enquiry is one which is itself disputed and subject to different interpretations. Strictly speaking, common schools should not be allowed to go beyond - '...the basic defensible criteria for rational belief and action' (PSRE:123), and the induction of students into - '....those intellectual skills, methods of enquiry, and bodies of knowledge that are beyond any reasonable dispute'. (PSRE:124)

However, Crittenden claims that the common school has as a matter of fact developed an increasingly expansive curriculum imbued with specific (and contested) values. And if the school is silent on religious and other systematic ways of life, this does not solve the problem of neutrality. (PSRE:207) Further, controversy is likely to arise about the theory of the nature and methods of education embodied within the school.

With regard to the specific case of religion, Crittenden holds that the schools cannot avoid taking a stand which is 'deeply contentious'. He writes - 'Even if they adopt a strictly sociological point of view in the study of religion as an aspect of social and cultural life, they will not satisfy those for whom religious beliefs are crucial in giving unity and coherence to the whole enterprise of human knowledge. When the institutional conduct of public education is secular in the sense that religious values have no guiding role, this arrangement will inevitably be more congenial to those who follow non-religious ways of life than to those who are religiously inclined'. (PSRE:123-124)

Crittenden concludes from all this that if the school is not neutral towards - '...legitimate differences over what is thought to be worthwhile in individual and social life and in the process of education itself...'(PSRE:125) then - '...there can be no reasonable objection if dissenting parents choose a style of formal education that is more compatible with the beliefs and values that their children are acquiring in the informal education of the family.' (PSRE:125)

For further arguments relating to the neutrality of the common school see Callan,E 1989. (See footnote 7 Chapter Two). For a recent general discussion of neutrality in education see Gardner,P 1989.

(15) Crittenden, in PSRE, offers the following account of the general characteristics which the state may insist upon as conditions for accreditation and support from public funds:-

' (a) The process and content of teaching should be such that students are led progressively to see for themselves the underlying reasons for beliefs and practices, and to understand the strengths and limitations of the methods of enquiry on which significant bodies of knowledge depend.

(b) If a school upholds a particular way of life, serious criticisms and claims of counterevidence to the beliefs and values of that way of life should be fairly examined...(also to)...the common values associated with liberal democracy...

(c) ...some comparative study of the major kinds of interpretation within the society of what it is to be human and how human beings should live.

(d) The curriculum of primary and secondary schooling should be broad enough to allow students to choose subjects or topics of study in the humanities, the sciences and the arts.

(e) The content of any subject should be presented with careful attention to its precise epistemic status...' (PSRE:206)

Crittenden supplies three further conditions to be met by public schooling in a liberal democracy: it must not constitute a monopoly (implying that comparable funding be provided by the state for the education of children at accredited alternative schools); it must be internally diverse (implying the principle of subsidiarity with regard to the control of education and the existence of a variety of institutional forms, curricula and pedagogical methods in schooling); and it must - '...pursue the objective of neutrality towards the diversity of ideals and ways of life within the society'. (PSRE:211)
(On this last matter see footnote 14 above).

(16) On this see Gutmann,A 1987:esp 50-52. See also Crittenden,B 1988:137-138.

(17) Crittenden in PSRE holds that, in a pluralist democratic society, parents have a right to raise children within a particular way of life, though this is subject to certain conditions. (For Crittenden's definition of 'way of life' see PSRE:108-109). These conditions include the 'essential values of social morality' such as truth-telling, honesty, justice, care in avoiding injury to others, co-operation in acquiring commonly needed goods, respect, tolerance, non-violent persuasion, non-racism etc. (PSRE:116) and also restrictions designed to secure the children's access to Rawlsian primary goods such as health, fostering of intelligence and imagination, rights, opportunity to develop particular capacities and to earn an adequate income, self-respect etc. (PSRE:116)

What about autonomy? Crittenden also includes as an important condition that - '...the manner of induction should be such that parents progressively encourage their children to think and act independently, to make their own principled decisions both within and about the way of life in which they have been raised' (PSRE:116), and he holds that the opportunity to develop the capacity for independent rational judgement of this kind must be among the most basic of the goods wanted by a rational person. This seems to constitute a fairly clear commitment to autonomy but Crittenden insists that what he has in mind does not include - '...anything like pure autonomy in choosing among competing views of the good or determining one's own life plan'. (PSRE:116)

What does Crittenden mean by '*pure* autonomy' here? It seems to be a conception of autonomy in which - '...each individual determines every aspect of his or her way of life through a completely free exercise of personal choice'. (PSRE:109) A consequence of this view, Crittenden argues, is that children should simply be provided with adequate knowledge of the full variety and range of options and encouraged eventually to decide for themselves, when older, which way of life they wish to follow. He rightly rejects this view as resting on an unduly abstract model of the child as a rational chooser developing in a social and cultural vacuum. - 'Children cannot spend the first

fourteen or fifteen years of their life in a value-neutral cocoon, gaining nothing more than a sociological bird's-eye view of alternative ways of life'. (PSRE:110)

However, it is not clear that any thinker in fact holds an extreme view of this kind. Crittenden proceeds to consider a less extreme and more recognisable view of autonomy where the need for parental guidance is acknowledged but restricted to that which is necessary for children to form their own life-plan. Whilst Crittenden point out, rightly, that for a range of reasons there are constraints on our rationally choosing a life-plan (PSRE:110-111), he nevertheless seems committed to a concept of autonomy which is implicit in my argument.

This is seen in Crittenden's comments about what he would in fact envisage as part of the upbringing he recommends. Thus he writes - 'In the process of inducting their children into the values and practices of a particular way of life, parents should ensure that their children come to understand something of the reasons for these values and practices and of how they are regarded in the society generally. Children should learn which aspects of their particular way of life are commonly accepted in the society, or are among a range of options generally regarded as desirable, or are upheld by one section of the society as true or worthwhile but rejected as mistaken by others, or are particular to their own parents. Children should be led to see that others in the society may conscientiously accept beliefs and practices which they and their parents regard as mistaken'. (PSRE:116) This is in fact very similar to my own view. This commitment to a significant sense of autonomy is discernible too in Crittenden's account of what formal education should include (PSRE:120) with its reference to - '...a thorough introduction to the main aspects of critical, reflective culture...(and)...that which is judged necessary...for making rational and responsible choices in one's personal life...for exercising intelligently the rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy...'. (PSRE:120. See also 201-202) In fact Crittenden holds that the liberal democratic state should non-neutrally uphold rational self-determination as a good both for individuals and for the community as a whole and that therefore - '...it should also uphold the kind of formal education that is consistent with this good and contributes to its attainment'. (PSRE:203) (Compare White,J 1988a).

(18)   Also ruled out on White's principle, as well as religious schools, are other kinds of schools concerned to promote a very particular conception of the good life (such as certain kinds of 'scientific' or 'musical' schools), or those involved in transmitting fundamentally illiberal values (such as sexism or racism).

White also specifically outlaws the rights of parents to buy *private* education for their children not only on the ground that many such private schools infringe the principle already outlined but on the additional ground that parents cannot be given rights at the expense of other citizens (i.e. to purchase a form of schooling confirming advantage in terms of access to power etc.) (BD:See esp.152-157). White also calls into question the right of parents to impose on their child their own 'enthusiasms and interests' or to develop in a one-sided way a particular gift or talent that their child has (e.g. in a particular sport, musical activity etc.). (BD:147-152)

(19)   On this, Patricia White writes - '...the BBC could not teach a baby her first language or the beginnings of moral education: this has to be done by someone standing in a personal relationship to her who knows her mind, attitudes and feelings in detail, because such teaching has to take advantage of the moment'. (BD:141)

(20)   For example, in contrast to Patricia White, Brian Crittenden holds that parents' rights arise not just from their duties towards their children, but also from their role in procreation. (See Crittenden,B 1988:Ch3).

(21)   On the concept of 'repressive tolerance' see Bridges,D 1986:esp 33-37.

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter Five

(1) Thus, concerning religious schools, Bailey writes - 'What would not be justifiable, on my account, would be to allow the provision of schools of a religious denominational kind where the pupils were to be educated and trained into a predetermined set of beliefs and attitudes, simply because these were the beliefs and attitudes of their parents'. (CB:227-228) Such schools, claims Bailey, cannot be justified in a liberal democracy by appeal to tolerance and pluralism, since - '...the toleration appealed to is to be extended to the parents who then impose a rigid and intolerant control over the future of their children. Any believer in tolerance, like any believer in democracy, must favour the provision and protection of a liberal education. To favour or allow other kinds, whereby some youngsters are excluded from liberal education, is to subvert the very roots of democracy and tolerance'. (CB:228) This argument - familiar to us from earlier chapters - is sound enough as it stands within the liberal terms of reference of my argument. But it is interesting to note that Bailey does not develop his discussion beyond this point to encompass a consideration of some of the possibilities I have envisaged: that religious schools need not necessarily be engaged in the kind of indoctrinatory activity commonly ascribed to them - and that liberal education might take various forms in relation to which parents might exercise legitimate rights of choice. It is not that Bailey *denies* such possibilities explicitly; his position regarding them is undeveloped. Thus in Part 3 of his book, which is devoted to 'Challenges to Liberal Education', Bailey does not consider any of the challenges which I have identified.

The more general tendency of philosophers to neglect school-level issues can also be illustrated by reference to Bailey's chapter on 'The Methods of a liberal education' (CB:Ch8) where, despite much interesting discussion of teaching for evidence, understanding and care, there is no extended treatment of the school context in which this teaching is to take place.

(2) For a general outline of the Greek notion of Liberal Education see Hirst,P H 1974a:30-32. For an outline of Peters' views of the problems arising in relation to the 'knowledge for its own sake' view, see Peters,R S 1977:48-58.

(3) For an outline of Peters' account of problems arising in relation to this interpretation, see Peters,R S 1977:58-62.

(4) Hirstian liberal education is concerned, then, solely with crucial (non-instrumental) aspects of the *cognitive* elements of the achievement of rational autonomy, the necessary dispositions and capacities crucial to the child actually *functioning* as an autonomous person and the additional knowledge necessary, being supplied from outside it. Liberal education in Hirst's sense may provide a *necessary basis* for these other achievements, but is not itself directly concerned with them.

Jane Roland Martin, in her paper 'Needed: a New Paradigm for Liberal Education', (Roland Martin,J 1981) characterises the product of a Hirstian liberal education as follows - '...an ivory tower person: one who can reason, but has no desire to solve real problems in the real world; one who understands science, but does not worry about the uses to which it is put; one who grasps the concepts of biology, but is not disposed to exercise or eat wisely; one who can reach flawless moral conclusions, but has neither the sensitivity nor the skill to carry them out effectively.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:44)

As Roland Martin herself admits (Roland Martin,J 1981:45-46), this is something of a caricature: Hirst does indeed envisage additional forms of education which will supplement liberal education and produce a more rounded person; there is no suggestion that he would be satisfied with the 'ivory tower person' as the outcome of education. Roland Martin too seems to acknowledge Hirst's point that liberal education provides a crucial part of the *basis* for these other human achievements and capacities. She criticises him, however, for saying nothing about what is to be built upon that basis or in relation to it (although she does ignore Hirst,P H 1974b which is relevant here).

One way in which Roland Martin expresses this point is as follows - 'A supporter of the forms of knowledge theory of liberal education might argue that its 'products' will not be ivory tower people because an education in the forms of knowledge sets people on the right track. Given an initiation in Hirst's seven forms of knowledge we can relax, they will say; competent action, moral agency, altruistic feeling will all fall into place.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:45)

She then criticises this claim on the grounds that the kind of society in which we live militates against this 'falling into place' actually happening. However, Hirst nowhere claims that these various achievements and qualities will simply 'fall into place' if by this is meant that they develop *automatically* as a consequence of introduction to knowledge. In his view, dispositions, skills, qualities of feeling, emotion etc., although they have a cognitive core, cannot be developed *merely* through a development in the person of that core. They have to be *directly* developed. And, furthermore, the kind of knowledge involved in liberal education is only *part* of the knowledge involved in the cognitive core of these achievements. But if it is the case that these achievements have to be directly planned for and aimed at, then it is even more important that we know the rationale for this activity - and its relationship with 'liberal education' narrowly conceived.

Roland Martin argues that in view of the things that are left out of Hirst's concept of liberal education (Roland Martin,J 1981:42), it is necessary to challenge - '...Hirst's basic and mistaken assumption that the nature and structure of knowledge determines the nature and structure of a liberal education.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:41) She claims that concentration on criticism of Hirst's 'forms of knowledge' has tended to deflect attention away from this fundamental challenge. Her own view is that liberal education should be conceived more broadly, as involving the development of the person. (Roland Martin,J 1981:53-57) This broader conception she sees as more adequately embodying the point that - '... an education is called liberal because it is thought to free us not only from ignorance, but also from the constraints of habit, custom and inertia. The standard conception of liberal education would free our minds, but not our selves. Surely if being a victim of ignorance and a slave to habit, custom and inertia are undesirable, then our whole selves ought to be liberated from them.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:54)

Roland Martin denies that the issue of conceptualising liberal education is a merely definitional one. She is aware that Hirst uses the term in an explicitly stipulative way, but finds his stipulation unfortunate and objectionable because the term 'liberal education' has powerful honorific associations, thereby giving the impression that the whole of education is being referred to.

In addition to this kind of argument - which concerns the *unintended implications* of using the term 'liberal education' in a narrow way - there are other, ultimately more powerful, arguments urging a broader use of the term. They all concern one basic problem: If 'liberal education' is interpreted in a narrow way, how is its relationship to the other elements of education to be conceptualised?

(i) The first argument concerns the problem of justification. As Charles Bailey writes - ' ... in supposing that as well as liberal education there is to be a wider general education containing elements that all should have, a justificatory gap arises.' (Bailey,C 1984:79) Thus, although a 'transcendental' or 'presupposition' argument may be invoked for the 'liberal education' component, the remaining components lack a clear justification of any kind. John White raises this problem also, in connection with the separation made by Hirst between the development of moral understanding and the development of moral character, dispositions etc. Thus he asks - '...how does one relate the aim of promoting moral understanding in the theoretical way to the aim of developing morally virtuous dispositions? To this the theory of a liberal education based on the forms of understanding gives no answer, since what happens in that part of 'education' lying outside 'liberal education' is also outside the theory.' (White,J 1982:70)

Charles Bailey argues with regard to 'non-liberal education' elements such as these, that - 'If there *is* a justification that appeals to common humanness in some way, and not merely to particular instrumental needs, then surely these are parts of a liberal education too?' (Bailey,C 1984:79. Emphasis in original) This seems to make a point similar to that made by Roland Martin; that it is the *whole person* that needs to be liberated, not simply their intellects. Thus Bailey writes - 'I find it very difficult to see what would justify the inclusion of any activity or any inquiry in a *general* education for all, separable from any kind of instrumental education, that is not at the same time being justified as a part of a liberal education.' (Bailey,C 1984:79-80. Emphasis in original)

(ii) A second - and neglected - argument is that if the 'non-liberal education' elements are left hived-off, uncharacterised and without explicit justification, it is difficult to see how we can be sure that the educational process *as a whole* will be liberal. Is there not a danger that these other

elements might be seen in an illiberal way, educators contenting themselves with the thought that the liberal aim is taken care of by the explicitly 'liberal education' parts of the curriculum? For example, whilst the child might be introduced to quite a wide range of moral understanding in the cognitive 'liberal' side of his or her education, the actual dispositions, virtues, qualities of character etc. developed in them might be of quite a restricted sort - and not be *linked* in any clear way to their growing cognitive grasp of morality. So the child might be 'freed' intellectually but not in any other way. This kind of outcome can result not only from the 'non-liberal education' elements being explicitly conceived illiberally, but also from their simply not being conceived adequately in any way at all - being 'left to chance' as it were. As was noted above, the dispositions, skills, qualities of feeling, emotion etc. needed for personal as well as intellectual autonomy need to be explicitly and directly developed upon, and in relationship to, their cognitive basis. It is a task that requires carefully formulated intentions and methods. It is only likely to be successful if 'liberal education' is conceived of in a broad way as the 'total package' of educational experience which is designed to 'liberate' the child in the fuller sense. It is only in this way - in a uniting of all the relevant elements of the child's education under a liberal aim and rationale - that we can hope to avoid the potentially illiberal effects of leaving parts of that education uncharacterised and separated from the directly intellectual parts. The broader conceptualisation of liberal education, in other words, is more likely to ensure an education that is comprehensively liberating.

(iii) A third argument is that it is only the 'broad' conception of liberal education which allows problems of objectivity and neutrality to arise in their full form. On the 'narrow' conception the problems are concerned solely with the objectivity of the *knowledge* being presented in education. On the 'broader' view, however, a much wider range of considerations is opened up - in relation to which questions of objectivity and neutrality acutely apply. Thus Roland Martin argues that the Hirstian model of liberal education - ' ... encourages philosophers to take the structure of knowledge and run. It fosters the illusion that curriculum can be determined without their asking questions about the good life and the good society.' (Roland Martin,J 1981:58) In allowing wider questions such as these to be raised, the 'broad' conception of liberal education brings into focus some of the most significant questions of objectivity and neutrality with which we shall have to deal.

(5) Bailey's emphasising the word 'only' here is significant. It might be interpreted as meaning that, unlike Hirst, Bailey does not want to confine liberal education exclusively to 'knowledge for its own sake.' This interpretation needs careful handling, however. For although Bailey admits certain kinds of instrumental aims into his concept of GLE, these are instrumental in a strictly restricted sense. Thus, although he concedes that - '...much of what is learned in such an education must of necessity be instrumental...' (CB:110), he makes it clear that he is interpreting the term 'instrumental' here - '...not in the sense of serving specifically prescribed purposes beyond a liberal education, but rather in the sense of making the more substantive objectives of such an education attainable'. (CB:110-111) Thus Bailey develops a notion of the 'serving competencies' - '...which make the rest of a liberal education possible and much else besides'. (CB:111) These include not just familiar items such as reading and writing, but also basic dispositional qualities. (See CB:113) Bailey clearly seeks to exclude a strong notion of instrumentality from his concept of liberal education. It does seem, however, that in stating his 'intrinsic worthwhileness' condition, he is going beyond the Hirstian notion of 'knowledge for its own sake'. This is because (as we shall see), Bailey expands the basis and content of liberal education beyond the Hirstian analysis of Knowledge. For Bailey the notion of the 'intrinsically valuable' in liberal education is richer than 'knowledge for its own sake'. Bailey's concern is perhaps better stated as involving 'what is of intrinsic value *for the person* '.

Another point to make about the role of the notion of 'intrinsic worthwhileness' in accounts of liberal education is that a *concern* for what is intrinsically worthwhile (common to all accounts) is compatible with very different views about what actually *is* intrinsically worthwhile. Bailey shares with Hirst the view that certain activities can be shown to be intrinsically valuable for everyone. For a contrasting conception of 'intrinsic worthwhileness' and its educational significance, see White,J 1973:Ch2; 1982:Ch2.

(6) Of belief in God, Scruton writes - 'It is the possession of that belief which enables men to direct their most powerful dissatisfactions away from the ruinous hope of changing things, to a more peaceable hope of being one day redeemed from the need to do so'. (Scruton,R 1980a:170) Whilst he acknowledges that religion is not necessarily essentially a conservative force, or required by conservatism, Scruton observes that - '...there is nothing more dangerous to the state than the

transfer of frustrated religious feeling to petty secular causes. It is such a feeling that would people the world with invalids, in order to lavish upon it the luxury of 'social justice'. In so far as religious feeling exists, it is therefore better that it be channelled towards its proper object. And if its existence sustains the social bond, then that is another reason to propagate and also to influence it'. (Scruton,R 1980a:171)

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter Six

(1) I do not deny here that both liberalism, and the notion of the common school, depend upon a substantiality of belief, practice and value. (For the claim that liberalism is itself a tradition see, for example, Almond,B 1990; MacIntyre,A 1981;1988). However, I am here referring to the specific and particular substantiality related to a religious tradition.

(2) For example, in relation to CR, Elmer Thiessen praises Lloyd for drawing attention to the 'inescapable confessional element present in the teaching of all subjects'. (Thiessen, E J 1987a:233 footnote 5) More nuanced support for aspects of Lloyd's arguments is given by Sealey,J 1987:14-16.

(3) Lloyd comments that one of the things that may change a person is corruption, and then proceeds to note that White's position necessitates the teaching of immorality. (RCC:335) It is hard to see quite how this claim can be justified. Lloyd seems to overlook the moral assumptions and restrictions which White brings to his argument.

(4) Lloyd writes, regarding reasons for people changing their beliefs - '...those reasons are features of the life of their adoption. The reasons constitute the beliefs they now hold to. If a person has come to see that his life has been selfish and wishes to devote his life to the welfare of others, he will draw comparisons between his old and new lives and not refer to some independent rational argument. And where the ways of life are very different, where there is little common ground, the impossibility of conceiving of an external measure is greater. What counts as a reason is determined by the fundamental beliefs in the particular way of life and these have no rational foundation, for they constitute the measure by which the rationality of other things is judged'. (RCC:338)

(5) In this connection, Lloyd makes the further points that such an approach may make children think that they understand other ways of life when they do not (a state of stupidity worse than ignorance) (RCC:337), and that the value of choice may be illicitly emphasised at the expense of (for example) acceptance. (RCC:340-341)

(6) See, for example, White,J 1982:170 footnote 3 to Ch3; White,J & White,P 1986:157-159.

(7) Lloyd interprets White as arguing that the presentation of activities must be 'without commitment' since that would anticipate the choice of the child. (RCC:334) His subsequent criticism of White includes no clear analysis of 'commitment' and the different senses in which the teacher can be required to be committed. For example, Lloyd remarks that - '...in order for someone to see a subject in its true light, commitment is necessary. A teacher who is not committed is likely to be deadly dull'. (RCC:334) 'Commitment' here seems to be equivalent to 'interest' in (and even 'enthusiasm' for) the subject and the teaching of it. No serious objections can be raised to a teacher being committed in this sense. A stronger sense of 'commitment' is where the teacher is committed to the teaching of substantive conclusions or views which, on public, rational grounds might be regarded as controversial or open to serious doubt, with a view to getting the students to (uncritically) share them. Lloyd seems to sympathise with White in wanting to avoid indoctrination (RCC:334) but does not clearly clarify and discuss further senses of 'committed teaching' where the teacher's commitment is to certain standards of discussion and evaluation and to placing the students in a position where they may make their own reasoned decisions and commitments. The teacher is committed here, but it is a commitment (roughly speaking) of a more 'procedural' kind. Lloyd's failure to consider this notion in more detail is a serious limitation in his (brief) discussion of the Humanities Curriculum Project and its concept of the 'neutral teacher'. (RCC:334-335) (For discussion of this concept see, for example, Elliott,J 1975; Bridges,D 1986; Dearden,R F 1984:Ch7). One reason for Lloyd's neglect of this perspective is his Wittgensteinian suspicion of general standards of evaluation and of 'public, rational grounds'. Thus he accuses White of wanting teachers and pupils to employ - '...a meta-rationality which does not have its roots in any particular way of seeing or judging. He may have in mind the neutrality of a judge but that is a neutrality which is within a particular tradition...'. (RCC:334)

(8) See, for example, Hirst,P H 1974b:58-64. See also Chapter Two Footnote 1.

(9) For example, Lloyd does not offer an analysis of the 'phenomenological' approach to education in religion.

(10) On the notion of 'unshakable beliefs' see the discussion in Chapter Two section (2).

(11) On this see, for example, Peters,R S 1974:Ch13.

(12) The parallel does not hold exactly here because it might be claimed that, in contrast to 'B' beliefs, one could reject 'M' beliefs without being irrational (as, for example, in the case of the 'rational egoist').

(13) See, for example, Phillips,D Z 1988a:esp Ch1; Kerr,F 1986.

(14) See, for example, O'Hear,A 1984:Ch1; Mackie,J L 1982:Ch12.

(15) For comment on this see Sealey,J 1987:15.

(16) That liberal education rests firmly upon a distinctive epistemological basis is illustrated by Charles Bailey's statement that his concept of liberal education - '...rests very much upon assumptions regarding the necessary presupposition of justification, logic, rationality and reason generally; together with all the principles and characteristics like consistency, coherence, impartiality, sufficiency and necessity that are attendant upon, and indeed constitutive of, the notion of reason; and together with such moral notions as can be derived from such presuppositions'. (CB:1)

What are the general features of the epistemological position taken here? There is a basic similarity in the general epistemological position taken by the modern advocates of liberal education, apart from less fundamental differences between particular theorists (Bailey's disagreement with Hirst about aspects of the 'forms of knowledge' thesis, for example).

Brian Crittenden attempts an outline of these general features in his book - 'Cultural Pluralism and Common Curriculum'. (Crittenden,B 1982) He stresses the close relationship between the notion of an open, pluralist society and a distinctive concept of rational belief, and the rational life generally. Indeed, he holds that valuing these conceptions of rationality is one of the three conditions which need to be satisfied if pluralism is to be justified as an ideal of social order. It is this concept of rational belief and the rational life which also underpins contemporary accounts of liberal education.
Crittenden argues that this concept of rationality involves three assumptions:

(a) - ' ... that there are public criteria, independent of the conceptual perspective or interests of any particular group, against which beliefs and values can be assessed as more or less rational'. (Crittenden,B 1982:39)

(b) - ' ... that it is fitting for human beings to be committed in as rational a way as possible to the beliefs and values that significantly affect their lives.' (ibid:39)

(c) - ' ... that, apart from circumstances in which forms of non-rational persuasion are themselves rationally defensible,... it is morally inappropriate to try to change a person's basic beliefs or way of life except through rational persuasion'. (ibid:39)

(a) - the notion of objective public criteria of assessment - is a crucial element in the epistemological basis of liberal education. The provision of a convincing defence of (a) against the various forms of relativism is therefore a prime task for an advocate of this conception of education. The consequences of accepting a strong form of the view that the criteria referred to in (a) are non-existent is brought out by John White. Such a relativist must admit, he writes, that - 'Whatever conceptual schemes one teaches a child ... cannot but involve the imposition of standards which are, in the last analysis, arbitrary. Education ... cannot become ... intellectual liberation ... It can only be at best a subtle indoctrination of a particular set of social values.' (White,J 1982:26) In this situation, it is difficult to see any grounds on which parents could be compelled (even morally) to give their children an upbringing and education which exposes them to a range of possibilities of belief and value. Given relativistic assumptions, what reasons could be advanced against a parent determined to indoctrinate his or her child in their own world view? This relativistic perspective seems to be very much part of Lloyd's position.

Given the importance of (a), arguments have been mounted in its defence by liberal educators such as Hirst (Hirst,P H 1985), Bailey (CB:Ch10) and Crittenden (Crittenden,B 1982), amongst others.

(b) - the notion of the importance of rational commitment on the part of individuals - is also a vital element in the epistemological basis of liberal education, because of its link with the key notion of rational autonomy. For all his general rejection of the objectivity of values, John White eventually concludes in 'The aims of education re-stated' that autonomy itself is an objectively valid ideal i.e. valid for persons everywhere - not merely those in certain cultures. (White,J 1982:See esp 128) In spite of all its centrality, however, the principle of rational commitment needs to be interpreted with the same caution as the notion of 'public criteria of assessment'. For just as the nature of these public criteria differs from one domain to another, so does the nature of 'rational commitment'. Since (c) is fairly straightforward, I will move on to an outline of what Crittenden argues to be the general tradition which embodies the attitude to reason which has emerged above. This Crittenden calls 'critical rationality' which he takes to be a - '...universally valid ideal'. (Crittenden,B 1982:42) It involves, in his view, three elements:

(i) ' ... the recognition that there are or can be alternative theories, conceptual schemes and procedures of enquiry that may prove more adequate than - or as defensible as - those prevailing at the time (or to which one is committed)'. (ibid:42)

(ii) - ' ... a collective process of continual critical reflection on theories and methods of inquiry in order to develop and refine the criteria for the quality of rational thought and action.' (ibid:42)

(iii) - ' ... the active willingness to test one's theories against the widest range of relevant human experience and to reject or modify them in the face of decisive counter-evidence.' (ibid:42-43)

Crittenden acknowledges that the notion of 'critical rationality' is not an uncontroversial one. Even within the 'rational' tradition, there have been disagreements both about matters of substance and the characterisation of the nature of rational enquiry itself. Nevertheless he argues that, in the light of certain qualifications and clarifications (Crittenden,B 1982:43-47), it is possible to claim that - '... the *general* characteristics of the tradition of critical, reflective rationality form normative criteria for the quality of rationality in the lives of human beings anywhere.' (Crittenden,B 1982:44 Emphasis in original)

(On all these matters compare Hirst,P H esp 1985. See Appendix C especially Footnote 4).

(17) In support of this argument it should be noted that, for example, no defender of liberal education argues that 'public criteria of assessment' are similar - and unambiguously available - in all areas of knowledge and understanding. It is readily acknowledged that the criteria involved take different forms in different areas; and that in some areas we are unsure as to their character - and, indeed, existence. Liberal education must, therefore, proceed in the light of an analysis of the specific character of the 'public criteria' in each domain. And the uncertainty about the character of public criteria in some areas applies also to the character of 'rational commitment' in those areas. The neglected question of the nature of 'rational commitment' in the religious sphere requires analysis before the character of liberal education in religion can be determined. As with 'public criteria' - an analysis of what is involved here may reveal complexities for the task of liberal education in this area.

The 'qualifications' and 'clarifications' which Crittenden supplies to the notion of 'critical rationality' (Crittenden,B 1982:43-47) allow scope for the notion of rationality in religion being of a distinctive kind. Thus Crittenden warns against a preoccupation with mathematical or scientific forms of reasoning and explanation, for example, and claims that rationality is '...weakened or lost' (Crittenden,B 1982:46) when these forms are inappropriately applied to the understanding of, say, modes of expression or interpretation of an aesthetic or religious kind. This would seem to mean that (i), (ii) and (iii) in footnote 16 above need to be given a distinctive interpretation when applied in religion. For example, in (iii), the kinds of 'tests' referred to cannot be construed as scientific in character; in (ii) the kind of critical reflection involved is critical reflection of a religious - rather than scientific - kind.

The concept of critical rationality which underlines the modern conception of liberal education is therefore one which recommends a certain attitude of mind, a certain approach to knowledge and belief which, in its insistence upon the importance of public criteria of assessment, the need for justification of beliefs etc., not only leaves open the possibility of these requirements being met

in the area of religion but also acknowledges that these requirements may be met in a distinctive way in that area.

The significance of this point for our later discussion can now be brought out. If it is the case that religion involves a distinctive form of rationality, then liberal education in religion, if it is to be both genuinely liberating and educative, must proceed in harmony with, and in the light of, that rationality. In fact, however, the logic of religion remains obscure and controversial - and no advocate of liberal education has actually advanced any detailed account of the nature of rationality in this sphere. Hirst, for example, simply leaves open the possibility that such a rationality might exist, without exploring its character in any detail. (Hirst,P H 1974a:See, for example, 88). If we are unsure about the nature of rationality in religion, however, we must be equally unsure about the nature of liberal education in religion. We must be unsure too, of course, about the very possibility of such an education. But if we accept for the moment that such an education in religion is possible, at least in principle, (which seems to be Hirst's position), then we must also accept that our uncertainties about the epistemological character of religion lead us directly to uncertainties about the character of liberal education in this sphere. This seems to be a straightforward point: uncertainty about rationality in religion means uncertainty about liberal education in religion.

This point is reflected in the writings of many theorists of liberal education. Thus, their accounts of liberal education in religion are often simply incomplete or sketchy. For example, their remarks typically extend little beyond an outline of the aim of this education: that it is to enable the pupil to be introduced to - and to understand - aspects of the religious domain and (ultimately) to be able to make an appropriate form of rational judgement about their beliefs and attitudes in this area. Too often the crucial questions which underlie this aim, about the nature of reasoning and judgement in religion and the possibility of achieving understanding 'from the outside' in this domain, are simply left to one side.

(18) For an interesting discussion of related issues see G E M Anscombe's paper 'Authority in Morals'. (Anscombe G E M, 1981:Ch5)

(19) See, for example, Hirst,P H 1974b:esp 58-64. John White's 'The aims of education re-stated' (White,J 1982) is precisely an attempt to relate the autonomy ideal to moral, social and political considerations. John Elliott has sought to show that the 'neutral' approach of the Schools Council Humanities Curriculum Project to the discussion of questions of value is fully compatible with an objectivist, as opposed to a prescriptivist, account of ethics. (Elliott,J 1975) The only philosopher of education mentioned by Ward is Robert Dearden, and his criticisms of him are based on a rather selective reading of his writings. (For Dearden's awareness of some of the points raised by Ward see, for example, Dearden,R 1975).

(20) See, for example, D C Phillips postulation in his paper - 'The Anatomy of Autonomy' of Autonomy 1 and Autonomy 2. The former is concerned with questioning fundamental matters such as the adequacy of the framework of beliefs and practices of a particular society, whilst the latter involves more limited questioning within a given system. (Phillips,D C 1975) A similar distinction is drawn by John White (1989b) between 'autonomy' and 'autarchy'. The autarchic person is rationally self-determining in the sense that he is negatively free from force and coercion and has rationally deliberated on the alternatives open to him. But, as in Phillips' 'Autonomy 2', this rational deliberation need not extend as far as calling into question the fundamental framework of beliefs, conventions etc. of his society. Therefore one can be autarchic within the confines of a tradition-directed society. In contrast, the autonomous person must achieve a distance from this framework and their actions and beliefs must result from principles and policies which they have themselves 'ratified' by critical reflection.

NOTES AND REFERENCES : Chapter Seven

(1) Ann Dummett, a member of the Swann Committee for part of the inquiry, claims that the call in the report for a reconsideration of the whole position of voluntary schools is a cautious way of saying that they should be abolished (Dummett,A 1986:13) It should be noted, however, that Swann is careful not to express a view on this matter, which lies outside its terms of reference.

(2) This question is in fact directly posed by Haydon in another article. See Haydon,G 1986:99.

(3) In this chapter I shall confine myself to a consideration of separate religious schools, and shall not consider any of the other important grounds on which separate schools might be sought.

(4) For further discussion of some of these issues, see Taylor,M J 1986.

(5) It should not, of course, be assumed that a person who has achieved independence of mind about religious issues is necessarily one who has rejected religious faith.

(6) See also White,John and Patricia 1986.

(7) For a discussion of the significance for religious schools of disagreement and relativism, see Aspin,D 1983.

NOTES AND REFERENCES: Chapter Eight

(1)   A historical/sociological treatment of European missionary activity in Latin America or Africa, for example, might be coloured by the underlying assumption that that activity, however misguided its strategy and approach might have been at times, was nevertheless concerned with the transmission of *truth* to those peoples. And that assumption might well inhibit (even unconsciously) the teacher of history/sociology from raising and discussing certain questions and forms of explanation of the events, arising within history/sociology, which proceed from, or lead to, a fundamental critique of religion.

(2)   Thus, although he insists that 'history must remain critical', Walsh elsewhere suggests that the history syllabus might emphasise - ' ... periods, institutions and figures ... inspired by Christian idealism.' (W:6) The quotation has a rather positive feel about it, giving the impression that only the 'good' elements in Christian history are to be studied. A genuinely critical historical approach would need to focus too, however, upon 'periods, institutions and figures' affected by Christian dogmatism, blindness and error, as well as by idealism. Walsh might well admit this, claiming that it is implied in the notion of a critical approach to history. It is only in the light of further clarity about this point that we can identify and assess the complexities involved in the task of preserving the critical independence of the disciplines in an organic/holistic religious school when those disciplines are invited to use and display, as examples of their work, material with religious significance.

(3)   We noted earlier Walsh's remark to the effect - 'If black studies for black children, then why not Christian studies for Christian children?' In more detail, he writes - 'If in schools where there is a strong concentration of black children it is a good idea to lace the curriculum with black ... (culture) ... then why not something analogous where there is a strong concentration of Catholic or Christian children?' (W:6) Walsh seems to be representing here a version of 'multi-cultural' education which is unacceptable from a liberal perspective. For, from that perspective, *all* children need exposure to black culture, not just blacks themselves or those living in an area which includes large numbers of blacks. The criterion for determining the content of the curriculum should be the need of all children for a broad introduction to a range of cultural models and experiences. This might well be compatible with certain cultural groups being given a form of education with a certain cultural emphasis, but the impulse and demand for breadth still remains. Walsh's slogan of 'black studies for black children' and 'Christian studies for Christian children' masks this and might well explain the muted treatment of the principle of breadth in this part of his account.

(4)   What exactly is meant here by Walsh is not very clear. He unpacks the notion as - ' ... love of the human beings and human worlds that are dead and gone, a critical respect and regard for these as they were in themselves, a sense of solidarity with their sufferings and their liberations, a readiness to draw inspiration from them - in a word a love that *relates* us to them.' (W:9. Emphasis in original) Thus, for Walsh, the aim of history teaching in the organic/holistic religious school is - '...to make the past live for pupils in such a way that they could actually relate thus *personally* to some parts of it...and that such a sense of personal relationship with the past would be likely to become a permanent part of their lives.' (W:9. Emphasis in original)

(5)   See also comments of Cardinal Hume reported in Egan,J 1988:95. This general perspective is re-iterated in a recent official statement on Catholic Education - 'The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School'. (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988:for example Part Two)

(6)   Hull seems to accuse Hirst of claiming that there is *no* connection or relationship between (say) Christianity and Education. Hull outlines five kinds of possible relation between Christian theology and education (Hull,J M 1976:128-129) and holds that Hirst espouses the last of these: - 'Christian theology... (is)...impossible and illegitimate as a way of understanding education. It...(has)...no contribution to offer.' (ibid:129) Hull accuses Hirst of failing to point out that - '...there can be many forms of relation between religion and education which may still be significant although they fall short of control.' (Hull,J M 1975:43) In his reply to Hull, Hirst makes it clear that, upon reflection, he does admit that such non-control relationships may well exist. A Christian might well have a view about the ultimate character of reality, for example, or about the deeper significance of personhood. And these might provide a distinctive view of the context in which autonomous pursuits such as morality, science and education are conducted. But

the autonomy of the pursuits themselves must be respected. Thus, claims Hirst, an intelligent Christian will have a view of the educational enterprise as a whole, but one which gives it - '... a position consistent with its autonomous and secular character.' (Hirst,P H 1976:156) Christian belief may illuminate and deepen the significance of 'tenable educational principles' but cannot determine or justify them. Hirst's modified position therefore seems to fit into a form of the fourth relation described by Hull - 'Christian theology might provide a possible and legitimate understanding of education, but one which is neither sufficient nor necessary.' (Hull,J M 1976:129)

As I explain later, in my view Hirst fails to consider a particular form of non-control relationship which provides a foothold for developing, within the terms of his argument, a distinctive concept of 'Christian Education'.

(7) The most important of these are as follows:

(a) Thiessen describes the 'transmissionist' element in liberal education as 'Education I'. It is in this way that he can launch his argument about the need to blur the distinctions between the four concepts of education by invoking the notion of a *continuum* across phases. But the identification of 'Education I' simply with a transmissional element is, in my view, a mistake. Thiessen's point about liberal education having to proceed along a *continuum* in terms of a move from an initially provided substantiality of belief, practice and value to gradually increasing scope for criticism and rational autonomy is well taken. But he fails to acknowledge the point that Hirst sees Education IV as an all-embracing conception of education *which includes within it* provision for this point. Thus Hirst concedes that Education IV must operate within a 'specific context' of concepts, beliefs, values, attitudes etc. which pupils have acquired initially in an uncritical way, and that it - '...must start within some system of beliefs...'(Hirst,P H 1985:13) Further, such an education has a 'firm content' derived from - '...the substantive achievements in all areas of understanding...'(Hirst,P H 1974b:85) This 'firm content' includes, for example, a defensible base from which moral education can proceed. (See Hirst,P H 1974b:86-88;Ch6,7) So Hirst would claim that Thiessen's major concern here is accommodated *within* Education IV. However, the crucial issue is that Education IV, whilst allowing for 'substantiveness' and 'content', and developmental points relating to them, contains an important criterion governing its attitude to such elements. They are to be regarded quite explicitly as preconditions for the pupils' subsequent development into rational autonomy and therefore must be (in an appropriate way and time) subject to rational criticism. Thus - 'If education must start within some system of beliefs, it is not itself aiming at the maintenance of that system. It aims at the development of the rational life by every individual whatever form that may come to take'. (Hirst,P H 1985:13) Whilst education may involve in some sense 'passing on' our values and beliefs it is never *merely* this. It also involves - '...passing on as far as is reasonable the most fundamental capacities to challenge those values and beliefs...' (Hirst,P H 1974b:83)

Hirst's position, of course, gives rise to many questions. For example, the developmental aspect to the position is undeveloped. In claiming that we should present to children the *rational status* of our values and beliefs, and not present them - '...as having a status that is not defensible' (Hirst,P H 1974b:83), Hirst must surely make some more explicit concessions to the developmental perspective taken by Thiessen. But Thiessen is wrong to see this, without further argument, as requiring a liberal education to be conceptualised in terms of a *continuum* of phases embracing education (I-IV) but abandoning the conceptual distinctions between them. This is because, as defined by Hirst, Education I is *only* concerned with transmission. It is not concerned with the crucial aim of rational autonomy and therefore does not see what it transmits as a base for this. Instead, it transmits a traditional belief system where - 'What is held true or valuable within the tradition provides the content of instruction for successive generations, a content to be accepted by those generations on the authority of the tradition or as resting on certain grounds which that tradition accepts ....(It) ... contains within itself no challenge by way of deliberately sought alternative beliefs, no self-critical monitoring procedures and no questioning of the over-arching framework.' (Hirst,P H 1985:7) For it to be regarded as a phase of *liberal education* , Education I needs to be governed by a set of principles concerning the aim of rational autonomy etc., which Hirst defines the concept as lacking. Thiessen sees Education I as a precondition for rational autonomy and as leading straightforwardly on to it. (EJT:229-30) But Thiessen himself notes the distinction between - '...acceptable and non-acceptable ways of transmitting beliefs and values to the young child, prior to his/her being able to reflect on them rationally and critically'. (EJT:230) What features of Education I acknowledge this point? To serve as a basis for rational autonomy Education I must have supplied to it certain aims and principles. Hirst's view is that

such governing principles are contained fully only within Education IV, which provides within itself for transmissionist/developmental concerns. A stress on the significance of these concerns does not in itself, as Thiessen suggests, justify blurring the distinctions between Hirst's conceptions of education by invoking the need for a *continuum*. Thiessen's stress is, of course, important, but needs to be more carefully articulated. I shall attempt to show that a more effective argument against Hirst is to challenge the adequacy of his provision for transmissionist/ developmental concerns *within* his conception of Education IV.

(b) Thiessen's failure properly to characterise Education I is seen in an earlier part of his argument where he mistakenly accuses Hirst of inconsistency in claiming that Education I can be complementary to, and compatible with, Education IV. (EJT:224-226) But this is precisely what Hirst does not claim. In his view it is 'rational catechesis' not Education I which is compatible with Education IV. Thus, Thiessen's claims about Hirst's inconsistency here are based on a misunderstanding; a failure to note Hirst's distinction between Education I and nurture/catechesis. Thiessen seems to be aware of Hirst's likely response to his argument. He notes Hirst's condemnation of indoctrinatory activities in any context, and his insistence that the activities of the home, church etc. can only be regarded as acceptable if they take the form of 'rational nurture' (EJT:226) but then shifts his ground slightly to the claim that, on Hirstian grounds, there cannot be such a thing as 'rational nurture' at all. Although, as indicated earlier, Hirst does not say enough about this matter, Thiessen does not substantiate his claim that Hirst's notion here involves an 'inherent contradiction.' (EJT:226)

(c) In the context of arguing that religious nurture might be regarded as an acceptable form of religious education, Thiessen makes the general claim that - '...the objective study of world religions is parasitic on there having been religious nurture of some kind in the first place. One can study other religions, only if people have first of all been brought up in various religious traditions.' (EJT:232) Thiessen provides no clarification and defence for his very general and sweeping claim here. Is it intended to imply, for example, that all those brought up without a religious belief are unable to gain an understanding of religious faiths? Although I agree with Thiessen's more modest conclusion that - '...we need to be much more sympathetic with the gradual exposure to other religions from within the context of one particular religious tradition' (EJT:232), the other claim seems indefensible, or at least in need of more nuanced statement.

Thiessen falsely attributes several views to Hirst. The relevant passages of Thiessen's argument here include the following: (i)- '...churches and other religious institutions ...concerned primarily with the practice and propagation of faith...committed to Education I, can nevertheless conduct their activities in such a way as to 'complement and harmonise with education, rather than run counter to it.' (EJT:224) But Hirst's view is that, although such institutions may as a matter of fact be committed to Education I, it is only to the extent that they abandon this commitment and do not conceptualise their activities as a form of education that complementarity and harmonisation can be achieved. (ii) - '...these institutions are committed to Education I according to Hirst's own criteria'. (EJT:225) But Hirst does not see these institutions as necessarily committed to Education I. Indeed it is only because they are not that Hirst sees a way, through their espousal of the notion of 'rational catechesis', of regarding their activities as legitimate. Third, Hirst is accused of having - '...a *laissez faire* attitude towards the family and the church, allowing these institutions to do whatever they please in the name of tolerance.' (EJT:226) This is clearly a misreading of Hirst.

(8) See, for example, O'Hear,A 1984:esp Ch6. John White in 'The aims of education re-stated' takes 'becoming a religious believer' to be a paradigm case of rejecting autonomy in favour of '...taking things henceforth on authority alone.' (White,J 1982:127)

(9) For example, Hirst holds that - '...the true character of religious beliefs only emerges when they are combined with a thorough secularisation of all other areas of human thought and experience....religious beliefs, rightly understood, are not a proper basis for scientific, moral, aesthetic, or other beliefs; rather they complement these other forms of belief in some way and are even perhaps in significant measure dependent on them.' (Hirst,P H 1974b:3;see also Ch1) On the relationship between religious and moral beliefs see Hirst,P H 1974b:Ch2; Ch3:52-57: Ch4:69-75: 1974a:Ch12 esp178-180. On the relationship between religious beliefs and scientific beliefs see Hirst,P H 1976:155-156.

(10) This is seen in one of his earliest (and neglected) papers 'Talking about God'. (Hirst,P H 1963) Here he points out that since the Christian makes claims to knowledge and truth there is a need to

show how religious discourse can meet the general demand upon all the forms of knowledge that they be in some way 'related to experience'. He writes - 'Christians have got to show what aspects of experience demand religious language, how it is related to that experience and how we can distinguish valid from invalid statements in this domain of knowledge...Once religious language loses its roots in experiences and is developed in a speculative fashion there is no end to the nonsense that can be spun out...' (Hirst,P H 1963:10-11) For Hirst's claim, contra David Jenkins, that religious knowledge fills a 'gap' in our experience see Hirst,P H 1963:10-11. - 'There *are* gaps in our knowledge which only religious knowledge...can fill. Looked at in this way, God *is* needed to explain the universe. Not because He is simply invoked where reason has failed but because 'explaining the universe' is one of the functions of that rational pursuit we call religious knowledge.' (ibid:10, Emphases in original). As examples of the 'gaps' referred to here, Hirst cites questions such as 'why is there a universe at all?',sin, death etc. He makes it clear that his reference to 'experience' here is intended to denote 'natural' experience of the world and other people and not experience of religious acts. (ibid:12) There is here a prefiguration of Hirst's recent insistence that religion be seen as anchored in 'primary theory'. (Hirst,P H 1985:8. See Appendix C Footnote 4). Such an 'anchor' is indicated in Hirst's reply to D Z Phillips, who had argued that there are indeed tests for truth in the religious domain - '...accepted public rules do not necessarily imply any tests for the truth of what is uttered'. (Hirst,P H 1970:214) There may be tests for the correct use of religious statements within given religions, but - '...tests of orthodoxy...are not tests for *truth*'. (Hirst,P H 1970:214. Emphases in original)

(11) Whilst Hirst considers the possibility that the emergence of such agreed tests may be impossible in principle, he nevertheless claims that this - '...has not been demonstrated as yet...'(Hirst,P H 1974a:184) and he sees 'some signs for hope' in claims for knowledge in (then recent) developments in Philosophy of Religion; for example, neo-Thomism. (Hirst,P H 1974a184-187) Such developments hold out, in his view, the possibility of finding - '...an agreed rational basis for at least some religious claims...'. (Hirst,P H 1974a:186) A move away from this optimism is detectable in Hirst's later work, where he makes clear that the uncertainty about religious beliefs is not only about their truth but also about their meaning (Hirst,P H 1974a:187), and that in this domain - '...there is...fundamental disagreement concerning what counts as 'rational criticism'....(Here)... understanding may be reaching the limits of our capacities'. (Hirst,P H 1985:12)

(12) It is true that Hirst insists that an appropriate education in religion must not confine itself to the 'external' features of religion and that the significance of commitment must be not be neglected. Thus in his 'Additional Note' to his paper 'Morals, religion and the maintained school', Hirst makes it clear that 'teaching about' religion should not be interpreted to mean confining attention to say the history or sociology of religions. The pupils must enter - '... as fully as possible into an understanding of what they (religions) claim to be true.' (Hirst,P H 1974a:187) And this in turn involves the use of appropriate methods such as - '... imaginative involvement in expressions of religious life and even a form of engagement in these activities themselves.' (Hirst,P H 1974a:187) For Hirst, central to this form of religious education is the exploration of - '...the significance of commitments and non-commitments in the interests of individual judgement' (Hirst,P H 1985:14), but he insists strongly that pupils must 'fully recognise' that - '...they are not being asked to do anything that either assumes, or is intended to produce, the acceptance of any particular set of beliefs.' (Hirst,P H 1974a:188)

The significance of commitment is also acknowledged by Hirst in other elements of his theory. Thus he acknowledges that participants may bring to the educational process many varied existing commitments which may or may not undergo change, and which constitute a resource for the group. Further, he sees education as precisely concerned with commitment in the sense that it is aimed at developing capacities for commitments of a rational kind. - 'What it aims at throughout is commitment in belief and practice in every area - commitment by the individual to the most rationally justifiable beliefs and values as he (sic) can judge these in his particular circumstances'. (Hirst,P H 1985:13) It will be recalled that Hirst holds that the process of education is not incompatible with the holding of particular commitments, and that he denies that such an education is aiming at doubt or scepticism.

(13) It is true that there are many varieties and degrees of non-belief and belief. My general point here does not deny this.

(14) For Nichols' account of the need for autonomy as as aim in the religious education of children see, for example, Nichols,K 1978:esp paras 17;28;50-51;59;61;66;74;84;187-198;209;Ch8;

Nichols,K 1979:Ch1,3-6. For his views on the significance and character of catechetical formation from the 'inside' of a faith for the achievement of this aim see, for example, Nichols,K 1978:esp paras 26-27;61;187-198;209;Ch8; Nichols,K 1979:Ch1,3-6.

(15) Very little writing or research has been devoted to the concept of the ethos of the school, either of an empirical or a philosophical sort. Yet the notion is clearly a very important one for several reasons. In general, school ethos is a significant part of the educational experience of students, and can powerfully assist, or frustrate, the achievement of overall educational goals of all kinds. It is particularly significant for religious schools, as one of their main distinctive features.

What are the logical elements of the concept of an ethos? Dancy appeals to a dictionary definition of ethos as 'The prevalent tone or sentiment of a people or a community.' (Dancy,J 1979) (Compare Fowler's Modern English usage - 'The characteristic spirit informing a nation, an age, a literature, an institution, or any similar unit'). Dancy teases out two logical elements of an ethos: Prevalence and Generality/Publicity.

I suggest (very roughly) five related elements of the notion of a school ethos as a development of Dancy's view. In my view, a school ethos, or at least an effective school ethos, must be:

(i) (Relatively) unitary. Against Rutter *et al* in 'Fifteen Thousand Hours', consistency is perhaps not so much a desirable, but a constitutive, feature of an ethos. (See Rutter,M *et al* 1979:esp 191-194)

(ii) Dominant, in the sense that it must be more powerful than other influences.

(iii) Pervasive (All embracing/encompassing/holistic).

(iv) Given/established, in the sense that it is not concocted or negotiated each year *de novo*. (See Aristotle's suggestion in *Ethics* Bks 1,2 that what constitutes an ethos arises spontaneously from natural habits; from what has become second nature in one's dealings with associates). It often exerts its influence in a non-transparent way.

(v) Maintained by attitudes within the institution and also by concrete procedures and practices.

(For empirical studies of related matters see, for example, Rutter,M *et al* 1979; Mortimore,P *et al* 1988. For the concept of school ethos see Hogan,P 1984)

An ethos is clearly permeated by aims and values, and these require critical investigation and analysis in any institution.

What sort of ethos should a school that is committed to liberal education have? Of its nature, an ethos must be substantial and determinate. The notion is perhaps most at home in contexts where there is a homogeneity of values. (See Bronfenbrenner's account of Soviet and American education in 'Two Worlds of Childhood' - Bronfenbrenner,U 1974 - and Kessen's account of Chinese upbringing - Kessen,W 1980). In these contexts, a particularly distinctive kind of person is being produced. But, granted the phenomenon of value diversity and controversiality, and the concern of liberal educators to avoid imposing a particular conception of the good life on their students, does the liberal view possess a sufficiently 'thick' set of values to generate a substantive ethos?

For discussions relevant to the concept of the ethos of the school from a liberal perspective see Fielding,M 1988; Hirst,P H 1974b:Ch7; O'Hear,A 1981:Ch5; Sockett,H 1988; Walzer,M 1983:Ch8; White,J 1982:esp 147-149; White,P 1983;1987a;1988b;1989b.

The character of the ethos of a liberal religious school is a matter which requires detailed analysis. However, granted the defensibility of the concept of Education IVB, a liberal might take a more relaxed attitude to the necessary substantiality of such an ethos.

For discussions relevant to issues concerning the ethos of religious schools see, for example, Buetow,H A 1988:esp Ch8,9; Deakin,R 1989a;1989b; Dykstra,C 1981; Egan,J 1988:esp 97-99;109; Field,F 1989; Hauerwas,S 1983; Hull,J 1984:Ch1;5; McClelland,V A 1988b; National Society (Church of England) for promoting Religious Education 1984:Ch4; Nichols,K 1978:esp paras 29,38; O'Keeffe,B 1988c; O'Leary,D & Sallnow,T 1982; Sacred Congregation for Catholic

Education 1977;1982;1983; Watson,B 1987:esp 5-6; 1988. The notion of the ethos of a Catholic school is given prominence in recent documents concerning the evaluation and appraisal of such schools. See Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 1988b:esp C1;D1;H1;K1-4;M1-7;N1-8; 1989:F1-2;G1;H1. The notion of ethos also figures prominently in an important recent document concerning Catholic Education. See Congregation for Catholic Education 1988:esp paras 25;45;96;104;106-7;109;111-2.

On the empirical investigation of the ethos of church schools see, for example, Burgess,R 1983; Egan,J 1988; McLaren,P 1986; O'Keeffe,B 1986.

(16) On the general issue of whether religious schools should be supported by public funds see, for example, Almond,B 1988a; Callan,E 1988c; Crittenden,B 1988:esp Ch8; Flew,A 1968; Strike,K 1982b:Ch5.

(17) For criticisms of religious schools see, for example, Ball,S 1988; Ball,W & Troyna,B 1987; Buetow,H A 1988:Ch2; O'Keeffe,B 1988c; Rogers,R 1982; Socialist Educational Association, 1981;1986. See also correspondence columns of *The Guardian* (1986) July 9;16.

For arguments in favour of religious schools see, for example, Deakin,R 1989a;1989b; Duncan,G 1988; May,P 1988; O'Keeffe,B 1986:esp Ch5,6; 1988b; Socialist Educational Association 1981:Appendix C.

(18) For emphasis on the importance of tradition see, for example, Almond,B 1990; Bambrough,R 1987; Cooper,D 1987; Dunlop,F 1986; Hampshire,S 1983; Kekes,J 1988;1989; Kerr,F 1986; MacIntyre,A 1981;1985;1988;1990; Midgley,M 1980:esp Ch12; Nagel,T 1979:Ch9; O'Hear,A 1981:Ch5;1985;1986;1988; Oakeshott,M 1962:esp the essays 'Rationalism in Politics','The Tower of Babel', 'Rational Conduct', 'On being Conservative'; Quinton,A 1971; Scruton,R 1980a;1980b;1983; Weil,S 1952.

(19) See, for example, Sandel,M 1982; Kymlicka,W 1989:esp Ch4;8.

NOTES AND REFERENCES: Appendix A

(1) One of the problems here is a rather restricted account of the nature and role of instruction. (See BCC:para 52).

(2) It is not clear why the report places particular emphasis upon *sufferings* and *disadvantages* here.

(3) But compare Slote,M 1979 who claims that - '..religious people, at some point and at some level, actually imagine they lack choice and are mere instruments or things....having such illusory thoughts is part of what it is fully to accept God's authority. To see clearly that one has a choice-perhaps a coerced and threatened choice, but a choice, nonetheless - about whether to do as God asks is precisely *not* to submit to divine authority in the manner of the devout.' (ibid:322. Emphasis in original.) Also D Z Phillips' paper 'God and Ought'. (Phillips,D Z 1970:Ch1)

(4) See BCC:para 184 in full, where it is claimed, amongst other things, that - 'The *content* of Christian faith pushes us towards the method of critical openness, and the content cannot be immune from the *method* it dictates...a method of enquiry, to which the Christian is prompted by special reasons of his own, but which is also mandatory for all thinking and testing of hypotheses'. (BCC:para 184 - Emphases in original) See also BCC:paras 26-27 for changes in the way that Christian faith is now perceived and the relevance of those changes for Christian nurture; BCC:paras 59-63 for preliminary consideration of the compatibility of Christian nurture with a concern for autonomy; BCC:Chs 2, 11, 12 for differing Christian understandings of childhood; BCC:paras 140-144 for the concept of critical openness as found in the New Testament.

(5) See, for example, Section 10 of the Council's 'Declaration on Religious Freedom' in Abbott,W M (Ed) 1966:689-690. - 'It is one of the major tenets of Catholic doctrine that man's response to God in faith must be free. Therefore no one is to be forced to embrace the Christian faith against his own will...the act of faith is of its very Nature a free act...It is therefore completely in accord with the nature of faith that in matters religious every manner of coercion on the part of man should be excluded. In consequence, the principle of religious freedom makes no small contribution to the creation of an environment in which men can without hindrance be invited to Christian faith, and embrace it of their own free will'.- The centrality of this principle to the tradition is underlined by the importance of the notion of freedom of conscience to the thought of Thomas Aquinas. On this issue, see, for example, D'Arcy,E 1961. Steven Lukes argues that Aquinas gives the clearest expression of the ideal of personal autonomy since Aristotle. See Lukes,S 1973:52.

The notion of 'freedom of conscience' in Aquinas needs to be handled with caution, however, and not interpreted in too modern a manner. This is brought out by Anthony Kenny in his paper 'The Conscience of Sir Thomas More' (Kenny,A 1987), where he shows that, contrary to popular modern interpretations, More did not assign primacy to conscience in any straightforward way. Kenny writes - '...the theory of conscience which More accepted is in every respect identical with... (that)...of Thomas Aquinas; and in many respects different from any theory of conscience since Kant. For Aquinas, unlike Kant, the human conscience was not a law-giver. Rather, a man's conscience was his opinion, true or false, about the law made by God. To act against one's conscience was always wrong, because it involved acting against what one believed to be the law of God. But to act in accordance with one's conscience was not always right: for one's conscience might be an erroneous opinion. An erroneous conscience would not excuse a man from wrongdoing, if he acted against the clear law of God. He should have formed his conscience correctly. And forming one's conscience was not a matter of making a decision, or making a commitment: it was a matter of finding out a piece of information - perhaps by consulting the scriptures, or the councils of the church, or it might be by reading the writings of the saints, or by private meditation and reasoning. The only case where a mistaken conscience would excuse from sin was when the matter in question was a debatable one: where there was no clear scripture or council of the Church to settle the matter, and where there was a division of opinion among the saints and sacred writers....(O)n this theory, it was obviously important that one's conscience should be properly formed. It was not enough to act in accordance with one's conscience: one's conscience must be *true*. (Kenny,A 1987:110-111. Emphasis in original) - '...(T)rue conscience is simply the right appreciation of God's law'. (Kenny,A 1987:114)

(6)   It is true that elsewhere in Section 86 of the document the following sentence appears - 'Adults must realise that adolescents hold fast to the faith and strengthen themselves in it, not because of any identification with adults, but because of their own convictions as these are gradually explored'. It is unclear, however, whether this is being presented simply as a matter of *fact* or as something to be positively welcomed.

NOTES AND REFERENCES: Appendix B

(1) Ackerman puts the following words into the mouth of the liberal educator - 'In exercising my power over the young, I have not used it to indoctrinate them into one or another of the competing ideals affirmed by members of our political community. In my capacity as liberal educator, I do not say that any of these ideals is worthy of greater respect than any other. Instead, my aim has been to provide each child with those cultural materials that - given his imperfect self-control and inexperience - he would find most useful in his efforts at self-definition. After all, these children are citizens of our liberal state. Although they may be subjected to special limitations when necessary to assure their future standing as citizens, they may not otherwise be denied their right to pursue their good in the way they think best. For are not they at least as good as we are?' (ACK:159)

(2) About any account of liberal education we can ask:- Is it being claimed, as by Charles Bailey, that reason, rational enquiry and autonomy are objectively valuable; that reason can show the objective validity of some values and some life-ideals and ways of life rather than others; and that there are rational limits to the choices available to an individual? Or on the other hand, is the account underpinned, as in John White, by a subjective theory of value which takes 'post-reflective desire satisfaction' (granted certain basic moral requirements) as a criterion of value? (White,J 1973:Ch2; 1982:Ch3)

Ackerman's position on these matters seems unclear. At some points, he seems to take a 'subjective' stance, as in his principle of neutrality, with its stipulation that no power holder can defend his power with a reason which involves claiming that his conception of the good is better than that asserted by his fellow citizens, (ACK:11), in his reluctance to be precise about acceptable forms of 'initial culture' and in his remarks about the aims of liberal education noted above with their implication that the child has quite wide-ranging freedom of choice. It would be inaccurate to interpret Ackerman exclusively in 'subjective' terms, however. This is because certain values and commitments are built into Ackerman's conception of the 'neutral dialogue'; a commitment to rationality and consistency as principles governing the dialogue, for example. And it is clear that Ackerman is unequivocally committed to the principle of autonomy. So it would seem that, as far as values, life-ideals and ways of life are concerned, the range of choice available to the child (and to any other liberal citizen), is determined by an application of the principles of rationality, consistency, neutrality and the substantive value of autonomy. Whilst an application of these principles may leave a wide range of legitimate possibilities, it is not an unlimited range. All liberal citizens remain bound by the requirement of the 'neutral dialogue', for example, and the values which it presupposes.

(3) Scrimshaw writes that - '...if any two children are to learn the same things then they need different curricula, not the same one. This is partly because they will have learned different things prior to entering school and partly because they will be learning different things outside school as their formal education continues...(Anyone interested) ...in the effective introduction of a common liberal education for all should be urging the provision of individualised (but not individualistic) curricula...a curriculum for liberal education has to be planned as compensatory in relation to the rest of a child's learning experiences, not as a totally independent entity...the disappearance of the notion of a school's (as distinct from a child's) timetable is surely one natural result.' - (Scrimshaw,P 1986:35) Although Scrimshaw does not develop the point, the notion of *diagnosis* is clearly implicit in his position.

NOTES AND REFERENCES: Appendix C

(1) It should be noted that Hirst does not use the term 'catechesis' in his early writings on this topic, and seems unclear how to refer to the notion. (see Hirst,P H 1972:11) The term 'catechesis' is first used in his 1978 Wiseman Lecture. (Hirst,P H 1981)

(2) Hirst makes it clear that one precondition for this to be possible is that the religious beliefs in question must themselves be rational. (See, for example, Hirst,P H 1972:9)

(3) Hirst does in fact say little about why such activities should be regarded as 'proper', and does not engage in a discussion of the sorts of issues raised in Chapter One. He says little more than that rational considerations alone cannot uncontroversially and fully settle many matters that are - ' ... of enormous importance for people's lives.' (Hirst,P H 1972:10) Further, the significance of commitment - including religious commitment - in the face of objective uncertainty and disagreement - '...can be considerable' (Hirst,P H 1972:10), although, interestingly, Hirst does not expand on what this significance might be, exactly. As a result of all this, Hirst acknowledges - '...a manifold need for institutions in which men can explore to the full and act together according to the beliefs they hold, and through which they can also seek to present and commend to others what they hold to be true.' (Hirst,P H 1972:10) Hirst seems to be referring here to institutions such as political parties and churches. He seems to give the impression that the involvement of children with these institutions is unproblematic, claiming, for example, that it is appropriate to seek the encounter of children with Christian faith . '...through the activities of the Church in catechesis.' (Hirst,P H 1981:93) Hirst needs to say much more about the additional moral complexities which arise in relation to children in these cases - and to supply a fully supporting rationale for their involvement. However, since he stresses that such activities are legitimate to the extent that they respect the demands of rationality and rational autonomy, (and for this reason are compatible with 'education' fully understood) it seems reasonable to speculate that my general argument is one which Hirst would not rule out of court.

(4) Basic to Hirst's later formulation of his distinctions is his clear insistence that education must be conceptualised in the light of an adequate account of the nature of knowledge, understanding and rationality. Thus he writes - 'What is needed is a concept of education that does justice to our contemporary understanding of the historical construction of all conceptual schemes, their necessary features, and the general characteristics that claims to the justification of beliefs must have, no matter what form of beliefs we are considering'. (Hirst,P H 1985:12) Hirst's four concepts of Education (I) - (IV) rest on a range of epistemological bases. In his view only Education (IV) adequately and fully mirrors a correct view of these epistemological matters and is therefore an acceptable account of education.

Hirst epistemology is a 'critical rational' one. This is in contrast with, and has developed out of, 'traditional' approaches, which see truth as determined not by appropriate public investigation and test, but by appeal to grounds or principles dogmatically enshrined in a tradition itself. The 'critical rational' approach is based, in Hirst's view, on 'primary theory', a domain of understanding common to all men (sic) and independent of any particular traditional belief system, since it is related to fundamentally shared features of our life as human beings; for example our human physical and mental constitution and the necessary features of the environment in which we live. (ibid:7-9) Science was the first of the areas of understanding to develop a system of abstract theoretical knowledge based on primary theory only and independent of the belief claims of all traditional systems. From this development, there has arisen a - '...progressive, open-ended, internally competitive and self-critical approach to knowledge with its tests tightly related to the meaning of the concepts in which its beliefs are formulated' (ibid:8-9); an approach which Hirst considers to be 'cognitively superior' to all others.

Hirst holds that this approach is valid not just for empirical or scientific forms of understanding, but for all forms including moral and religious ones. These, he argues, have developed in the same way and are open to the same general demand for justification and assessment. It is, he claims - '...simply a mistake to see these areas as generated in some non-historical fashion or as fundamentally non-rational in character'. (ibid:11) He writes - '...I see no reason why in these areas, as in the sciences, alternative beliefs do not necessarily operate in competition with each other for mutual appraisal in terms of their adequacy in providing understanding and explanation of human behaviour' (ibid:11) and therefore claims that - 'In these very controversial areas beliefs can be more or less rational in certain respects.' (ibid:11) Hirst, of course, is concerned to

emphasise that a particular kind of rationality is appropriate in religion - although he offers no detailed account of its character. The implications of this omission will surface later in my argument.

Each of the four broad conceptions of education discussed by Hirst is distinguished on the basis that each employs, in determining what is to be learnt, a distinctive view of the nature of knowledge and belief, each involving a distinctive attitude towards the significance of disagreements in belief and the value and scope of criticism and innovation in knowledge. The conceptions are as follows:-

(a) Education 1 (The Traditional Concept). This is based on an undilutedly 'traditional' concept of knowledge which sees what is true or false as being determined and justified not by reference to the kinds of procedures distinctive of 'critical rationality' but by appeal (in various ways) to tradition; or, more particularly, to the features of a particular traditional belief system. Such a system (in its 'ideal type' form) lacks within itself - '...challenge by way of deliberately sought alternative beliefs ... self-critical monitoring procedures and ... questioning of the over-arching framework' (ibid:7) even though it may allow for a degree of innovation within the system itself. The resultant concept of education, therefore, is based on the view that - 'What is held true or valuable within the tradition provides the content of instruction for successive generations, a content to be accepted by those generations on the authority of the tradition or as resting on certain grounds which that tradition accepts.' (ibid:7) Thus such an education involves the uncritical - and perhaps indoctrinatory - transmission of a range of determinate beliefs, values, concepts, dispositions, emotions etc; indeed, perhaps a complete view and way of life. This seems to be what Hirst earlier described as a 'primitive' concept of Education.

Although Hirst gives no particular examples of 'Education 1', it would seem that an example of what he has in mind here are various forms of Islamic Education, where the validity of every aspect of knowledge is seen as dependent upon the Islamic tradition - and where calls are made, for example, for Islamic conceptions of science, literature etc. to be nourished and transmitted. (See, for example, Ashraf S A 1982;1986;1988).

Hirst's rejection of this conception of education is based, in this later formulation of his position, primarily upon his rejection of the underlying conception of knowledge and belief. For Hirst, it is simply not the case, for example, that - '...in the last analysis all knowledge and understanding rest on cognitive presuppositions or commitments which man may or may not make, different traditions presenting alternative foundations which are in crucial respects mutually incommensurable'. (ibid:7) Not only have areas of knowledge achieved logical independence from such traditional belief systems, he claims, but such systems themselves stand open to the demands of criticism and assessment.

Hirst holds that commitment to a 'critical rational' (CR) view of the nature of knowledge and belief means that education can no longer be justifiably conceived in traditional terms. Instead, from this perspective, - 'The concepts, beliefs, values, skills, dispositions involved will all ... need to be presented as anchored in a constant concern for immediate experience, alternative beliefs, open critical debate and the revision of beliefs in the light of publicly shared evidence'. (ibid:9) Instead of the development in pupils of one set of beliefs and values, such an education seeks autonomous personal judgement on such matters on the basis of appropriate evaluation of publicly accessible evidence. In the light of the nature and conclusiveness of the evidence available in relation to given questions, pluralism of belief can be regarded as 'thoroughly legitimate'.

Hirst holds that 'Education IV' is the fullest embodiment of this view of Education . He outlines, however, two other conceptions which each allow some scope to the 'critical rational' view of knowledge, but preserve in different ways a degree of commitment to the traditional view.

(b) Education II. Here the CR view of knowledge (and therefore education) is accepted in relation to areas such as common-sense and science, but in other areas (such as aesthetics, morality and religion) the traditional conception of both knowledge and education is maintained.

Hirst seems to have in mind here an approach to education commonly found in religious schools (whether independent or voluntary aided) in our own society - where 'secular' subjects are approached in their own terms, and in a way (largely) indistinguishable from the approach adopted

in non-religious schools - but where the religious and moral elements of the school's task are approached in a distinctive 'closed' way.

For Hirst, however, 'Education II' is unjustifiably 'split in two' - 'At times it emphasises observation, experiment, discovery, the testing of rival beliefs and theories, critical discussion. At times it stresses exposition, instruction, catechesis, indoctrination and the development of understanding, attitudes, values, experience within the concepts and beliefs of one tradition.' (ibid:9) This makes education in his view - an 'inherently unstable process' since on both logical and moral grounds the CR approach cannot be confined to its allotted area. Hirst seems to suggest that, in practice as well as in principle, it will encroach upon the territory controlled by tradition. A more 'unified' notion of education is therefore needed.

(c) Education III. Here the 'CR' approach to knowledge is acknowledged but is 'accommodated' within a traditional concept. Knowledge approached in the 'CR' way is seen as necessarily locatable within a wider belief system which itself is not amenable to assessment by critical rationality (as where science is seen as requiring an ontological foundation provided by metaphysics or religion). In this way critical rationality is seen as valid but limited in scope - ' ... subservient to the more wide ranging power of a richer system.' (ibid:10) The traditional approach is therefore seen as retaining - ' ... over-arching higher level importance...' (ibid:10) Hirst rejects this conception as merely 'domesticating' the claims of autonomous knowledge and re-asserting Education I. Autonomous knowledge, he claims, cannot be regarded in this way; it is genuinely independent of all traditional belief systems for both its character and validity. Furthermore it involves 'universal forms of conceptualisation' and constitutes - ' ... a knowledge base with which traditional beliefs must be consistent if they are to continue to be defensible.' (ibid:11)

(d) Education IV. This is the conception of education which Hirst sees as the only one compatible with an adequate view of the nature of knowledge and belief. It sees as centrally important the demand for appropriate (and presumably distinctive) rational critical appraisal in all areas of beliefs, values and attitudes. It accepts that in many areas beliefs and values may not be capable of a definitive rational assessment and therefore that several alternative assessments may be rationally open. It recognises that the criteria for what counts as 'rational criticism' in some areas are disputed and acknowledges that the development of a 'rational society' can only come about through piecemeal rational criticism of the existing system rather than through any utopian planning *de novo*. Within this framework, Hirst characterises Education IV as seeking - '...that, in all areas, beliefs, values, attitudes and so on are held by individuals according to their rational status, there being a fundamental commitment to the progressive rational development of personal beliefs and practices rather than uncritical adherence to, or determined defence of, any particular set of beliefs and practices whatever their source.' (ibid:13) Since this aim is taken by Hirst to be independent of any particular belief system, he argues that - 'Education IV is therefore not Christian, Muslim, Marxist, Humanist, or Secularist. In the areas of moral and religious beliefs and practices the aim is, as in all other areas, the pursuit of understanding and personal commitment to what is judged to be most defensible.' (ibid:13)

Thus, in terms of Education IV, Religious Education is seen as centrally concerned with - '...the critical examination of alternative beliefs and their implications.' (ibid:14) Whilst holding open the question of the truth of any particular religious belief system (and indeed the religious domain as a whole), it does not aim to convey the impression either (a) that 'all religions are equally true or false', (b) that argument and criticism is unimportant in this area or (c) that commitment is to be avoided. On the question of commitment, Hirst writes that - ' ... in seeking to be determined by the bounds of reason and reason alone, Education IV must not be thought to be aiming at pupils achieving a general state of critical scepticism or doubt in any area.' (ibid:13) On the contrary, Hirst argues - 'What it aims at throughout is commitment in belief and practice in every area - commitment by the individual to the most rationally justifiable beliefs and values as he can judge these in his particular circumstances.' (ibid:13) Such an approach to religious education, claims Hirst, is open to all who accept a 'critical rational' approach in this area, whether they be believers in particular religious faiths, or non-believers.

Hirst holds that this approach is compatible with certain aspects of religious belief and practice: (a) with holding certain specifically formulated and determinate religious beliefs, although both the content of these beliefs - and the manner in which they are held - must be compatible with the principles of critical rationality; (b) with giving a child an upbringing as a 'rational' Christian, Muslim etc. (Although Hirst does not say anything about this question, it would seem

appropriate to speculate that what he has in mind here is something similar to the kind of argument about religious upbringing advanced in Chapter One; and (c) with certain forms of religious evangelism or catechesis, activities conducted from a committed and distinctive religious point of view. Hirst says little *positive* about these activities (either their character or - particularly - their rationale). Negatively, he seems to make two main kinds of points found in his earlier work: (i) That - in the light of (a) and (b) - the activities must not be conducted - ' ... so as to prevent or undermine a rationally developing commitment.' (ibid:14) (Thus indoctrination in any context is ruled out by the 'CR' approach. And presumably, evangelisation and catechesis in any religious beliefs not passing the test outlined in (a) is excluded also); (ii) Where institutions are committed to both evangelisation/ catechesis activity *and* Education IV activity, the two kinds must be clearly distinguished in the minds of the students to prevent misunderstanding, confusion and - especially - a threat to their developing autonomy in this area. As in his earlier work, Hirst insists upon this clear distinction because the two activities involved are crucially different in respect of their commitment to, and presupposition of, a particular religious position.

Hirst therefore holds, on the basis of his epistemological position, that Education IV constitutes the most justifiable form of education, and that it should be implemented in all areas of knowledge and belief.

With regard to questions of policy concerning schooling, Hirst admits that these have to be determined in our particular society (which like all complex societies is not in practice organised in a wholly rational way) by an appropriate democratic process having regard not just to matters of theoretical principle but also to the need to achieve practical compromise. This confirms Hirst's general reluctance to argue directly to conclusions about practical educational policy directly from (merely) philosophical considerations alone. Nevertheless Hirst advances briefly his own set of comments or proposals regarding policy which can be conveniently summarised as follows:

1. Distinctive religious voluntary schools run along the lines of Education I, II and III - ' ... seem ... not only to offer an indefensible form of religious education, but to be inconsistent with the principles that should govern an open, critical, rational and religiously pluralist society.' (ibid:15) (Hirst acknowledges that adherents of Education II and III are not necessarily going to seek separate schools: Given the logic of their position they may find 'supplementary provision' of one sort or another satisfactory).

2. Those committed to Education IV should seek to transform religious education in county maintained schools so that it corresponds to critical rational principles, and to ensure that - 'Any possible complement to that in terms of the promotion of any particular religious way of life ... (be kept) ... sharply distinct from the directly educational function of the school, and on a strictly voluntary basis.' (ibid:16)

3. Those committed to Education IV are likely to be 'strongly opposed' to separate schools for particular religious groups on three major grounds:

(a) - '...they will tend to be inadequate in their support of open, critical, rational education, particularly in areas of religious and moral education.' (ibid:16)

(b) - '...the committed ethos of the school will restrict undesirably the choice of children in important aspects of life when they should be open to a variety of influences within the generally agreed framework of the common morality of the society.' (ibid:16)

(c) - '...such schools necessarily encourage social fragmentation in the society along religious lines. The pluralism of a system of separate schools seems to me to be not the pluralism of a positively- developing rational critical society, for such a society will wish its major institutions to encourage unity amongst its members, a unity born of an open, rational, critical approach to all of life's concerns.' (ibid:16)

(5) See particularly the description of Education IV in the preceding footnote.

(6) For recent discussions of the relationship between 'education' and 'catechesis' see Nichols,K 1978; 1979:Ch1; Rummery,R M 1975; Groome,T 1980:esp Ch2,4,5,6,PtIV; Westerhof,J H 1985.

(7)   Or indeed whether *any* commitment at all is made in some cases, for example where an individual finds it difficult to make a settled judgement on a particular matter where rational considerations permit a plurality of views.

NOTES AND REFERENCES: Appendix D

(1) First, it is true, but uncontroversial, that 'life-planning' in the Rawlsian sense requires a society
with a certain level of wealth. But this gives rise to no major difficulties for the 'life-planning'
theory. For example, John White admits, in 'The aims of education re-stated', that less wealthy -
or indeed poor - societies might have different educational priorities. (White,J 1982:138-139) But
in a society such as ours, 'life-planning' seems a possibility. Further argument would be required
to show its inappropriateness as an ideal. The second part of the quotation from Wolff seems to
offer such an argument in suggesting that the very activity of 'life planning' is *inherently*
associated with specific (middle class; bourgeois) values. It is difficult to see the justification of
this criticism. The claim of the theory is that the activity of life-planning (appropriately
conceived) is itself valuable for every person, given the satisfaction of basic preconditions, such
as a necessary level of wealth etc. The *content* of a given adopted plan is what should be
highlighted to determine whether it is 'middle class' etc. or not. If the activity of considering
one's wants as a whole, trying to order them into some sort of structure etc. is labelled 'middle
class', this is no more than a sociological label:- a statement about the groups in society who as
a contingent matter of fact happen to engage in (or to have the opportunity to engage in) this
activity. It says nothing to justify the assumption that the value of such an activity is limited to
those groups. (Compare Bailey,C 1984:205;219-221). As to the content of life-plans, the
educational process is seen as necessarily opening up possibilities for pupils; as precisely
overcoming limitations of class-based conceptions of appropriate ways of life.

(2) I owe this point to Paul H Hirst in discussion.

(3) These elements seem to be as follows:

(i) White admits that, to retain its plausibility, the 'post-reflective desire satisfaction' theory of
value has to be interpreted as asserting that - '...one's good is constituted by desire-satisfaction
over one's life as a whole, not at such and such discrete points in it'. (White,J 1982:55) Granted,
however, that one's desires are likely to change over a lifetime (for a host of reasons), then
flexibility in life-plans seems to be a necessary feature of them; one demanded by White's
fundamental value position.

(ii) White is concerned to avoid raising reflectiveness (the activity of determining one's life-plan
etc.) into a substantive conception of the good for man. He wants to leave room for impulse,
spontaneity, attraction etc. in human life, and not to rule out - '...as constituents of one's well-
being, commitments which are less the product of reflection than of being drawn into, fascinated
by, perhaps even being taken over by, activities or projects of different sorts'. (White,J 1982:57)
We shall look in more detail shortly at White's allowance in his thesis for 'natural' elements such
as these. For the moment, though, we can note that one implication of this allowance is that, to
accommodate it, life plans must be conceived flexibly. White talks of the need for life-plans to
allow room for spontaneity etc. What needs to be brought out more clearly is the necessity for
this to occur.

(iii) White insists that a person's life plan must be 'expanded' to provide not just for conflicts
between the individual's own wants but also for - '...conflicts...between moral rules or different
parties' interests, as related to his leading a morally virtuous life'. (White,J 1982:94) White
insists that the 'self-regarding' and the 'other-regarding' elements of a life-plan must be integrated
into a coherent whole; there can be no question of a person forming a separate 'self-regarding' life-
plan which is to be immune from change in the face of moral considerations. In relation to such a
person - 'There is no question of his adjusting or altering his life-plan, only a question of what
weight he is to give to *his* life-plan on particular occasions as compared to others'. (White,J
1982:95. Emphasis in original) But such a person would be unable to achieve and maintain an
appropriate form of integrated 'psychic unity' - and must therefore form a unified 'expanded' life-
plan of the sort to which White refers. The relevance of this point to the necessary flexibility of
life-plans is clear. For the expansion of life-plans called for by White is not just an expansion of
scope, but also an expansion of complexity. Even if the notion of an inflexible 'blueprint' were
plausible in relation to the purely 'self-regarding' life-plan, it clearly falls down as an account of
the character of its 'expanded' relation. Granted the on-going complexity of the 'resolutions' and
'integrations' demanded in the notion of a life-plan in the 'expanded' sense, flexibility would seem
to be a necessary feature of any such plan.

(4)   Hepburn writes - 'The well-integrated person shows consistency of character and personal resources. He does not find himself pulling down what he has just been building up; he is not taken aback by seemingly alien urges and aversions, or taken by surprise by crises of identity...(F)ragmentation, ...(and)...dispersedness are common complaints of those who feel their lives lacking in point or significance.' (Hepburn,R W 1982:122)

(5)   MacIntyre writes - 'A life lived from moment to moment, from episode to episode, unconnected by threads of large-scale intention, would lack the basis for many characteristically human institutions: marriage...the carrying on of families...through generations and so on...'. (MacIntyre,A 1981:98)

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