Why the Development of Character should be a Central Aim of School Education

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Abstract

What is character and what should its place be in school education? This thesis examines these two fundamental questions, contending ultimately, that character ought to be a central aim of school education. Underpinning this work are two premises that are clarified as the thesis progresses: (a) the notion of character is broader than moral character and (b) there is a valuable relationship between the development of character and human flourishing.

This thesis contains 8 chapters and is divided into two major parts. The first part (consisting of 5 chapters) outlines and considers various perspectives on the concept of character. It is shown that there is a range of ideas associated with the label 'character', both in educational as well as in philosophical discourse; yet, there is a lack of consensus on what the notion entails. In particular, the contention herein is that the notion of character is not merely moral character, and a broader characterisation of the concept is one that is compatible with ancient philosophical thought (of Plato, Aristotle, as well as ancient Indian philosophy).

The second part of the thesis (consisting of 3 chapters) endorses a broader notion of character and deliberates upon its implications in school education, particularly in relation to the aims of education. I begin by delineating a broader characterisation of character. Arguing that character should be an aim of education, I examine other prominent candidates (autonomy and wellbeing) in order to assess this claim. In particular, I argue that character is intrinsic to an individual's wellbeing (which has recently been advocated as a central aim of education).

Thus, not only does this thesis shed light on the concept of character, it perhaps more importantly, reveals the necessity of this concept for school education.

Declaration

I, Shilpa Sharma, hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Shilpa Sharma

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Introduction

Most societies, whether Eastern, Western, Liberal, Conservative, Democratic, Socialist, and so forth, are concerned with addressing basic issues related to the livelihood of their citizens. It is not a matter uniquely related to liberal-democratic societies such as England, the United States and Canada.[1] The education of persons is arguably among the most important of these questions. What exactly is education, how it is to be delivered, and who will be the recipient of it are all realistic concerns. Within the field of education studies there are those who are concerned with economic, sociological, historical and philosophical issues, to name a few (though the lines between these areas can easily be blurred and divisions are not necessarily so crudely discerned). Most people, regardless of their area of expertise, have an opinion about education: particularly, what it is for and where it is going. John White (1982) explains that it is not simply educators, policymakers and parents that ought to have a vested interest in education and its aims,

> *every* citizen has an interest in this. 'What should our society be like?' is a question which as a citizen he cannot avoid. It overlaps so much with the question about education that the two cannot sensibly be kept apart; so although for some, for teachers and parents, the educational question is of immediate practical importance since the answer to it helps to shape even the very details of their job or role, it also has a broader relevance for all of us, (p. 1).

This thesis is a philosophical study, and is a conscious deliberation on the type of school education we should have and why. Should our education teach us simply how to add (so we can later learn how to accumulate money), or should it also teach us how and why we should limit our greed (particularly when it's at the expense of others)? Should education give us the tools to secure a roof over our head, or should it also enable us to adapt and cope in case this roof is blown down? Should education encourage us to critically think about a situation, or should it also motivate us to *act*? Should we learn to only be critical of the world, or should we also learn to be critical of ourselves? What kind of education is necessary in today's

[1] Nevertheless, this thesis is concerned with liberal democratic societies such as the ones mentioned above.

multicultural, multilingual, multinational, 'modern' era? I begin this investigation by examining the aims of school education[2].

'To argue about the aims of education is to argue about what it is to be educated. It is, therefore, worrying that today there is relatively little discussion of aims (or the concept) of education,' (Barrow, 1999: p. 2). This quotation makes a significant assumption: that education is characterised by particular aims, and that to say of a person that she is 'educated' is to make reference to these aims. In this way, Barrow (1999) indicates the necessity and worth of examining and discussing the aims of education; an endeavour which is undertaken in the second part of the thesis. It is necessary to get to grips with basic concepts that are used throughout this work: specifically, education, schooling and aims. Although I do not offer an in-depth exploration of these concepts, it is necessary to take note of a few important points on the general nature of these.

It was mentioned above that this thesis is concerned with *school* education, or *schooling*. This is not to be confused with the notion of education. Roughly, education may be seen as a process of developing different types of knowledge and understanding among various groups or individuals[3]; this process occurs for the bettering of individuals. In other words, there is an implicit idea that this education enhances the life of persons involved. The process of education may take place in either a formal or informal setting. That is, education can occur in a prescribed way within a particular establishment, or by-chance without any particular preparation. Examples of this process can be illustrated as follows: a craftsman who initiates an apprentice into his art, a father who demonstrates his cooking skills to his children, or a professor who imparts her knowledge of the human brain to her neurophysiology students. Thus, education can take place in a variety of settings involving different types of knowledge.

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[2] From the outset, it is important to say that this work is concerned specifically with the aims of *school* education, or schooling. In other words, an underlying focus is the question 'what are schools for and why?'

[3] This concept could be interpreted in two ways: in a narrow sense, which, I think, is R.S. Peters' notion referring to the 'deliberate attempt to initiate people into worthwhile knowledge for its own sake,' (Barrow, 1981, p. 26); as opposed to a wider sense, which I think is one used in everyday conversation, attributing *any* enhancement of *any* type of knowledge as 'education'. In this latter sense, it seems that education may be interchangeable with 'being informed'.

Schooling involves the conscious and deliberate development of certain types of knowledge, with a range of outcomes in mind. The type of knowledge, the information it contains, and the way in which this knowledge is dispersed is usually planned. An example of a type of knowledge is academic knowledge, which is often practically represented by various subjects (English, Science, History, and so forth).[4] Thus, it is important to make clear that I take it as obvious that schooling is a purposeful endeavour, responsible for the development of knowledge and understanding; this process is identified as having certain intentions and outcomes, rooted in the idea that this endeavour is understood to improve an individual's life. One could argue that 'education' is actually one aspect of schooling[5], and that there are various things that go on in schools that are not particularly *educational*.[6] Because this work does not intend to scrutinise over interpretations of 'education' and 'schooling', the concept summarised above is not meant to be a portrayal of what schooling *ought* to look like; rather it paints a broad picture of what schooling is understood to be. Because this research focuses on the formal sense of education referred to as schooling or school education, the rest of the discussion assumes that 'education' is being referred to in this formal sense.

From the discussion above, it can be said that the aims of education are guided by conceptions of education; they are an idea about what education is or ought to be. Aims can be broadly understood as ideas of worth that may intentionally guide schools in a certain direction and underlie practice, at times, in the formation of the curriculum and/or in the teaching of subjects. 'Thinking about aims is a way of getting a clearer picture of what it is we are trying to do, and about what would count as doing it well,' (Haydon, 2006b, p. 19). This reference to aims is of particular importance to those involved in formal education such as schooling, as it is seen as a purposeful and necessary component of educational practice of most liberal

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[4] Carr (2003) explains that 'the central philosophical issue of the school curriculum... is that of determining which potentially objective kinds or forms of knowledge and understanding are appropriate for inclusion in any formal programme of school-based education,' (p. 133).
[5] Barrow (1981) makes this point, (pp. 26-27).
[6] However, I think this is only the case if one espouses a narrow interpretation of education.

democratic societies.[7] If we understand this conception of educational aims, then we can use it as a frame for the discussion ahead. Looking at the model of education presented above, which is likely to be valued by most western liberal democratic societies, it seems there are basic aims that stem from this characterisation. For example, education ought to aim at the development of knowledge and understanding of sorts. It must additionally improve and enhance the lives of the individuals involved.

Thus, the 'aims of education' is of fundamental interest to philosophers of education. Among the discussions on aims is the basic question, what ought the aims of education to be? The most prominent candidates[8] among these discussions seem to be autonomy, and wellbeing.[9] Though these concepts are examined in more detail in the second Part of the thesis, it is important to acknowledge a few basic points here. Both of these prominent aims are considered to reflect liberal values, or those values that reflect a liberal tradition of education.[10] Some advocates say that one particular aim ought to take precedence, whereas others might endorse a cluster of aims. In this thesis I contend that character ought to be an aim of education. What's more, I allege that the development of character is significant to a person's wellbeing, and show why the development of character ought to be a *central* aim of school education.

The suggestion that education ought to develop the character of pupils is not a new idea but rather one that has been attached to education by both ancient and contemporary thinkers. In his paper on the re-emergence of character education, Arthur (2005) begins with the statement: 'it could be said that the aim of all general education throughout history has been to form character and produce good citizens,' (p. 240). He rightly claims that often these aims are assumed to exist without any

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[7] White (2007b) has argued for the necessity of aims (as well as the actualisation of aims in the curriculum); Chris Winch (1996) rightly argues that educational aims are necessary as a means of *accountability*.

[8] These aims are prominent in the sense that they are widely discussed within the field of philosophy of education.

[9] On **autonomy** see Brighouse (2000), (2006), Callan, (1988), (1997), Mackenzie, (2007), White, (1982), (1990), Winch, (1999), (2006); on **wellbeing** see Marples, (1999), White, (2002), (2007a), (2007b); on **both** see Haji and Cuypers, (2008).

[10] See, White (1999, p. 185).

precise direction. In other words, an implicit intention of schooling has been to foster 'good character', but the methods by which this may have been done were often inadvertent. In England today, the Government has recently *explicitly* highlighted the need for educators to aid in character formation.[11] Looking at the West, this advocacy is an ongoing trend of various liberal democratic nations. The United States Department of Education offers as one of its six goals for education, 'strong character and citizenship among our nation's youth'.[12] It keenly advocates for schools to develop programmes that promote character development and explicitly endorses this aim financially, through federal resources. Individual states throughout the country, in turn, are encouraged to develop policies to support these goals. The Ontario Ministry of Education, in Canada, in recent years has endorsed the 'Character Development Initiative' in state-funded primary and secondary schools.[13] This project, along with an estimated $2 million that was being spent on character building programs in schools, illustrates Ontario's commitment to character development in schools.[14] It is obvious that these countries share an interest in the development of character in their young citizens.

This thesis investigates the claim that the formal process of schooling ought to explicitly and consciously develop 'character'. This does not seem to be a controversial thought, as it fits into current educational discourse in the UK, USA and Canada (as identified above). The purpose of this research is not to introduce a novel idea into the sphere of education; rather, an aim is to draw attention to the idea that character has continually been an important consideration of educators, yet it is still faced with resistance and uncertainty. However, perhaps it is not enough to begin work on a subject matter, merely because of its current status; it is not enough to say that 'education has long been concerned with character and so we should try to understand what character is.' It is necessary to acknowledge the point that educators may be wrong, and that discussion of character may be unnecessary and useless. However, in either case, it's still necessary to get to grips

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[11] See Arthur, (2005).
[12] *Strategic Plan 2002-2007* http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/character/brochure.html; see also www.ed.gov/about/reports/strat/plan2002-07/plan.doc
[13] http://www.curriculum.org/secretariat/files/Dec11CharacterReport.pdf
[14] Speech given by Kathleen Wynne
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/nr/06.11/hs1115.html

with the concept of character, to understand perspectives on it, and consider its educational implications before making a case for or against its worth.

Furthermore, that which is understood as character is not always clear and consistent among various accounts. Character is often used interchangeably with moral character and character education is often considered to be a form of moral education. I claim that character is not *solely* moral character, and that a broader conception of character lends itself to school education. In doing so, I assume there are narrow and broad conceptions of character. Narrow, can be understood as 'limited in extent, amount or scope.'[15] Accordingly, I use the term 'broad', to refer to something which is 'large in area or scope.'[16] Both terms are relative to the particular concept being described. And so we can say that X is narrow in relation to Y, or X1 is broad in relation to X2. To refer to a narrow conception of character, is to say that it is narrow in relation to other (possible) conceptions; it is to say that the narrow conception is to a certain extent limited or incomplete, whereas a broader conception might offer a fuller picture. Thus considering various conceptions of character (as mentioned above) is both necessary and crucial in arguing for a comprehensive characterisation of character.

What does it mean to say that character is not solely *moral* character? In order to evaluate this claim, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by notions such as moral and morality. Though this work does not endeavour to offer a treatise on this topic, as doing so would be an entirely different project, it however explores the nature and use of such terms, as they are commonly understood, though there is likely to be disagreement on this.[17]

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[15] This is the second definition of narrow which is provided in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th edition).

[16] Again, this is the second definition put forth in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th edition).

[17] One could devote an entire thesis to examining the concept of morality (let alone its implications for education, the concept of moral development, and so forth). In this short space, I identify very basic distinguishing features of morality, which are useful to the discussion of character. A thorough understanding of the nature of morality would not hinder this investigation, but isn't necessary, as it will be shown. To say that there may be disagreement on this is to acknowledge two things (though there may be other points): (a) that one may disagree with the divisions I ascribe to morality (which are not my own), and (b) one could question the usefulness of the limited discussion on morality. I acknowledge that the discussion of morality is limited, but it is one that sheds further light on the concept of character (which is an aim of this thesis).

Beginning with the notion of morality, there are many ways in which this concept is construed. I start by making distinctions between *narrow* and *broad* conceptions of morality. By a narrow conception of morality, I do not simply mean one element from the larger notion of morality. Rather, I mean what Haydon (1999) identifies as 'morality in the narrow sense', a concept which he attributes to John Mackie (1977). Mackie (1977) recognises a significant distinction between various accounts of morality, and he categorises them as morality in the 'narrow' and 'broad' sense. Morality in the broad sense, he explains, is an 'all-inclusive theory of conduct: the morality to which someone subscribed would be whatever body of principles he allowed ultimately to guide or determine his choices of actions,' (p. 106). This is distinguished from another sense of morality:

> in the narrow sense, a morality is a system of a particular sort of constraints on conduct- ones whose central task is to protect the interests of persons other than the agent and which present themselves to an agent as checks on his natural inclinations or spontaneous tendencies to act, (p. 106).

Haydon (1999) identifies four elements which constitute morality in the narrow sense: (a) it concerns conduct, (b) it tells us what we *ought* to do, (c) it applies to everyone, and (d) it's a 'system of values[18] existing within society' which places particular limitations on an individual's actions, (p. 28).

Although, it is recognised that morality in the narrow sense by no means encompasses the entirety of morality (in the broad sense), this narrow conception of morality has come to be known as 'morality' in contemporary discourse; whereas terms such as 'ethics' or 'the ethical' are frequently used for what might also be described as 'morality in the broad sense'.[19] Criticisms of morality are often criticisms of morality *in the narrow sense*, as the terminology has been modified. As Standish (1997) explains,

> for many the very word 'morality' has become tainted, suggesting the stiff correctness of Victorian behaviour, sexual repression (if not hang-ups), timid subjection to conformity, and a certain starchiness of tone...People *do* avoid speaking of morality- as if something were amiss with it, as with an outmoded ceremony, (p. 50).

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[18] Barrow, (2007), similarly identifies morality as a 'system of principles to govern human life in general', (p. 28).
[19] See, Haydon, (1999), chapter 3.

It is for this reason, perhaps that Standish (1997) raises the question: 'Are we using a language whose significance for us has faded from view,' (p. 50)?

It is important to be familiar with this distinction between morality in the narrow sense and morality in the broad sense, although the distinction has only been sketched. The way in which morality is understood (be it narrow or broad) determines what we take moral to mean. For a person who conceives of morality in the narrow sense as a particular system which places constraints on conduct, then whether or not something is moral is determined by whether or not it conforms to those ideas and rules of that particular system. In this way, for someone with a narrow interpretation, moral values are those ideas of worth that are based on accepted ethical rules, whereas a person with a broader perspective of morality would conceive of moral values to be all ideas of worth that reflect any ethical stance.

In the same way, one might say, it is possible to conceive of 'moral character' in a broad or narrow sense. Though it may be *possible* for moral character to reflect either a narrow or broad sense of morality, it is often understood in a narrow sense, usually referring to particular behaviours or character traits.[20] In other words, though morality might in fact be broader than 'a system of values which places limitations on people and guides their conduct', and rather it might be 'a system concerning anything that is of human importance', the notion of moral character does not reflect this broader conception. It is built upon a narrow construal of morality. Thus to claim that character is *broader* than moral character, is to say that character reflects something broader than morality in the narrow sense; though character might certainly encompass moral character, it is not *solely* moral character.

That is not to say, however, that it is inconceivable for character to reflect a morality in the broad sense. One might argue that this broader sense of character (which this thesis makes a case for) might in fact reflect a broader reading of morality, in which

[20] That is not to say that morality in the narrow sense *only* refers to behaviours or traits, but that this is how moral character is often construed.

case, character could actually be conceived of as moral character.[21] This might be true, but this is not only a linguistic issue: it's an ideological issue. What 'moral character' represents to advocates of character education is something narrow, and until this dominant ideology changes, it does not seem plausible to refer to character as moral character. There are many questions that this issue about moral character raises: what exactly *is* character? Should 'moral character' encompass a broader conception of morality? Even so, should character be used interchangeably with moral character? In hypothesising that character ought to have a place in the aims of education, this thesis explores these important questions.

Overview of Chapters

In order to address the questions listed above, it is necessary to employ philosophical methods. To begin, the purpose of a philosophical investigation into the notion of character and character education is to provide clarity on the concepts that are central to the research. Often concepts are referred to in educational discourse, in policy documents, and so forth, without substantial understanding or precision on what the concepts actually mean. In other words, it is often taken for granted in educational discourse, that the meaning of a word (such as 'character') is universally understood. Often, it is not the case that words are understood in the same way. Even when a definition is given, there is not always a clear rationale behind this. And so, a function of this type of philosophical enquiry is to arrive at conceptual clarity. It may seem insignificant to spend time carefully considering what others mean by these notions, but John Wilson (1972) argues that '*it matters what we say,* because if we are not careful we can deceive ourselves,' (p. ix).[22] In other words, if an idea of worth gains prominence but remains ambiguous, then how can we understand how to apply that idea to education? With specific regard to this research, if I do not offer a conceptualisation of character then how can I make a case for the educational implications of this concept? Moreover, if I do not explore

[21] Kupperman (1991) explains that 'a person who wishes to treat moral categories as broadly as possible and to give moral terms the most frequent possible use, character appears to lie entirely within the domain of morality,' (p. 9). Though, he goes on to argue why character doesn't merely entail the acquisition of moral principles.

[22] Wilson, J (1972) *Philosophy and educational research.* Windsor: NFER.

what others have considered character and character education to be, then how can I defend my own ideas on this subject? And so the significance of this educational research is interconnected with its search for conceptual clarity; much of this research focuses on getting to grips with the concept of character, and exploring various perspectives on this concept.

I claim that character ought to be a central aim of education, and supporting this claim are the suppositions that character is not merely moral character and that character is central to an individual's wellbeing (i.e. to human flourishing). In order to evaluate this claim (that the development of character should be a central aim of school education), there are two important questions that need to be addressed: (a) what is 'character' and (b) why should it be an educational aim? For this reason this thesis is divided into two Parts, in order to distinguish between two important tasks corresponding to the questions above. It is important to understand the overall structure of these two Parts, before looking more closely at the breakdown of chapters.

The first Part, 'Perspectives on Character', sets out to identify how the notion of character is understood by *others* and comprises the first five chapters. The notion of character, as this introduction has indicated, is one that is not unfamiliar to educational discourse. That is, I am not introducing a word that is foreign to contemporary education, and so I do not begin the thesis with a robust clarification of what I think character entails. Rather, I begin with an examination of what contemporary ideas of character consist in. For, part of the impetus for writing a thesis on character is the supposition that there is something lacking in contemporary characterisations of character. And so a major task involved in asking 'what is character' is to reflect upon and question assumptions related to the concept of character that are espoused in much of the discourse on character education. For this reason, the first Part of the thesis begins by examining what others conceive of character to be. However, this examination is not limited to contemporary perspectives of character. For, many contemporary thinkers cite Plato and Aristotle as the earliest pioneers of character development, and so I examine ancient perspectives on human flourishing and character, in an effort to

become clearer about how the concept should be understood. I expand the survey of ancient philosophical thought by considering ancient Indian perspectives on Human Flourishing. It is by studying these various perspectives (both contemporary as well as ancient) that I am able defend my own characterisation of character. In the second Part of this thesis, I put forth a broader characterisation of character. I illustrate how ancient Indian and Greek conceptions of human flourishing and character are relevant to the conception of character I put forth, and show why my characterisation of character ought to take precedence over other characterisations. Of importance, I make a case for why the development of character (as I conceive) ought to be a central aim of school education. Thus this thesis is divided into two Parts, containing 8 chapters.

The first chapter begins by looking at contemporary views of character and character education. I begin the thesis with this perspective in order to familiarise the reader with the modern-day educational context. Because the chapter seeks to explore what is meant by 'character' and 'character education', at the outset I present a brief historical overview of character education from the last two centuries. In doing so, I acknowledge that character has had obvious connections with schooling; in other words, there has been an obvious intention to educate for character. However, despite much advocacy, there is difficulty in indentifying what character education entails. Often character is understood solely as moral character, which implies morality in the narrow sense. However, should character be used interchangeably with moral character? This is a crucial question that this thesis explores in subsequent chapters.

The contemporary views on character that are examined in chapter 1 are supplemented by contemporary philosophical perspectives on character in chapter 2. Whereas, the first chapter looks at a variety of thinkers from the fields of education, psychology, sociology, philosophy and so forth, this chapter primarily focuses on the work of those in the field of philosophy of education. I identify various senses in which the notion of character is understood, and specify the difficulties that thinkers have with the notions of character and character education. Similar to the first chapter, philosophers of education also call for the notion of

character to be clarified prior to addressing what character education ought to consist in. The philosophical examination of character emphasises the point that the notion of character is often used interchangeably with moral character, and so it is necessary to consider whether this ought to be the case.

Chapter three and four, 'Ancient Greek perspectives on Human Flourishing' and 'Ancient Greek perspectives on Character and Education' respectively, look at the work of Plato and Aristotle. The ancient Greeks are considered to be the pioneers of much of Western philosophy; particularly, the concept of moral character is often attributed to the work of Aristotle, and Plato is often cited as one of the first thinkers to emphasise the importance of character education. Thus, it seems appropriate to examine the work of both Aristotle and Plato in relation to character. In chapter 3, I outline their ideas on human flourishing, and show that there are important similarities involving the philosophies of these two thinkers. In chapter 4 I examine the implications of these similarities. Though there are differences between their ideas, I argue that their notions of human flourishing allude to a sense of character, which is broader than the contemporary understanding of moral character. What's more, I identify an element which is often overlooked in their theses: that human flourishing is related to the *psychē*.

This thesis extends its examination of ancient philosophies in chapter five, by studying ancient Indian perspectives on character and human flourishing. Modern ideas on human flourishing, character and education are often said to be influenced by ancient Greek thinking, and so it is natural to look at ancient Greek perspectives. Though these two civilisations (Indian and Greek) are often considered to have very different views on human flourishing, with the ancient Greek perspective standing as the rational base of Western civilisation, I claim that this division is false. In exploring some ancient Indian ideas on human flourishing, I reveal interesting similarities between the two and show how an examination into these ideas complements the study of ancient Greek perspectives. I also identify the worth of understanding ancient Indian philosophy in order to become clearer about notions of character and human flourishing.

This brings an end to the first Part of the thesis, which again aims to study various perspectives on character. As mentioned above, the second Part addresses why character ought to be an aim of education. Chapter six (the first chapter in Part 2) puts forth a broader characterisation of character. In doing so, I explicitly address what is meant by notions such as strength, weakness, good and bad character. I argue why this broader characterisation ought to take precedence over other conceptions. Next, I show that the conception of character I put forth is a comprehensive characterisation, which complements ancient philosophical thought, and addresses the shortcomings of contemporary conceptions.

This thesis argues that character ought to be a central aim of school education, and so chapter 7 considers these claims in line with another aim which is given much importance: autonomy. I examine the notion of autonomy as well explore its educational significance, in order to evaluate what the relation between the development of character and autonomy is (if any). The development of autonomy is considered to be a facet of a flourishing life, and thereby assists in the development of another educational aim: wellbeing.

The final chapter (chapter 8) considers the aim of wellbeing, as it has most recently been given much importance as a master aim of school education. I examine what is meant by wellbeing as an educational aim, and explore to what extent this aim is something that schools can pursue. More importantly, I reveal important ways in which wellbeing and the development of character are linked. What's more, I examine the relationship between human flourishing, luck and character. In doing so, I make a case for why the development of character ought to be a central aim of school education.

Thus, by examining various perspectives on the concept of character, putting forth my own conceptualisation of character which is broader than the one utilised in contemporary educational discourse, and studying the relation between other aims of education and character, I demonstrate why and in what sense character ought to be a central aim of education.

Part 1: Perspectives on Character

Chapter 1: Contemporary perspectives on Character

This first chapter aims to shed light on the concept of character, or more appropriately, *concepts* of character. It is an effort to highlight the predominant perspectives on character and their relation to education; that is, it seeks to get to grips with how 'character' is understood particularly in the context of character education. I begin with an excursion into the development of character education in Britain and the United States, showing that it is not necessarily a novel or recent phenomenon. From there I move on to examine prevalent characterisations of character. The last section gives particular attention to the work of James Hunter (2000) who contests the relevance of character and argues that it is a dead concept which should not be promoted in schools. The implications of his work are considered against the larger argument (that the development of character should be of central importance in school education). The purpose of this chapter is to uncover and consider what is meant by 'character' in order to (later) make a case for what character should be understood as.

1.1 Early endeavours in Character Education

In this section, I trace the progression of character development in schools, focusing on Britain and the United States. Though the concept of character has not specifically been delineated, for the purposes of this chapter, character education is identified as any programme in formal education which intentionally and explicitly aims at the development of character. It does not (necessarily) refer to all programmes of moral or citizenship education, but may overlap with such areas. This chapter particularly focuses on the ideas of some thinkers who have deliberated on the concept of 'character', and additionally looks at programmes that are particularly concerned with the development of 'character' within the larger

framework of schooling. Although the purpose of this section is not to provide an exhaustive history of character education, it is useful to offer an outline of the development in this field.

Beginning in eighteenth-century Britain, Arthur (2003) notes that there were a number of thinkers who advocated what he identifies as 'moral' rather than intellectual aims, but rarely were these aims explicitly stated. He explains that an exception to this rule was Robert Owen, a Scottish industrialist, who built a school in order to train children from a young age into good habits. Called the 'Institution for the Formation of Character', the aim of this school was to improve the basic 'habits, dispositions and general character' of the children by treating them with a 'spirit of kindliness and affection' and surrounding them with inspirational and positive things to foster good habits, (Arthur, 2003: p. 12). Even after the demise of this programme, many nineteenth-century theorists were favourable towards this view of (what they saw as) growth and personality development.

Education in Britain during the Victorian era was interlinked with character development. Underprivileged children received an education that prepared them for a life of work, in which character 'training' was an important element. More specifically, this training was a process of socialisation whereby children were taught rules of conduct. At this time, Arthur (2003) indicates, British society was very influenced by Christianity and the Ten Commandments. Those from wealthier backgrounds were initiated into good Christian character and into the formation of good manners.

> For many, character was not an ideal, but a display of the required manners solely towards those they considered their elders and betters... This class-bound society was changing rapidly and it remained impossible to develop workable notions of character for all, (Arthur, 2003: p. 15).

'Character' in this sense was superficial: an outward mask that was given little, if any, importance or reflection beyond its required use. Regardless of one's social status though, what is evident is that the development of character was closely associated with instilling specific behaviours.

American schools in the nineteenth century were similarly led by religious overtones; namely, those of the Protestants and Catholics. A consensus among the two religious groups was the centrality of 'moral education' in schooling, or that which aimed at the development of character, (McClellan, 1999). Character education (similar to its British counterpart) consisted in the promotion of particular codes of conduct, (Field and Nickell, 2000, p. 51). As religious influences began to decline in these countries, many people sought some form of secular character education. In England, school regulation started moving away from the Church of England, and towards the government. In the next few decades, the role of character formation in education was still apparent, though sometimes masquerading under another label. For example, the rise of citizenship education in the earlier part of the twentieth century had a direct link with character education; the former was seen as an extension of secular character training, (Arthur, 2003).

Perhaps one of the most frequently cited studies concerning character education, the Character Education Inquiry (CEI), led by Hartshorne and May defined character as 'the persistent disposition to act according to moral principle in a variety of situations' (Arthur, 2003: p. 22). This well-known study concluded: 'character education programs, religious instruction, and moral training had no effect on the moral conduct of the students as measured in this study,' (Mulkey, 1997, p. 35). Their conclusions were often interpreted to be devastating to the field of character education, and to debunk the very notion of character itself. After the 1940's, character education gradually diminished in many schools and from government documentation, although various programmes of character development remained ongoing in boarding schools and church schools. In the USA, the impact of modernity brought about a wave of uncertainty about the importance of character education in schools. Academic concerns were given priority in schools, in order to meet the needs of an increasingly technologically advanced society. In both places, the 50s and 60s were heavily influenced by cognitive psychology and the perspectives of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and Eric Erikson. The idea of a cognitive-based moral education seemed fitting for the increasingly plural society and with the liberal notion of critical thinking. Values clarification was widespread in the 60s and 70s, as the idea of moral relativity and values-relativity increased. It

seemed safer to provide students with the opportunity to choose their own values through a 'legitimate' decision-making process, rather than presenting them with a possible list of shared values. At this point, educators were concerned with encouraging students to discover certain 'qualities of character' on their own, as opposed to prescribing specific qualities. Since the 1980's it seems there has been resurgence in the interest in character education.

Arthur (2003, 2005, 2008) goes on to look at the current trends in educational policy and the revival of academic interest in the field of character education. He notes that from 1979 to 1997 the Conservative Government in England put forward certain initiatives to reverse, what they saw as a moral decline in society, (Arthur, 2005: p. 242). For example, an aim imposed by the Education Reform Act 1988 called for schools to promote the 'spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society,' (ERA 1988). Further to this, 1996 saw the formation of the *National Forum for Values in Education and the Community* by the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). This project brought together people from various backgrounds to examine whether a plural society could find any shared moral principles. The forum concluded that it was wrong to assert that a plural society such as England was devoid of shared values, (see, Talbot and Tate, 1997). Although these initiatives do not explicitly call for the development of character that is not to say that there is a lack of discussion about character education in educational discourse today.

To a certain degree, all of these areas are attempting to aid in the students personal development, but in a way that is non-controversial, or fitting of the time. What seems evident throughout these shifts is a consistent concern for the type of person the student is (and will be). Consequently, character education programmes (in their various forms) have attempted to adjust to suit the needs of a changing society. As a result, what is obvious from the above observation of character education programs is that character education has not been a straightforward movement with a clear rationale, but rather various attempts to preserve 'traditional values', (McClellan, 1999: p. 48). Hence, it has often sought to instil behaviours and develop habits, creating an expectation that the development of character ought to have

obvious behavioural manifestations. Additionally, it seems that most advocates of character education did not want to ignore the changing society and increasing modernity; they felt that traditional values and modern living were compatible and so they sought ways to support an ethical way of living in the changing times.

This section has drawn attention to the importance given to character development, and elucidates the point that the development of character has been a significant consideration for those concerned with education. However, it is also apparent that the concept of character education has remained indistinct and therefore,[23] has appeared to change over time. Thus, although there seems to be an intention for educators to assist in character development, the process by which this aim may be realised is unclear, and has therefore taken on various forms.

More importantly, the very notion of character, itself, is not straightforward, and there is room for this concept to be comprehensively demystified. Thus, an underlying aim of this work is to lay bare and examine some assumptions made in contemporary educational and philosophical discourse on the very notion of character; this will shed some light on what has come to be known as 'character education'. Although there is not one particular conception of character that dominates the discourse, there are some elements of the concept that are often taken for granted. Two noticeable features from this survey into historical roots of character education are:

(a) Character education is often used interchangeably with moral education[24], and,

(b) Talk of character is often strongly linked with the development of certain behaviours and/or habits.

Both of these lines of thought are linked with a larger assumption: that character is interchangeable with moral character, where this is reflective of morality in the narrow sense. These assumptions continue to influence and dominate

[23] This is a challenge to Lockwood (2009) who claims that '... the message of contemporary character education is clear and direct...,' (p.*xiv*). This is a misleading statement, as it suggests that contemporary character education is a coherent movement.

[24] For example: Carr (2008) considers character education to be a form of moral education which is 'focused on changing moral conduct,' (p. 99); Lockwood (2009) writes that it's a form of values education, (p. *ix*).

contemporary discourse on character education, and are explored in the subsequent sections.

1.2 The education of (moral) character

As the introduction pointed out, it is difficult to get to grips with the concept of character without considering the notions of morality and moral development. Because character is more often than not linked with moral character, it is no surprise that character education cannot be easily divorced from ideas about moral education, particularly in contemporary educational discourse. Even an examination into the historical roots of character education (such as the one above), is filled with references to general moral education programmes. Arthur (2005) notes: 'Character education is a specific approach to morals or values education, which is consistently linked with citizenship education,' (p. 239). Because character education is frequently used interchangeably with 'moral education' any attempt to uncover a precise movement of character education, is not completely accurate. In this sense, the very concept of character is often morally-tethered, or primarily linked with matters of moral concern. But what does it mean to say that character is moral character? This section explores this question by looking at predominant characterisations of character in contemporary educational discourse.

1.2.1 Lickona and 'Good Character'

The link between character and moral character is not only evident from the historical perspective above; the association is made by many proponents of character education today. Among the most prominent advocates of character education in the USA, Thomas Lickona is a household name. In his 'Educating for Character', it is Lickona's (1991) intention to offer *strategies* on how schools can develop good character in pupils; he claims that all people would like their children to have 'good character', (Lickona, 1991: p. 50). Lickona (1991) explicitly makes several assumptions in relation to his conception of character. To begin, (a) values education and moral education are terms which are used interchangeably,[25] (b) schools should have a values education programme in place,[26] (c) moral values

[25] Lickona, 1991: p. x.
[26] From the outset, Lickona (1991) insists that schools cannot be 'ethical bystanders', (pp. 5-22).

should be taught by the school (at the bare minimum, 'respect' and 'responsibility' should be taught),[27] (d) the *sort of character* that schools ought to promote derives from (b) and (c)[28]. In this sense, moral values are the source of good character.[29]

One's character, Lickona (1991) would say, is an outward expression of the moral values a person holds; it is 'values in action', (p. 51). To be a person of good character, he suggests, is to lead a life of *right conduct*, (Lickona, 1991: p. 50).[30] Hence, it would seem he is placing weight entirely on one's *behaviour*, as an indication of character (which is not a far cry from advocates of character education over a century ago). However, he clarifies his position by providing an account of character in relation to values education. Character, he claims, has three inter-related parts: (1) moral knowing, (2) moral feeling and (3) moral behaviour, (Lickona, 1991: p. 51). In particular, '*good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good*-habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action,' (Lickona, 1991: p. 51). He claims that in order to lead a moral life, these qualities are essential and that this is what most (if not all) people want for their children.

Moral knowing, Lickona (1991) explains, consists in one's ability to identify and understand what is right. This involves knowing moral values, reasoning in a moral way, making decisions about a situation, and so forth; it is understood as the cognitive side of character (Lickona, 1991: pp. 53-56). However, it is not simply enough to know what is right; a person must also care about taking the right course of action. Moral feeling, as Lickona (1991) describes it, is the emotional side of character, and involves instilling a sense of obligation or 'constructive guilt', empathy, and, a 'love for the good' in people, (pp. 57-60). The third aspect, Moral Action is often the result of the other two (understanding what is right and desiring to take the right course of action). It encompasses competence (knowing what *sort* of action to take and *how* to take it), will (doing the right thing in the face of other

[27] He distinguishes a moral value from a non-moral value (Lickona, 1991: p. 38), and later talks about various moral values that schools should promote (Lickona, 1991: pp. 43-48).
[28] Lickona, 1991: p. x.
[29] It appears that by 'good character' Lickona (1991) means morally good character. I examine the notion of 'good' character in chapter 6.
[30] Lickona (1991) attributes this notion of right conduct to Aristotle.

temptations) and habit (a repeated course of action that becomes almost an unconscious response), (Lickona, 1991: pp. 61-62). It seems safe to say that these are, arguably, important *qualities* that a person of good character ought to have, and in this sense they are ideals. Lickona (1991) insists that these three components (moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action) are inter-related, and can influence each other 'in all sorts of ways,' (p. 52).

Character consists in these three aspects outlined above; these three aspects are *features* of character. This point cannot be overstated, as the oversimplification of the three components seems to be one part of a major difficulty with Lickona's (1991) ideas: he does not put forth a sound rationale for his characterisation of character. His primary claim, that character ought to be developed in schools, is not accompanied by a thorough deconstruction of the concept; rather, he offers a description of qualities related to the concept. Although this may very well contribute to his proposal, the discussion of the components ought not to cloud the overarching claim (that there is something such as 'character' which we ought to be developing). In other words, if Lickona (1991) is convinced that educators ought to develop something he identifies as character, he should at some point identify what he means by character, and not simply components of it. For example, if I have a health problem I usually go to see a general practitioner, with the full expectation that this doctor is familiar with the totality of the human body, and not just particular components of it (lungs, kidneys, heart). In order to improve my health condition, the doctor needs to be familiar with what normal and basic functions of the human body are, how to identify possible frailties, and how to ameliorate those problems. Before the doctor can even begin to strengthen my health, or provide ways in which I can reach optimal health, she first needs to have a basic understanding of what it means to be in *stable health*.

Similarly, prior to educating for character, it is first and foremost necessary to identify what character is and not simply what its components are.[31] The point is that Lickona (1991) does not investigate what the concept of character consists in,

[31] Even if it is not possible to Identify first and foremost what character is, at some point, this needs to be explicitly addressed rather than taken for granted.

but rather, quite quickly moves onto discussing 'good' character. Before one can begin to understand what *good* character encompasses, it seems that a preliminary conception of character ought to be established.[32] Even in his minimal discussion of good character he briefly discusses the qualities (moral feeling, moral knowing and moral action) which are meant to provide a sketch of the type of character he feels schools ought to promote. But even this characterisation is insufficiently outlined, leaving a string of unanswered questions.

Would a person who is devoid of all three aspects have 'bad' character; what if a person was only missing a particular aspect (she may have moral feeling and moral action, but not moral knowing); would this person still have good character? Although Lickona's proposal might be more of a practical guideline than a philosophical treatise, there are important theoretical questions that ought to be addressed, particularly if this proposal were to actually be implemented in schools. Looking again at the previous example with the doctor, it seems crucial that this professional have a comprehensive understanding of what 'good' as well as 'bad' health is. If the doctor's medical training was limited to working with people with optimal health, then every ailment she came across thereafter might be perceived as a major problem. The doctor may not have a sense of the *degree* of severity of the problem, and so a common cold may be treated as vigorously as a broken limb. Similarly, educators, and anyone concerned with character development, need to be able to understand distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' as well as 'strong' and 'weak' character. Lickona's (1991) ideas are inadequately explained in this respect.

'To educate for respect and responsibility- to make them operative values in the lives of students- is to educate for *character*,' (Lickona, 1991: p. 68). Lickona (1991) identifies operative values as those which stir a person into action. Although he does not seem to maintain that character simply consists in one's behaviour, he does place significant weight on action, asserting that a person's character develops through his response to a situation. This sentiment seems inconsistent with his

[32] Interestingly, from the example above, one could argue that 'good health' is often used interchangeably with 'stable health' or being 'healthy'. And so, perhaps 'good character' is being used interchangeably with 'character' in the sense of 'having character'. Even if this is the case, though, what it means to 'have character' needs to be made explicit.

emphasis on the other two components (moral knowing and moral feeling). It would be more fitting to his own views if he said 'to make people aware of, think about and act upon values, is to educate for character'. It is fair to say that Lickona (1991) is unashamedly concerned with moral character, and by referring to good character he implies morally good character. Even if character is good character, as Lickona (1991) suggests, what is the reasoning behind this? Although his ideas are important and useful to the study of character education, he fails to offer a coherent conception of character and a rationale for why educators should particularly educate for moral character. Such a rationale might be able to stand up to the questions outlined above, as well as similar questions about the nature of character (i.e. is there something such as 'intellectual character' as opposed to 'moral character'?).

This thesis does not endeavour to completely dissociate the concept of character from that of morality, but it seeks to examine whether it might be reasonable to dissociate character from moral character.

1.2.2 The development of character traits

Whereas the previous section draws attention to the view that schools should develop (morally) good character, this section looks at the particular content of what such character ought to entail. Specifically, I examine the idea that character education should consist in the conscious development of 'character traits'.

The legacy left by the Hartshorne and May (1930) study (mentioned earlier) in the USA, seems to be carried on by a number of social psychologists who continue to be critical of the notion of character; often labelled as 'situationists', these psychologists challenge the idea that a person possesses specific character traits (often thought to result in the individual behaving in a way which is consistent with those traits). Character traits (frequently used interchangeably with virtues and vices) are described by Harman (1999) as broad based dispositions that are often thought to

explain a person's behaviour, (p. 316). Hence, such traits[33] are said to *include* virtues and vices (such as courage, cowardice, honesty, dishonesty) but are not limited to these qualities alone; attributes such as 'talkativeness' and 'friendliness' can also be included as character traits, (Harman, 1999: pg. 316). He illustrates Aristotle's conception of a character trait (from the *Nicomachean Ethics)* as a 'relatively long-term stable disposition to act in distinctive ways... the relevant dispositions must involve habits and not just skills, involving habits of desiring,' (Harman, 1999: p. 316).

A situationist perspective is one which questions the extent to which behaviour, often attributed to one's character, is actually the result of so-called traits of character, (see, Haydon, 2006a). For example, if I saw an elderly person struggling to carry his groceries, situationists would claim that whether or not I helped this man would be based on a number of factors relating to the situation itself (i.e. how much time I had, if I had my own bags, the mood I was in, and so forth) rather than a specific characteristic I may have (benevolence or helpfulness). In other words, it is situation-specific factors that determine a person's behaviour. This lack of emphasis on aspects of a particular situation (as key determinants of a person's behaviours) has been referred to as the 'fundamental attribution error' and for similar reasons as 'correspondence bias' (Gilbert and Malone, 1995).[34]

Philosophers influenced by the ideas of situationists have highlighted the significance of these studies in relation to ancient Greek thought on virtues and character. In particular, John M. Doris, in his *Lack of Character* (2002) heavily draws

[33] For the purposes of this thesis, I use 'traits' interchangeably with 'character traits', though I acknowledge there may be differences between the two concepts. Conceptually speaking, the difference between 'trait' and 'character trait' is a subtle one: that being, that 'character trait' seems to imply regular behavioral manifestations, whereas 'trait' need not necessarily have this condition. The distinction can be understood as follows: if we think of the quality of 'honesty', one could call this either a 'trait' or a 'character trait'. To say that 'honesty' is a trait of Mars is to say that Mars has the *capacity* to be honest. However, for those who ascribe to the language of 'character trait', to say that Mars has the character trait of 'honesty' is to say that he regularly behaves honestly. In this way a trait refers more to a *capacity* or *ability*, whereas character trait has the added expectation of performance.

[34] Gilbert and Malone (1995) attribute the notion of 'fundamental attribution error' to Lee Ross: Ross, L. (1977) 'The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings', in L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 173—220). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

upon experimental psychology to argue that the concept of ethical character which dominates Western thinking is wrong, (p. 1). The very notions of character which he draws upon are, according to him, prominent in ethical thought, and a reflection of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. He explains that 'it's commonly presumed that good character inoculates against shifting fortune, and English has a rich language for expressing such a belief...Such locutions imply that character will have regular behavioural manifestations' (Doris, 2002: p. 1).[35] He is critical of this particular conception of character, and more generally, the assumptions it seems to make about the link between one's character and behaviour (Doris, 2002: p. 6). Doris (2002) suggests that most people do not display consistency or stability in their character traits, and in this sense, most people lack character; however, he claims that the very notion of character and the common language it draws upon *imply* that it manifests in one's behaviour (p. 1).

Although Doris (2002) is critical of character, and suggests that moral philosophers ought to reconsider their claims in light of these empirical findings on character traits, there are some who insist upon the abandonment of the very notion of 'character'. Harman (2000) sums up this point of view as follows,

> ...ordinary thinking in terms of character traits has had disastrous effects on people's understanding of each other, on their understandings of what social programs are reasonable to support, and of their understandings of international affairs. I think we need to get people to stop doing this. We need to convince people to look at situational factors and to stop trying to explain things in terms of character traits. We need to abandon all talk of virtue and character, not find a way to save it by reinterpreting it, (p. 224).

Harman's conclusions above are based on an assumption that character can be used interchangeably with the notion of character traits; he is critical of a conception of character which is narrow, and identified closely with the behaviour of a person. Similarly, Doris (2002) derives his conception of character from a framework of Western ethical thought; although these thinkers may refer to Aristotle's ethics as a source for the conception of character traits, it is a mistake to assume that Aristotle

[35] I discuss the notion of good character in more detail in chapter 6, and show why good character might indeed inoculate against shifting fortunes.

considered character to solely consist of character traits.[36] It is important to note that character as conceived from a situationist perspective (and corresponding philosophical thought) is closely linked (if not used interchangeably) with individual character traits, and thus has strong connections to a person's *behaviour*.

The interpretation of character as linked to character traits and (consequently) behaviour is one that is prominent in much of the discourse on character. It is no surprise that a lot of opponents of character education programmes are sceptical of the influence of such programmes on pupils, especially when such programmes aim at moulding their behaviour. Alfie Kohn (1997) is one such critic who suggests that educators ought to pay more attention to the mounting evidence from social psychology. He claims that the implications of the fundamental attribution error are to consider the *school environment* in which the students are taught and not necessarily focus on the individual *behaviour* as an isolated element; one such implication might be that character education ought to try and transform the classroom rather than trying to 'fix' the students themselves, (Kohn, 1997: p. 156).

There are a number of thinkers who have rejected the claims made above, as well as similar claims made by philosophers and social psychologists alike.[37] Although their particular arguments are not thoroughly outlined here, it is significant to note that opponents argue that the situationist perspective depends upon a narrow conception of character, often isolating behaviour as the sole indication of the presence of so-called traits of character. They claim situationists study only one aspect of character, whereas the ancient Greeks (and often the virtue theorists who support them) conceive of character to include cognitive and affective aspects that cannot necessarily be divorced from understanding behaviour.[38]

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[36] Aristotle's conception of 'character' is discussed in subsequent chapters.

[37] For those thinkers who reject the situationist claims see, Kristjansson, K (2008) 'An Aristotelian Critique of Situationism' in *Philosophy*, **83** (1):55-76; Webber, J (2006) 'Virtue, Character and Situation' in *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, **3** (2): 192-213; Kupperman, J (1991) *Character*. New York: Oxford University Press; Merritt, M (2000) 'Virtue Ethics and Situationist Personality Psychology' in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, **3** (4): 365-383.

[38] Again, ancient Greek perspectives on character, including that of Aristotle, are further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

There are limitations to constructing character simply as an amalgamation of character traits. For one, this interpretation seems to suggest that there are specific qualities that a person must have in order to 'have character'. Immediate concerns which are frequently raised are which character traits or qualities should a person of character have, and who is to decide? Even if it was decided that a person of character should be courageous, friendly, honest, hardworking, and loving, does this mean that only those people who display these specific qualities have *character*? If character is understood as embodying particular traits, does this mean that there is only one 'type' of character that ought to be esteemed? In other words, is there only one set of behaviours that is accepted as a reflection of character? Should all people of character behave alike? What about notions such as good or strong character? If this refers to the presence of specific traits, does that mean that there is only one type of good character? If we think about people like Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Miep Gies, in uncomplicated language, one could unhesitatingly say that they are personifications of *character*. Even without a precise definition for character, there is something that these three exemplars epitomise, that can undoubtedly be described as character. These individuals are remembered for the positive things they did in their lives as well as their resilience. One could say that these people most certainly had character. Yet, their behaviour was not identical, nor did they have the exact same qualities or traits (though they probably did have traits in common). It seems unlikely that there is only one type of good character, or that goodness of character can only refer to one specific set of traits or a single pattern of behaviour. This point is further examined in chapter 6.

There are several looming questions that need to be addressed. The first is whether or not character traits should be understood to have regular behavioural manifestations. A challenge particularly to situationists is that if it seems that character traits aren't a reliable indication of behaviour, perhaps it is our understanding about what such traits consist in, that needs to be re-examined. What seems to be questionable about the notion of character traits is the added expectation of some sort of consistency in behaviour. However, does a person have to behave in a consistent manner in order to have character? The idea that character engenders consistency is more thoroughly examined in chapter 6. What is

important for this chapter is to recognise that it is problematic to automatically align traits with particular patterns of behaviour; more importantly though, this adversity towards the notion of character traits, consequently leads to resistance towards the notion of character, simply because many people do not display consistency of behaviour. Regardless, the notion of character traits, as understood by situationists is extremely limited, as is the corresponding understanding of behaviour. A key assumption made by these thinkers is that a person's character *ought* to have behavioural manifestations if (especially if) it is linked closely with character traits. This assumption is at best a claim that is falsely substantiated by reference to Aristotle.[39] However, even Doris (2002) recognises that Aristotle's understanding of character traits is not merely concerned with behaviour; as he mentions above, it involves habits of desiring as well. Situationists and those influenced by their ideas cannot completely reject the notion of character traits or character, though they might be able to claim that there is a lack of either (in the sense that one's character is somehow partial or incomplete).

What are advocates of character education to make of the claims made by the situationist perspective? Are the notions of character traits and character to be abandoned altogether? In short: probably not. The assertions made by situationists as well as those influenced by their psychological experiments should not deflate the character education movement: it should rather stimulate proponents of it to move towards creating a more coherent practice, and more importantly, a coherent characterisation of character. For one, character education programmes are readily open to attack when there is not a dominant conception of character that they follow. On the other hand, situationists should not call for the abandonment of character when a narrow conception of character (that is solely linked to the presence of character traits) is under scrutiny. One might suggest that the notion of character traits is problematic, and so, at a minimum, this concept ought to be discarded. In this way, the concept of character can be made clear without the tricky baggage of traits obscuring the discussion. Although this seems like an attractive idea, it may not be the most helpful way of looking at the problem. Harman's (2000)

[39] Again, some situationists claim that Aristotle's conception of 'character' *implies* a particular behavioural expression. I claim that this isn't necessarily the case.

proposal above, that we should not salvage the concept of character trait and virtue, seems extreme, when perhaps what is needed is *precisely* that: a re-examination into the *roots* of character and virtue. It may not be necessary to *re-invent* the concept, but rather, to examine the foundation of this concept, and how it has come to be understood today.

I claim that although there does not seem to be a coherent and well-articulated conception of character, we should not discard the concept altogether; this thesis claims that a central aim of education ought to be the development of character. However, underlying this claim is an assumption that there is something one can identify as character. The outcry that there is a lack of character in people today, the call to develop character in schools and the basic claims of character educators, all take for granted the existence of something which can be identified as 'character'; though it is becoming clearer that that which is understood as character widely varies. However, the assumption that there is indeed something that one can identify as character need not be taken for granted. Perhaps the confusion and vagueness associated with conceptions of character is due to the fact that the notion has become obsolete, and has lost any grounding in modern, multicultural liberal societies. James Davison Hunter (2000) argues just that in his book *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil.* Hunter (2000) claims that character is dead and efforts to develop character in schools are actually a *hindrance* to pupils. The next section looks more closely at his claims.

1.2.3 Hunter and the 'Death' of Character

'Character is dead. Attempts to revive it will yield little. Its time has passed,' (Hunter, 2000: p. *xiii*). These bold sentiments resonate throughout Hunters (2000) book and encapsulate his main arguments, that: (a) Character is a concept that is rooted in certain cultural and institutional conditions, which are no longer valued or valid; (b) The attempt to develop character in schools is ineffective.

For Hunter (2000), character is highly social in its constitution and cannot be considered in isolation from the culture within which it is formed. So, to speak

generally of, say, 'human character' as something that transcends social boundaries, would most likely be rejected by Hunter (2000). This view stems from his belief that character is the unification between three properties: moral discipline, moral attachment and moral autonomy. Because morality is always situated, Hunter (2000) observes that character is similarly historically, culturally and socially situated, (p. 11). In looking at these three components, *moral discipline* is the most fundamental aspect, identified by one's ability to constrain oneself for the benefit of a greater good: in short, the capacity to say no. He specifically identifies 'constraint' as controlling of *habits*, *passions* and *desires* with consideration to a particular moral order, (Hunter 2000: p. 16). Next, *moral attachment* is understood in terms of the greater good, and is indicative of a responsibility to a larger community outside oneself, which activates the internal signals of moral discipline. The third aspect of character Hunter (2000) identifies is *moral autonomy*, which is one's ability to make their own (ethical) decisions.

> Character, then, is defined by the coming together of these moral properties. It is a reflection of creeds that have become convictions and is manifested in choices to abide by those convictions even in, *especially in*, the face of temptation or adversity, (Hunter, 2000: p. 16).

In other words, concrete experiences and circumstances form character and allow the tripartite aspects above to be tested and made resilient.

This concise portrayal of Hunter's (2000) account of character is crucial to the examination of his overall arguments. Hunter (2000) acknowledges that well-intentioned efforts are made to restore character and amplify character development in schools. However, he claims that those who advocate for character development do not fully realise what they're asking for and that these efforts inevitably disappoint. Although his arguments are very much inter-connected, I look at them as they are ordered above, for the purposes of this paper. Hunter's (2000) most palpable claim (and the title of his book) is that character is dead: a 'relic of another age,' (p. 13). To reiterate, one's character is rooted in particular convictions and is strengthened when a person is able to follow those convictions. According to Hunter (2000), convictions are not isolated factors that exist outside of culture and society; they derive from and are influenced by particular moral codes and creeds. Thus, adherence to specific moral doctrines is the basis for a person's firmly held

beliefs, which manifest as one's character. Character, in this sense, comes into being in a place in which there are specific moral commands that are valued by that society. For example, it might be easier to form a person's character in a homogenous society, because of the influence of a solitary set of creeds.[40] However, in a diverse society, such as the multicultural USA, identifying a *solitary* set of moral creeds is challenging.

The demise of character, then, is a result of the visible breakdown of those cultural and institutional conditions that make character possible. These conditions can be understood as moral imperatives; unshakeable truths formed from sacred codes that are imposed upon individuals. These conditions, Hunter (2000) explains, are compelling because of their apparently authoritative nature. The influence of religion and religious doctrines is an obvious example of moral imperatives from which convictions derive. However, as Hunter (2000) acknowledges,

> character does not require religious faith. But it does require the conviction of truth made sacred, abiding as an authoritative presence within consciousness and life, reinforced by habits institutionalised within a moral community, (p. 19).

Hunter (2000) is not denying the fact that smaller communities adhering to particular moral codes may exist within a larger community, such as the Amish or Mormons in the USA. Although these groups may provide authoritative codes and practices, and may very well influence the convictions of their adherents, the USA may never institutionalise and promote these beliefs. Thus, a smaller community may shape a person's character from an early age, but it may be stifled due to the lack of support and reinforcement from the larger community. Hunter (2000) seems to be suggesting that the death of character results from the lack of reinforcement the USA (or a similar community) may give to a particular moral code.

Thus, the prerequisites to the formation of character are (a) a compelling sacred code, and (b) a larger moral community, which adheres to and reinforces this code. Hunter (2000) claims that this is the basic form of character (i.e. the framework). He acknowledges that it is quite general, and that this characterisation could encompass a wide-range of people, from Mother Theresa to various Klansmen. Therefore, he

[40] This is considered further in the conclusion.

says that it is not enough to identify the form of character; the *content* must also be specified. However, in a multicultural liberal democratic society such as England, that which constitutes 'the good' or more specifically good character cannot be taken for granted. It is in this task of filling in the content that many complexities arise. Hunter (2000) explains a familiar difficulty; although the form of character may be the same, its actualisation and application often differs.

He also says that in addition to the extensive moral content that defines character, importance must also be given to the various communities and social traditions in which character is shaped. These moral cultures, as Hunter (2000) identifies them, provide answers to the 'whys' of motivations behind certain behaviour, hold people accountable for their actions and identify consequences of action. 'Indeed the power of culture is always measured by its power to bind us, to compel us, to oblige us in ways we are not fully aware of,' (Hunter, 2000: p. 23). Following this line of thinking, Hunter (2000) rejects the view that humans are born with well-developed moral sensibilities, and that unlike animals, humans are instinctually deprived; they are born with very little sense, and that institutions such as a moral culture provide us with this sense. Because moral sensibility is acquired, without a prevailing moral culture, there cannot be character or development of character. Consequently, Hunter's (2000) preliminary argument is that the *death of character* is a result of the diminished or non-existent cultural and institutional authority out of which character develops.

If the above considerations are accurate, it follows then, that it would be odd to discuss character development in schools. Hunter's (2000) subsequent argument is that schools cannot develop character and that any attempt to do so actually undermines its formation. Substantiating this claim are various links he makes to empirical investigations, to which the book gives prominence. Although these are not discussed here, I provide a brief glimpse into his critiques. Hunter (2000) is generally critical of the campaign for character development in schools, quite rightly arguing that,

> We say we want a renewal of character in our day but we don't really know what we ask for...We want character but without unyielding conviction; we want strong morality but without the emotional

> burden of guilt or shame; we want virtue but without particular moral justifications that invariably offend; we want good without having to name evil...In short, we want what we possibly cannot have on the terms that we want it, (p. *xv*).

He asserts that the USA (and presumably, similar western liberal societies), in an attempt to be inclusive, is hesitant to impose or endorse ideals and beliefs. Therefore, schools often take a neutral approach to character development, thus providing a shallow environment in which ideals are not imbibed, but rather destroyed. He is also critical of the superficial techniques offered in schools, arguing that they offer quick-fix solutions and slogans; this undermines the entrenched nature of character and its need for sustained progression.

Although Hunter (2000) offers a thorough model of character and a convincing argument for its formation, it seems as though his depiction is one-sided. Conceivable as his account of the moral aspects of character may be, he seems to assume that character is *solely* moral character. Consequently, his argument is not an attack on character rather it is a grievance with the conventions that form moral character. I reject Hunter's (2000) argument, that character is dead, on the supposition that character is broader than he purports. His second claim that the development of character in schools is debilitating seems at first glance to be a largely empirical claim. However, underlying both these arguments seems to be a deeper question that I examine below.

Hunter (2000) incorrectly claims that character solely derives from moral discipline, moral attachment and moral autonomy. Although character may have a moral 'strand' or moral implications, it is not simply the culmination of moral properties (as he has identified it). To begin, his use of 'moral discipline' to identify an individual's ability to control his appetites, one could also call 'self-discipline'. He explains that underlying to this restraint is a concern for the 'greater good'. However, there are two issues with this. For one, the 'greater good' could represent the greater good for the individual. For example, I may decide to stop buying coffee from a local café in order to save money for a new bike, so I consciously control my desire for coffee for the benefit of my greater good. This is very much a case of self-discipline. Another difficulty with this purely moral sense of the greater good is the

assumption that doing what is good for the majority comes at a cost to my own good; it views the greater good of others as distinct from the individual. However, does there have to be such a stark distinction between one's own good and the greater good? Could one's own good be inextricably linked to the greater good? A simple case of controlling one's anger is obviously beneficial for others (it may prevent violent acts) but it is also beneficial for oneself. Even if it seems as though ones restraint is only related to one's own good (not eating junk food to maintain good health), it can often lead to the good of others (being a role model for others to follow). Considering these points, it is unclear why moral discipline cannot be referred to as self-discipline.

The point of the above digression is that it seems as though Hunter (2000) is placing unnecessary emphasis on the moral aspect as though it is a hat that a person can wear which automatically turns all of her decisions into moral ones. This mistaken characterisation suggests that he assumes that character is interchangeable with moral character. He comes close to saying this when he claims that the entire enterprise of moral instruction is about the cultivation of character, (Hunter, 2000: p. 8). Even if this observation is accurate, it does not mean that *all* of character development is exclusively moral development and neither does it mean that character is solely morally constructed.

If character is not the coming together of three distinctly *moral* properties, then it is not necessarily the case that convictions arise out of *moral* attachment, but rather a more general attachment (that may include, but is not limited to the moral). It should be uncontroversial to suggest that moral doctrines might not necessarily influence the formation of a *conviction* (generally understood as a firm belief in something), but may still have an influence on a person's character. For example, Chand adamantly believes that recycling is a nonnegotiable activity that will lead to the betterment of environmental problems. She abstains (as much as possible) from using plastic bags and other items that are not biodegradable, as she feels this choice will also positively affect future generations. It is easy to see this belief may shape Chand's character, in terms of her discipline (using environmentally friendly products), attachment (to future generations) and autonomy (in choosing specific

products over others). Yet a number of personal, practical and political factors and not simply a single moral factor may influence this conviction. It is unconvincing that one's character, as Hunter (2000) suggests, is solely the result of adherence to moral imperatives, because one's character is not solely *moral character*. Thus, the claim that character is dead is not only false it is also misleading.

Interestingly enough, Hunter (2000) argues that character is dead and that it is a relic of another age. However, these are two different assertions. Death, in most cases, is indicative of an absolute and final end; it is conclusive. However, the very notion of death indicates that this thing indeed had an existence at some point in time. Suggesting that character is a relic of another age, Hunter (2000) is surely trying to imply that is it archaic. However relic is also suggestive of something lingering and often deep-rooted that has endured a certain phase, but has survived, albeit somewhat fragmented. Perhaps this is not what Hunter (2000) means by relic, but it is the latter sense that I agree with. Character is indeed a relic of another age, but has not reached a final resting point, and is by no means dead. If, what is left of character, is seemingly disjointed from everyday discourse, then it should perhaps be restored, not buried.

Hunter's (2000) second claim, that it is detrimental to develop character in schools, is largely supported by empirical work that he has done which I do not explore here. Nevertheless, underlying this claim, it seems, is an important question that is central to this thesis: if there are obvious efforts to rejuvenate and promote character development in schools, why does it seem as though these efforts are unsuccessful? His investigation leads him to conclude that the very conditions that underpin character are defunct, and so the very concept of character is dead and the development of it in schools is useless. However, I contend that this reasoning is incorrect, and that character is broader than Hunter (2000) conceives. Hunter (2000) even admits, 'Children today are innately as capable of developing character as they ever were in the past,' (p. 13). Therefore, the quest to find an answer to his original query (why does character development fail to bring results?) is incomplete. This may be an empirical question, but Hunter's (2000) work brings to light certain normative issues. It shows that there is scope for investigating the concept of

character and that there is an obvious vagueness associated with this idea; there is need for a comprehensive characterisation of character. In its observation that character is a relic of another age, Hunter's (2000) research also shows the necessity of examining not only *what* character is today, but also *why* schools ought to develop it.

The views presented in this chapter are representative of predominant and leading contemporary perspectives on character. This chapter reveals that although the notion of character is not distinct and straightforward, most thinkers seem to assume that character can be used interchangeably with moral character. Earlier I addressed the point that 'moral' can be understood both in a narrow as well as a broad sense. The perspectives in this chapter are representative of morality in the narrow sense. I have maintained, thus far, that character is not necessarily moral character. That is to say that character is not moral character, where moral' is reflective of morality in the narrow sense. However, it is necessary to look closely at this claim and examine whether character *should* be used interchangeably with moral character. This is a significant question. If character is not merely limited to moral character, then critics of the development of character in schools might assuage their arguments if a broader characterisation of character was taken into account. And so, the question whether character should be used interchangeably with moral character is one that is most certainly examined in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2: Philosophical Perspectives on Character

The first chapter provided some insight into contemporary perspectives on the notion of character, reviewing a wide range of literature. From educationalists to psychologists, practitioners to theorists, notions of character (as well as the components which constitute character) were extensively discussed. It is no surprise then, that the concept has received some attention within the field of philosophy of education, as well as within wider philosophical discourse. Though the previous chapter may have incorporated some contemporary views of philosophers, this chapter focuses entirely on philosophical perspectives on character. I begin by outlining three senses of character, so as to differentiate between the various ways in which the concept is *predominantly* understood. I examine the complexities that these interpretations give rise to, particularly identifying difficulties that philosophers find with the education of character. In this way, this second chapter continues the process of getting clearer about the notion of character, in order to later address how character ought to be understood.

2.1 Various senses of 'character'

The first chapter recognises that there is not one comprehensive definition of character, though the notion of character in contemporary discourse is more often than not used interchangeably with moral character. Though the first chapter questions the extent to which character is merely moral character, suggesting the notion is *broader* than is often acknowledged, the idea of character remains ambiguous. Unsurprisingly, philosophical thought related to the notion of character is not an exception to this rule. That is, what constitutes 'character' as well as what it means to develop a person's character is not clear; though, there has been some useful work done in the field (which this chapter explores). Hence, continuing the effort to shed light on the concept of character, I examine the philosophical territory, delineating prominent ways in which the concept is understood. In particular, I outline three particular senses of character, as identified by Peters (1981); these

serve as useful starting points from which distinctions between various conceptions can be made.

In his book *Moral Development and Moral Education*, Peters (1981) dedicates some thought to the notion of character and its influence on education. He rightly points out that the study of character was an important aspect of psychology in the 1920s and 30s, though it experienced a waning period.[41] For this reason, he says, it may seem that there are aspects of the discussion which seem more relevant to psychology than to philosophical enquiry. For example, his discussion of character traits which places emphasis on an individuals behaviour is often the subject of psychological enquiry; though philosophers might be interested in human behaviour, they are more inclined to consider such things as what sort of behaviour is good and why.[42] Peters (1981) does acknowledge that the study of character has a rightful place in philosophical enquiry, and that philosophers have much to contribute towards the subject. He claims that Aristotle was among the first in the field to account for the 'training of character... as a corrective to preoccupation with the cultivation of the intellect and with vocational training,' (Peters, 1981, p. 24). However, this statement is misleading. Aristotle did not conceive of the development of character as a corrective measure, but rather saw it as fundamental to the training of the intellect. Accordingly, a virtuous person couldn't have acquired the intellectual virtues without the development of character, and so to attribute the idea that character development existed to compensate for excessive intellectual development to Aristotle, is mistaken, as the development of both aspects went hand-in-hand.[43]

Peters (1981) begins looking at contemporary interpretations of character, and rightly observes that the concept of character is often linked to that of traits, and

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[41] Peters (1981) refers to the Hartshorne and May study mentioned in chapter 1, and also asserts that the inferences drawn from this study were mistaken and killed the subject of character for some time.
[42] That is not to say that philosophers are unaffected by psychological work on character traits. On the contrary, much recent philosophical debate on the concept of character has been influenced by such work, as was revealed in chapter 1.
[43] The idea that the development of character was imperative to human flourishing and foremost in the education of the child was one held by both Plato and Aristotle. This is discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.

that both are frequently used to describe a manner or style of behaving[44]. He contrasts this idea with a person's nature, which he claims the individual has no choice in deciding, (p. 25). Peters (1981) says that nature may be formed by a person's inclinations and desires, and he rightly states that those factors are not necessarily indicative of particular behaviours (i.e. Just because I am easily angered, does not mean I always display anger or argue with others). Peters (1981) also attempts to distinguish character from personality; though he only touches upon the differences, he acknowledges a difficulty in distinguishing character from both nature and personality.[45] This difficulty is perhaps one of language, and not necessarily a conceptual difficulty. Mainstream ideas about character, personality and nature, often merge these terms, and this may have an effect on how they are used in educational discourse. However this does not mean that there is a conceptual difficulty in distinguishing between these ideas. Looking closely at the concept of character, in an effort to become clearer about the subject matter, Peters (1981) divides the concept into three senses which he identifies as the following categories: '*types* of character', 'non-committal use', 'having character'. These are explored below.

2.1.1 Types of Character

Peters (1981) describes Types of Character as distinctive patterns or styles of traits that are associated with a particular person (p. 28). The way in which we are inclined to describe and characterise others often denotes a particular type of character. When we say that a person is eccentric, we are saying something about how she normally behaves; to a certain extent, we are providing a caricature based on the amplification of a particular trait or characteristic. Similarly, Peters (1981) explains that often in a play, individuals take on specific roles, exaggerating certain traits associated with the role (p. 28). In this way, a type of character could be a specific label ascribed to a person that reveal a number of traits about that person or a manner in which that person may act (i.e. obsessive compulsive).

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[44] A basic conception of 'character traits' was offered in chapter 1, which shows that the notion of character is often used interchangeably with the idea of 'character traits'. In other words, discussion of character, may, in actuality, be a discussion of character traits. This is explored further in this chapter.

[45] Distinctions between personality and character are further discussed below.

An individual's type of character, it appears, is defined by her behaviour (or that which is outwardly visible) as it is based on a pattern of outward expression. However, one's pattern of behaviour may not necessarily be enduring; that is, the traits that I display, although frequent enough to appear patterned, may in fact be short-lived (only for a particular period of time). For example, I may be messy while at home, living with my parents, because I know someone will always be there to clean up after me. However, when I enter university and have to live on my own, my patterns of behaviour may change. The influence of my neat-freak parents, as well as the realisation that no one else is going to clean up my mess, might prompt me to clean my house all the time. To my parents, I might appear to be a lady of leisure, but to my friends who see my behaviour at university, my type of character might appear to be completely different. Peters (1981) does not explicitly mention anything about time or duration; the sense in which he refers to character above places emphasis on a pattern or style of behaviour. However, many contemporary conceptions of character have an expectation of an entity that is enduring. The sense of character that Peters (1981) describes above does not necessarily capture this basic element, but rather appears to suggest that a person's character could be frequently changing.

This sense of character can also be illustrated by the phrase 'He's such a character.' For, in exclaiming that X is 'a character', I might be saying any number of things about his style or manner of behaving based on particular traits this person seems to personify. But I am not necessarily praising or blaming this person, nor is my exclamation based on a particular idea of character. In other words, I am not saying very much about what type of person I am referring to (i.e. whether he's noble, weak or wicked) rather I am using the word 'character' in a very loose sense.

To a certain extent, this delineation comes closer to modern notions of personality. Though Peters (1981) differentiates between character and personality,[46] there are obvious ways in which the two concepts (as presented above) overlap. McKinnon

[46] Peters (1981) observes that personality is more of a presentation to the outside world, an outward mask he claims, while character involves 'inner effort and decision', (p. 25).

(1999) considers an individual's personality to be 'the sum of (her) temperamental dispositions,' which often determines how likeable that person is. She claims that much of a person's personality is determined by factors that are not of one's own choosing, such as environmental and hereditary elements. McKinnon (1999) contrasts this with a person's character, which she claims is, to a larger extent, self-constructed and a matter of choice. Interestingly, McKinnon (1999) differentiates between personality traits, and those of character as follows: '...we say that some animals and most small children have personalities, but not characters. Dogs may be 'loyal' or children may be 'generous' but we do not take these traits to be traits of character,' (p. 62). Hence, the idea of distinctive 'traits' or qualities that a person exhibits relates to conceptions of character *and* personality, which may be one source of uncertainty about the concepts.[47]

For this reason, Kupperman (1990) also acknowledges that the two concepts (personality and character) are used interchangeably, though he maintains that they are, in many ways, different. In particular, he emphasises that character has moral overtones, whereas personality does not. For example, to say of Chand that she has 'no character', though infrequently used and perhaps linguistically incorrect, holds particular negative connotations; the fact that Chand has no character is not only undesirable, it is something we might *blame* her for.[48] In this way we are calling into question ideas about the individual's responsibility and integrity. Whereas, to say that Chand has no personality might be perceived as negative, but Chand would not necessarily be held responsible for such a fault. This is often understood as someone who lacks basic social skills; an element which might cloud our perception of Chand, but not something which we would reprimand her for. Kupperman (1990) indicates that 'the divergence between character and personality looks sharpest when the word *good* is introduced. Occasionally, people are spoken of as having a good personality; usually this means something like the claim that they are charming...To have a good character suggests the presence of virtues and the

[47] This uncertainty refers to the way in which character and personality are often used interchangeably in everyday discourse. Hence, there is an uncertainty about distinguishing features of the two concepts.
[48] Peters (1981) also makes the point that praise and blame play a role in the concept of character, (p. 26).

absence of major vices,' (p. 8). These examples supplement the distinctiveness of character and personality. Though Kupperman (1990) suggests that the notion of character has moral overtones, he claims that he is not committed to the view that character is entirely moral.[49] This digression into the concept of personality (as opposed to character) is by no means a complete portrayal, but it is useful to distinguish between the concepts, for the purposes of this thesis.

Coming back to Peters' (1981) notion of types of character, this interpretation is, to a certain extent, the *narrowest* out of the three. That is to say that it provides a particular sketch of character that may only be one degree of the concept, and that it is not necessarily an adequate representation of the concept. I claim that a broader conception of character is one that schools ought to promote. This is further discussed in a subsequent section.

2.1.2 Non-Committal Use

Another sense in which character is understood, Peters (1981) explains, is the non-committal use, which he claims is the most common use of the term; it is the *sum total* of an individual's character-traits that she has absorbed, based on the particular conventions she has been exposed to, (Peters, 1981, p. 27). In particular, it is a composite of rules[50] that a person has acquired which dictates the way in which she behaves towards others as well as for her own ends (Peters, 1981, p.27-28). In this way, the non-committal sense of character is largely reminiscent of morality in the narrow sense, which was outlined in the introduction; particularly the sense in which a person's character is reflective of particular rules that directly impinge upon the way she behaves.[51] In chapter 1, it was suggested that 'moral character' is often used interchangeably with the concept of character, and for the

[49] In a subsequent publication, Kupperman (2006) writes that character can be understood as 'your characteristic way of responding to the world, and specifically to moral problems...' (p. 113). Hence, he maintains the view that character isn't *entirely* moral, but it seems he places much emphasis on moral elements. He discusses three major areas of life which he feels that character is concerned with: (1) moral virtue, (2) behaviour towards others, and (3) encountering and overcoming adversity, (pp. 113-114).

[50] It is important to note that Peters focuses on this idea of rule-following, or, specific directives that a person uses to guide her behaviour; he specifically mentions this 'rule-following' at particular points in his book, (see, Peters, 1981: p. 16).

[51] The connection between rules and character are considered in further in chapter 6.

most part, that character largely consists of an amalgamation of character traits.[52] The non-committal sense of character appears to be parallel to the contemporary notion of moral character that is adopted by many theorists and educationalists (as observed in chapter 1).

Though not all thinkers might readily accept the necessity of rules, they will certainly agree that Peters' (1981) classification rightly brings to light the widely accepted view that character is a composite of particular character traits. In her discussion of character, McKinnon (1999) puts forth three aspects of character which she calls naturalistic, ethical and metaphysical. The first aspect she refers to is the naturalistic sense of character, referring to the idea that character is something that all people naturally construct.[53] She relates this aspect of character to the notion of the self, maintaining that although we are not born with a character, it is natural and, perhaps inevitable, that we create one. An ethical sense of character (though not necessarily completely distinct from the naturalistic sense), McKinnon (1999) explains, particularly has to do with states of character or virtues and vices. The ethical aspects of character, refers to the particular *content* that goes into making one's character, to a certain extent, desirable or undesirable. The third aspect, the metaphysical character, is related to the idea that each person has a unique character, that is truly her or his own; this is what makes a person who she is.

All three senses above seem to fall under Peters' (1981) non-committal use. Although McKinnon identifies them as different senses, they seem to be more like variations of one particular sense of character: the sense which identifies character as (at a very basic level) a composite of traits. McKinnon (1999) does not offer any remarkable distinctions between the categories she puts forth, and rather seems to be discussing aspects of a particular sense of character (as mentioned above),

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[52]Though, I claim that this view is mistaken and examine ancient thinking (in chapters 3, 4 and 5) in an effort to support my claim.

[53] McKinnon (1999) claims that character (particularly the naturalistic sense) is an essential ingredient for a flourishing life, (p. 66). Because this sense of character is something that each individual constructs, and it is essential for a flourishing life, then to a certain extent, one could argue that a flourishing life is also one which each individual can determine for himself. Notions of human flourishing and wellbeing are discussed in subsequent chapters.

though these aspects, as she rightly identifies are somewhat distinct from one another.[54] Hence, McKinnon (1999), like many of her contemporaries, identifies character closely with traits, (p. 66). However, her views on character reveal that she too is not committed to an idea that character is simply moral character.

Is it necessarily wrong to consider character to be a collection of traits? After all, many contemporary thinkers identify the ancient Greeks as proponents of this conception of character. Though Plato is called upon as a pioneer for character education, it is Aristotle who is regularly alluded to by philosophers of education.[55] For example, Sherman (1989) conceives of character as a person's enduring traits, an idea which she attributes to Aristotle (p. 1).[56] If the ancient Greeks *did* in fact conceive of character as an amalgamation of traits, then this association (above) between character and traits would be somewhat appropriate.[57] Surveying the contemporary philosophical literature on the subject and studying the ancient Greek literature related to character are two crucial means of evaluating these claims; the former is briefly taken up in this section.

Accompanying most philosophical discussions of character is the notion of virtue[58], and a story of how the two concepts are strongly related.[59] Famously quoted are two passages where Aristotle first tells us that 'Virtue is a character state concerned with choice, lying in the mean relative to us...' (Aristotle, 1925, 1107^{a1}), and then later on, 'it is not possible to be fully good without having practical wisdom, nor practically wise without having excellence of character,' (1144^{b31-32}). Even if one has not the slightest clue of what character entails, these views certainly confirm that, at

[54] McKinnon (1999) does not profess to identify completely distinct senses of character, and in fact says 'these three facets are linked and overlap in different ways,' (p. 66); for the purposes of this section, it is important to recognise that the distinctions she makes still fall within one (maybe two) senses that Peters (1981) describes.

[55] Though their (Plato and Aristotle) ideas are more fully explored in Chapters 3 and 4, for the purposes of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the implications of their thoughts on contemporary conceptions of character (such as the ones previously mentioned).

[56] McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) also use the phrase 'enduring traits' in reference to character, (p. 134).

[57] There is also the question of whether the notion of character traits that was highlighted in the previous chapter is the same as the notion ascribed by the Greeks.

[58] By 'virtue', I am specifically referring to the ancient Greek concept of *aretē*, which Plato and Aristotle were considerably concerned with.

[59] See, McLaughlin and Halstead (1999: p. 134); Sherman (1989).

the very minimum, character is linked to virtue. Littering Aristotle's discussion of virtue (and subsequently, contemporary discussions on character) are various terms such as 'states of character', 'character state', 'excellence of character'; all of which are translations from ancient Greek text. Without much investigation into what the notion of character entails, we are offered explanations of a concept that is automatically tied up with virtue.[60]

There are various examples in contemporary philosophical literature that illustrate the point above. For one, Kristjánsson (2007) describes *hexis* as character state.[61] Virtues, he tells us, are settled character states, an idea which he attributes to Aristotle, (see, Kristjánsson, 2007, chapter 2). However, he does not say much here about the notion of character itself, apart from claiming that Aristotle understands emotions to be one facet of human character, which are described as particular character states, (see, p. 87). Doris (2002) also says 'a virtue is a state of character that makes its possessors behave in ethically appropriate ways,' (p. 15). Sherman (1989) claims that character refers to a person's enduring traits, referring to Aristotle's 'classification of virtue or excellence (*aretē*) into that of character (*ēthikēs*) and intellect (*dianoētikēs*),' (p. 5). She goes on to say 'virtues of character are in all cases descriptions of character states, which are at once modes of affect, choice, and perception' (p. 5). Carr (1991a) talks about the idea of 'defects of character', which he uses (as opposed to the notion of vice); he claims that (specifically referring to Aristotle's philosophy) one virtue sits between two defects of character, that fall short of the mean. By 'defects of character' he acknowledges that he is referring to 'a disposition which falls considerably short of the standards which Aristotle sets...' (p. 54); embedded within his writing, is an association between character and disposition. In this way, it appears that at times, theorists mechanically use terminology that has some foundation in ancient Greek translations, without necessarily examining the implications of such characterisations.

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[60] One might wonder whether there is such a concept as character (on its own) within Plato and Aristotle's ethical thought. This is explored in chapters 3 and 4.
[61] I address this point in Chapter 4.

These interpretations reveal that there seems to be not only confusion about the notion of 'character', but also the various terms that are often associated with character (character states, and so forth); more often than not, character is used interchangeably with these terms.[62] However, whether or not character can be used interchangeably with 'character traits', 'character state' or 'excellence of character' is something that is best settled by an investigation into Plato and Aristotle's texts. This is not merely a puzzle for a linguist; this excursion reveals an imprecision with which the notion of character is both utilised and understood.

I am not claiming that there *is not* a relationship between character and virtue or character and traits. Nor, is it necessarily *wrong* to closely associate character with a set of traits; but it is rather, incomplete. For one, it is based on an idea that character automatically entails moral character, which presupposes particular moral virtues. However, I claim that the notion of character is broader than this conception of character in chapter 6, and I show how ancient Greek thinking also supports an idea of character which is not merely 'moral' character (see, chapter 3 and 4). In doing so, I reveal that the notion of character, as it is depicted by many philosophers, actually refers to other concepts (such as dispositions, habits, ethical virtues) which are distinct from the notion of character.

At first glance, it appears that the types of character is quite similar to the non-committal use of character. Both labels typify a sense of character that is predominantly related to traits and behaviour. However, whereas the former (types of character) might refer to an exaggeration of a particular trait, the latter (non-committal use) seems to account for *the* aggregate set of traits that a person possesses: it is an attempt to define character. One could say that this latter sense of character is *broader* than types of character, to the extent that it seems to encompass a larger range of traits. However, the non-committal sense of character appears to suggest that the set of traits that comprise a person's character is relatively fixed and unwavering. In comparison to the types of character view, this

[62] For example, chapter 1 revealed that character is mistakenly used interchangeably with 'character traits' and the present examination of philosophical perspectives reveals a similar problem.

sense is limited as it does not allow for fluidity over time. And so, from this perspective, the second sense of character too seems narrow.

2.1.3 Having Character

The demarcation the of previous two senses of character seems to include a large majority of how the concept is understood today, not only by educators, policymakers and within the larger public arena, but by philosophers as well. According to Peters (1981) there is one more sense in which character is often understood, which he describes as 'having character'. Unlike the other two senses examined above, having character is not indicative of having any one particular set of traits. Rather, as Peters (1981) notes, the necessary conditions of having character are integrity, incorruptibility and consistency (p. 30). Though these components are not spoken of in depth, they are presented as essential to the notion of having character, (Peters, 1981, p. 30). Thus, if we look at this idea of having character in relation to the other two senses of character offered above, there are significant differences to be noted. For one, both the non-committal sense and types of character are narrow, in the sense that they reflect notions of character that are predominantly related to behaviour; they are specific. For example, when we attribute a type of character to someone, this label is suggestive of specific attitudes, behaviours, dispositions, and so forth; it imposes explicit expectations on a person about how they *ought* to behave. So if we label Mars as punctual we expect him to always be on time. Whereas to say that a person has character it to say any number of things about their behaviour. Perhaps the point to be made is that having character does not necessarily mean having the qualities of A, B and C, rather it is the manner in which those qualities are pursued that is being evaluated. And so, when we say that 'it takes character to do X' or 'it takes a person of character to do Y', these sentences capture the sense that is being referred to. That is, something broader than an organised list of attractive qualities is alluded to here.

With respect to his three components of integrity, incorruptibility and consistency above, Peters (1981) begins with the concept of integrity and says that a person said to have this 'is not credited with any definite traits; but the claim is made that,

whatever traits he exhibits, there will be some sort of control and consistency in the manner in which he exhibits them,' (p. 30). This concept is closely related to the other two. For example, it could be said that Chand is a teetotaller because she abstains from drinking alcohol. Teetotaller could be the label of the type of character she has. However, if Chand always refrains from drinking alcohol, it might be said that she has character. If she avoids drinking alcohol whether she is at home, out with friends, or with co-workers, then Peters (1981) would say that she has shown consistency. That is, Chand has displayed the same set of traits across place (and perhaps time). If she does not easily succumb to outside pressure to drink, then it might be said that she has an incorruptible character-type. That is, she does not merely refrain from drinking when she is with certain friends who also do not drink; she avoids alcohol even with those people who try to persuade her to drink. These are not strictly examples of consistency and incorruptibility: they encompass factors of integrity such as control over the manner in which traits are exhibited. The example above has illustrated the components Peters identifies with his notion of having character. These three components indicate a particular *manner* in which one's traits will be pursued.

It is this third sense of character that is particularly valuable to the current discussion, as there are important educational implications for having character.[63] Educators interested in the development of character, or the archaic training of character which Peters (1981) refers to in several places,[64] would most likely approve of promoting the qualities of integrity, incorruptibility and consistency which are paramount to having character. There is little difficulty in accepting these qualities; the difficulty that arises is rather, in agreeing upon the specific traits that a person is supposed to maintain with integrity, incorruptibility and consistency. From the account of having character above, there are any number of traits one could place emphasis on, and Peters (1981) does not explicitly fill-in the content. He

[63] That is not to say, however, that the other two senses in which Peters (1981) describes character do not have educational significance. In fact, it is probably the case that many programmes of character education most likely fall within the first two categories. I am not disregarding these efforts; I am rather suggesting that schools ought to focus on ensuring, at the most fundamental level, that their pupils have character, and that this is likely to be the least problematic sense of character development.

[64] For example, see Peters, 1981, p. 24 and p. 30.

acknowledges that this is a crucial task for educators (p. 30). The characterisation provided by Peters (1981) above does not provide an adequate account of character from which educators can fully understand what it means to develop character. Though he has offered a useful initiation into this investigation, more work would need to be done to fill-in the content. In other words, if educators should be concerned with ensuring their pupils have character, what does this entail?[65]

What Peters' (1981) explanation has revealed is that there may be varying degrees of having character which may contribute to the discussion of what type of character a school ought to promote. For example, 'strength' and 'weakness' of character might be better understood with reference to the three components of consistency, incorruptibility and integrity. So, if Mars exhibits a set of traits (in the non-committal sense) in his own country, but drastically changes when he goes to live elsewhere, Peters (1981) would say that this person would not be described as having character, (p. 30). However, neither would Mars be completely void of having character, as he clearly displayed certain traits earlier on. The lack of consistency in the adherence to particular traits suggests that Mars might have a *weakness* of character. As Peters (1981) says 'we speak of strength and weakness of character which is a way of measuring the degree to which a person can be side-tracked, tempted, coerced, corrupted or altered by ridicule,' (p. 30). Mars has a weak character, in that his commitment to his traits is easily corrupted by the influence of others (in this example). In the example put forward earlier about the teetotaller, one could say that this person has a strong character. However, Peters claims that simply referring to someone as having character (be it strong or weak), does not seem to automatically entail that such character is either good or bad. He explains how it may be possible for a morally repugnant person[66] to still have character, (p. 30). I claim that this sort of reasoning is faulty, and develop this critique in chapter 6. For the purposes of this chapter though, it has been important to outline Peters' (1981) notion of having character, as it is broader than the other senses of character introduced. I claim that it is this particular sense of character

[65] This question is closely examined in Chapter 6.
[66] He assumes that a morally repugnant person would mean that such a person has 'bad' character.

that is of importance to school education, and that the education of character ought to encompass such a broader sense of character.

So far this chapter has considered philosophical perspectives on the notion of character. The final section of this chapter examine perspectives on character development in education.

2.2 Perspectives on character and education

The previous sections have shown that philosophical interpretations of character abound. In addition to this, there are some philosophers who have examined the implications of character and education. It should come as no surprise, that the notion of character education is not straightforward. The idea of character education, philosopher of education Kristjan Kristjánsson suggests, is 'historically founded on Aristotelian pillars', (2007, p. 31). This observation is in line with other contemporary thinkers (Sherman, Doris, Lickona, and so forth). However, although Kristjánsson (2007) acknowledges that the education of character may be an influential movement, he rightly indicates that it is 'philosophically undiscerning and underdeveloped,' (p. 2). Such weakness arguably derives from a more fundamental ambiguity associated with the very notion of character. Nevertheless, various philosophers have explored conceptions of character education; some of their ideas are highlighted in this section.

The education of character is of prime importance to many Communitarians, (Arthur and Bailey, 2000). Because there are multiple communitarian perspectives, which on the whole attempt to remedy the perceived shortcomings and limits of liberalism, so too are there various educational implications. A prominent critique that is made by many communitarians is of the 'asocial individualism' that liberal theory appears to promote.[67] In other words, communitarians claim that liberals often ignore the extent to which a community shapes the values that a person has, and this creates the idea of an individual who freely chooses a specific way to live, independent of

[67]See, Mulhall & Swift, 1996.

society. In an attempt to remedy any such individualism communitarians insist that education must first and foremost be in character, (Arthur and Bailey, 2000). Amitai Etzioni offers the following rationale:

> In the Communitarian's ideal world, children would come to school with their basic characters well formed and their values sufficiently internalized. Children already enrolled in school would have their character traits further reinforced at home...Under such conditions, teachers would be able to concentrate on passing information and skills...But this is not the case, (Etzioni, 1993, p. 89).

And so, he claims that character formation is a task that must be undertaken by educators, (Etzioni, 1993, pp. 91-95). It seems that Etzioni (1993) takes for granted a particular characterisation of character, which he identifies quite specifically as 'the psychological muscles that allow a person to control impulses and defer gratification, which is essential for achievement, performance, and moral conduct,' (p. 91). And so, for him, it follows that character development is developing a *capacity* to live in such a disciplined and self-controlled manner.[68] He is particularly convinced that character development lays the 'psychic foundation' for a person to behave morally, but offers little clarification on what this means.

Thus far, the line of reasoning I have taken is that character is broader than moral character. More specifically, I attribute moral character to be reflective of morality in the narrow sense, which (as mentioned above) can be likened to Peters' (1981) non-committal sense of character. However, even if the non-committal sense of character is correct, the educational implications for it are still problematic, as McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) reveal in their paper 'Education in Character and Virtue'. These thinkers thoroughly examine the notion of character education from this narrow perspective. They begin with important questions that are often neglected or taken for granted in much educational discourse on character: namely, what is *meant* by 'character' and what *sort* of character do we want to develop in pupils and *why*. The answer to the first question, as this chapter has demonstrated, is at best, imprecise. However, McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) put forth a basic characterisation of character, which unsurprisingly 'refers to a person's enduring traits, and therefore plays an important role in explaining not only how a person

[68]Interestingly, Etzioni (1993) takes the notion of 'character development' to be obvious, claiming 'there is little mystery as to what proper character development entails,' (p. 91).

acts now, but how he or she can be counted upon to act,' (p. 134). For this reason, they refer to the education of character and virtue rather than merely character education.

McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) explain that character development is linked with habit formation and development of certain sensitivities (among other attributes). Character development in this sense may become a process of conditioning by means of control that is exerted by those who make a claim for a certain conception of the ideal person. 'After all, education in character and virtue involves the development of some sorts of persons rather than others,' (McLaughlin and Halstead, 1999, p. 136). The point to be made here is that character educators ultimately promote a specific type of character, and so, they must face the difficulty of justifying the reasoning behind choosing certain qualities and omitting others. In a liberal democratic society, when education in character is closely linked with moral and civic education, further complexities arise, because it is difficult to accept a definitive group of qualities as *the* ideal. Such a partiality is to be discouraged, as it undermines an individual's freedom to choose their own concept of the good.[69] Furthermore, doing so in a common school would be especially controversial, unless justified. For these reasons, McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) observe that *any* conception of education in character leads to complex and often controversial issues.[70]

They organize various conceptions of education in character into two groups: 'expansive' and 'non-expansive', (McLaughlin and Halstead, 1999, p. 136). These divisions are not meant to be viewed as sharp separations, rather as two groups on a continuum representing a certain degree of 'expansiveness', and are related to three specific features:

1. the nature and extent of the rationale offered for the conception;

[69] Though, as it has already been noted above, a communitarian perspective would argue that a person's choice doesn't occur in isolation from her environment and is inevitably interconnected with the larger community that she is a part of. Hence conceptions of 'the good' are often reflections of a larger 'community' that the person is influenced by.

[70] To reiterate, though some of their arguments are examined it is crucial to remember that I am arguing for a characterisation of character that is broader than the one under critique in this article. Hence, their criticisms are tied to a particularly narrow sense of character, albeit one which is commonly accepted by many contemporary thinkers.

> 2. the nature and extent of the qualities of character and virtue proposed for development; and
> 3. the nature and extent of the role given to appropriate forms of reasoning on the part of the student, (McLaughlin and Halstead, 1999, p. 137).

Conceptions of the non-expansive type are considered to be limited in all three areas listed above, and particularly in the third area, while expansive concepts tend to be more elaborate. Often the rationale behind character education of the expansive type is applied to specific schooling contexts such as faith schools, independent schools, or any school that is able to exert influence of a wider-sort. Such a conception would not be acceptable in the context of a common school in a liberal democratic society, as the influence, of these schools is limited.[71] In reference to the qualities of character and virtue, an expansive notion is likely to provide a substantial account of virtue and character, and would consequently run into the problem of unjustified value influence. Nevertheless, although they acknowledge problems with the notion of 'core values', McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) observe that the general instinct behind this approach is correct. After all, 'we should not underestimate the extent of consensus about many virtues and other qualities of character which exists among people of wise practical judgment,' (McLaughlin and Halstead, 1999, p. 148). Thus, character education that derives out of some commonality or non-controversial character development may be seen as that which is associated with the requirements of learning, or those that promote 'civic virtue'. Promoters of this conception hold that certain qualities of character that are expected of citizens in a liberal-democratic society, should be promoted, and often offer a more expanded conception of education in character. However, these points are open for criticism as McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) indicate.

Though the two thinkers offer important criticism of both the expansive and non-expansive accounts of 'education in character and virtue' (as they call it), I do not express those points here. For, I contend that the characterisation of character that McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) base their critique on, is narrow, and insufficient for school education. Hence, whatever their critiques of character education may be,

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[71] See, T.H. McLaughlin, 2003, 'The Burdens and Dilemmas of Common Schooling', in K. McDonough and W. Feinberg (eds.) *Education and Citizenship in Liberal Democratic societies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

they are grievances based on an inadequate (though, commonly used) characterisation of character. The point of this digression has been to reveal that philosophers of education *have* indeed thought about the notion of character education, and have systematically problematised an account of character education that is primarily based on a narrow conception of character: one which I do not adhere to. This section has endeavoured to represent some of the work that has been done in this field as well as familiarise the reader with some key difficulties with this widely-held conception of character education. These issues are taken up further in a later section.

It seems this section only reinforces the point that there are several important questions relating to the characterisation of character that need to be addressed. As McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) rightly demand at the outset of their paper, what is character and what type of character should schools develop and why? On the whole, this chapter reveals that philosophical thought often links character to virtue, and it often assumes that the development of character should result in the inculcation of virtues. A significant pattern of thought in philosophy, and specifically, in philosophy of education is the assumption that character is interchangeable with moral character. In this way, philosophical perspectives on character share this assumption with contemporary perspectives (as discussed in chapter 1). The limited discussion of character within the field often sustains archaic interpretations of the concept, which are usually linked to ancient Greek philosophy, and particularly, the work of Aristotle. Even a quick online search for 'character' in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* generates a primary result of 'moral character'. It is no surprise that character education is often used interchangeably with moral education, and the development of character may be seen as an element of moral development.

The first and second chapter have raised various concerns, but of central importance is whether character should merely be understood as moral character. After focusing on these various contemporary thinkers, in the last two chapters, I now move on to looking at ancient perspectives of character. For, many contemporary thinkers attribute the notion of character to Plato and Aristotle. And so, any enquiry

into the concept of character ought to include ancient Greek perspectives, as they are looked upon as the pioneers of character education. The next two chapters study the ideas of these two thinkers, in an effort to get clearer about the notion of character.

Chapter 3: Ancient Greek Perspectives on Human Flourishing[72]

Thus far, the previous two chapters have studied the notion of character (mainly in the context of 'character education') at a microscopic level. That is, I have looked at the particular details concerning the notion of character in contemporary discourse. As a result, many uncertainties have been raised not only about the basic conception of character, but also about the worth of character development in schools. I claim that much of the uncertainty can be attributed to a narrow characterisation of character, which dominates much of the discussion around character education. Such a characterisation, I claim, is reflective of morality in the narrow sense. Should character and character education be conceived of in such narrow terms?

As the previous chapters indicate, the contemporary notion(s) of character are often said to derive from ancient Greek thought; specifically, that of Plato and Aristotle. In order to tackle whether or not character should be understood as moral character (the micro perspective), it is necessary to examine the underlying thought behind such contentions (the macro perspective). In order to do this, I begin by examining the two thinkers fundamental ideas related to human flourishing. For, much of their discussions on character (as well as their wider philosophies) are embedded within their overall ideas about a flourishing life, so it is important to get to grips with these ideas. And so, to begin I look closely at the work of Plato before moving on to Aristotle. Of importance, I show that there are significant similarities between Plato and Aristotle; I claim that these similarities have a bearing on how they might characterise character and education.

[72] The notion of 'human flourishing' is referred to in various ways (such as the 'good life' and 'wellbeing'), and is indicative of an idea or set of ideas that express how best to live; it is a theory about human happiness.

3.1 Plato and Aristotle on 'The Good Life'

Many of the ideas presented below are those that are basic to Plato and Aristotle's ethical theory, reflecting two of their well-known writings. Those who delve into even a small amount of Greek philosophy are bound to have come across many of the concepts that are being presented below. So then, why is there a need to spell out these concepts in such detail? The answer may not be obvious. It seems that many concepts and theories that are fundamental to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, are understood through the consultation of *translated* works. Hence, it is necessary to look at the 'original' ancient Greek text (though these might also be a translation) in order to substantiate certain points. The points being raised may seem divergent to some of the common assumptions made about Aristotle or Plato's ethical theory, and so it is important to flesh out these ideas, and look at the implications of these interpretations for the larger work.

3.1.1 Dikaiosunē

In his *Republic*, Plato[73], speaking through his revered teacher Socrates, sets out to defend his theory on *dikaiosunē*. Traditionally translated as 'justice', and less frequently as 'morality', there is not necessarily a consensus on this term, which is the focus of the *Republic*; though, the preferred translation seems to be justice.[74] Annas (1981) asserts that 'justice is the usual, because the only reasonable, translation,' (p. 11). Though, she acknowledges that the concept might be wider than contemporary translations of justice, and may be used more generally as 'right conduct' or 'doing right'. For this reason, she explains, *dikaiosunē* is sometimes translated as 'righteousness'.[75]

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[73] Though Plato might have authored *The Republic*, he remarkably never refers to himself. It is most probably out of deep respect for his teacher, Socrates, that he uses Socrates as the primary narrator. Thus it is natural to speak of various claims that 'Socrates' makes, or the ideas of 'Socrates'. However, because the writing is Plato's, there are certain points at which I attribute certain ideas to 'Plato'. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this chapter, it should be understood that the arguments and ideas that are represented by 'Socrates', are actually those of Plato, and so, even those moments where I refer to Socrates, one can assume I am still referring to Plato's arguments and ideas.

[74] For example, Lee and Shorey both use 'justice' in their translations. Amongst commentators on the *Republic*, Guthrie (1975); Boyd, W (1922) *Introduction to the Republic of Plato*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London; Irwin, TH (1977) *Plato's Moral Theory*. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

[75] Murphy (1951) explains that *dikaios* means 'right', or, in the sense that Socrates is using it (within the discussion), 'rightness of conduct', (p. 8).

The ambiguity of this word is something which Aristotle acknowledges in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. In Book 5 he illustrates two senses of *dikaiosunē*: one which represents the particular virtue of justice and the other sense which perceives justice to be complete virtue or the *exercise of virtuous behaviour*.[76] Because of this demarcation Annas (1981) attributes Aristotle with the criticism: 'the *Republic* is a muddle, because Plato slides between a broad and narrow sense of *dikaiosunē* and it is never clear whether he is talking about justice or about morality in general,' (p. 12). However, this seems to be a misrepresentation of Aristotle's stance, as he does not seem perturbed by these various senses of justice, and rather, on the contrary, utilises both senses of *dikaiosunē* within his own discussion.[77] However, Annas (1981) is unconvinced by this so-called vagueness, and asserts that Plato is not guilty of shifting between different degrees of *dikaiosunē*. Rather, she claims that he is talking about justice throughout his text, and that the sense in which he talks about this concept may be broader than other conceptions; Plato has, what Annas (1981) calls, an 'expansive theory of justice', in which the just life and the moral life are not mutually exclusive, (p. 13).

Waterfield (1993) suggests that Aristotle is not trying to make a philosophical point by stressing the two senses of *dikaiosunē*; rather, he believes that Aristotle is showing how the concept is broader than 'acting fairly and impartially towards others,' (p. *xii*). Hence, Waterfield (1993) translates the word as 'morality' throughout his text, though he admits that 'justice' would have been a better translation at some points, (p. *xii*). Guthrie (1965) is convinced that *dikaiosunē* fits under the wider sense that Aristotle outlines, though he is comfortable with describing it as justice throughout his own commentary. For the purposes of this work I use 'righteousness' and 'doing right' as the translation for *dikaiosunē* as it seems to encompass the moral undertones of some of Plato's arguments, without the complexities of contemporary interpretations of morality.[78] It is also broader than

[76] Aristotle (1925) says, 'It is complete virtue in its fullest sense because it is the actual exercise of complete virtue. It is complete because he who possesses it can exercise his virtue not only in himself but towards his neighbour also,' (p. 108).
[77] In particular, see Aristotle (1925), Book 5.
[78] Annas (1981) rightly explains that the very notion of morality brings with it a tradition that is foreign to the ancient Greeks. This is discussed further in another section.

the stringent 'justice', which connotes a specific reference to rights, a concept that is also foreign to Plato.[79]

Discussion of the notion of righteousness immediately commences at the outset of *The Republic*, where in Book I, Socrates and Thrasymachus engage in dialogue on the subject. Thrasymachus claims that by being unrighteous, a person is better off, and Socrates challenges this position.[80] Prior to this discussion though, there is a brief conversation between Socrates and an elderly businessman named Cephalus. In this discussion, Cephalus conveys the woes of old-age that some of his acquaintances have expressed. However, Cephalus interestingly attributes such feelings of discontent not to their (i.e. his acquaintances) particular circumstance (in this case, acceleration of age) but rather to their character, (Plato, 1993, 329d). In this way, Plato introduces early on, the view that the type of life one leads is very much directed by one's character.[81] This particular point about character is not dwelled upon, but the discussion is expanded to include views on the right way to live and righteousness more generally. It is in this exchange that Cephalus reveals that, in his opinion, right or wrong consists in behaving in a particular way or carrying out particular actions.[82] Thus, the right way to live is something outward, in the sense of following specific rules or fulfilling certain duties.

Annas (1981) tells us the importance of this exchange is that it is not merely a representation of Cephalus' views; it is the ordinary person's view of *dikaiosunē*, that

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[79] Again, Annas (1981) tells us 'rights are often the basic or key concept in a modern theory of justice. Plato has no word for 'rights'. He and his contemporaries distinguish justice as a particular virtue rather by means of the notions of equality and of keeping to what is one's own,' (p. 11).

[80] This is quite a crude interpretation of his claims, of which there are several. For one, Thrasymachus claims that righteousness is merely the 'advantage of the stronger' (338c); that being, the people who are 'stronger' (often those who are in power, or are wealthy), often act in ways that are beneficial to themselves. He adds that anyone, given the opportunity, would act in such a way that is beneficial to him or herself. In claiming that righteousness is the advantage of the stronger party, Thrasymachus attempts to show that righteousness is actually a bad thing (343c, 344c). He also claims that being unrighteous is far more profitable than being righteous (344c).

[81] Both Waterfield (1993) and Shorey (1930) translate the (perhaps outdated) word τρόπος (*tropos*) as 'character'. The http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Main_Page translates this word as 'way, manner, style'.

[82] Annas (1981) claims that Cephalus is suggesting that 'the *kind* of person you are does not matter,' (p. 20). However, this doesn't seem to be entirely correct. If by 'kind' of person, Annas (1981) means 'good' or 'bad', then Cephalus has something to say about this. He certainly attempts to distinguish between different kinds of people within his limited discussion of character, suggesting that those with character are, to a certain extent, better off, (see, Plato, 331a).

it is largely a matter of following prescribed rules, where motivation is of little concern, (p. 21). Socrates challenges this idea and attempts to show his listeners that the right way to live is not necessarily a matter of mechanically carrying out particular actions or fulfilling a universal set of duties.[83] In a later section of Book 1, Socrates rejects Thrasymachus' claim that unrighteousness is superior to righteousness, ultimately arguing that a righteous person is better off than an unrighteous person.[84] He also argues that a person who truly understands the concept of righteousness recognises that it is inherently good, and does not fail to act in accordance with it (regardless of the consequences to him/her).

Towards the end of Book I, Socrates attempts to confirm his claims about the relationship between righteousness and the good life, by talking about *ergon* or the 'function' of x.[85] The *function* of x, refers to something which 'x' is uniquely suited to do or does better than anything else. For example, ears have the function of hearing, and it is something which only ears can do (that is, one cannot 'hear' with their eyes). Socrates goes on to say that everything that has a function also has a 'state of being good'[86]; x's state of goodness is related to x's function, (353b). In other words, if the ears function is to hear, then to hear well would be the state of goodness of the ears. And so, a function is best performed when its performer is in a 'state of goodness', (Plato, 1993, 353c). Having put forth these thoughts, Socrates moves on to examining the function of what he calls the *psychē*[87], or, 'mind'.[88] He claims that a person's 'way of life' is the function of the *psychē*, and that the good state (or

[83] Already we see that this idea of *dikaiosunē* is not necessarily morality in the (narrow) sense of performing prescribed duties based on a particular code or creed, nor is it justice in the sense of doing what is 'right' based on certain rules.

[84] The extent to which his argument is convincing and unproblematic is not of concern here, though. The purpose of introducing these ideas is not to assess the validity of the claim, but rather to familiarise the reader with the argument, which is useful in getting to grips with character.

[85] Aristotle, similarly relates the good life to a human's function. This is addressed in a later section.

[86] In his translation of *The Republic*, Lee (1974) describes this 'state of being good' as 'excellence'. (This is similar to Aristotle's ideas in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which are outlined below). Shorey (1935) notes that 'the virtue or excellence of a thing is the right performance of its specific function,' (p. 100-101).

[87] Also transcribed as *psuchē, psukhē, psykhē*.

[88] In his translation of the *Republic*, Waterfield (1993) notes that: 'The Greek word for mind, *psukhē*, is also the word for 'soul' or life-force. Thus Plato's concept of mind is rather closer in broadness to the Buddhist than to the rationalist Western usage,' (p. 385). Similarly, Lee (1974) notes that *psychē* (Waterfield calls this *psukhē*) refers to the 'principle of life', and suggests that it is the 'seat' of mental functions, (p. 100). This concept is further discussed in chapter 5, but it is important to acknowledge that the word 'mind' doesn't fully capture what Plato is referring to here. For this reason, when I do refer to 'mind', it is placed in inverted commas to indicate the ambiguous translation.

excellence) for the *psychē* would be to live well (*eudaimonia*).[89] But how does one live well? From this point onwards, Socrates uses earlier claims to justify that *dikaiosunē* leads to happiness. He reminds his audience that he has already shown that righteousness is an excellence of the soul, whereas unrighteousness is a defect; hence, a righteous person will live a good life, and anyone who lives a good life is happy, (353d-e). In this way, according to Plato, being righteous (*dikaiosunē*) is the key to 'living well' or happiness (*eudaimonia*).

3.1.2 Aretē

This section examines Aristotle's key premises on human flourishing[90] in the *Nicomachean Ethics.* Aristotle conceived of the good for humans as the best sort of activity or the most suitable way to lead one's life. Though he deduces that happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the highest good for man he attempts to examine what this happiness actually consists in and how human goodness (if there is such a thing) can be better understood. His inquiry leads him down a similar path, as that taken by Plato above. He observes that everything has a particular role that is characteristic and central to its existence; a *function* unique to it.[91] Like Plato[92], he suggests the notion of goodness can best be understood in relation to the function of each thing. For example, the function of an eye is to see, and to do so with 20/20 vision is to see well.[93] In this way, Aristotle begins his journey to locate the central function of man.[94] He begins with the basic notion of life or living, and observes that there are aspects of living which humans share with other sentient beings, such as nutrition and growth. Similarly, he notes that even animals are capable of perception. Finally, he comes to the concept of *logos*, which is translated as 'rational

[89] Here we can interpret Plato to be using the 'mind' to represent the human being. In saying that It is the 'mind' that lives well, Plato is obviously referring to the 'mind' of the human being; he is saying that it is that which contains this 'principle of life'/ 'mind' (i.e. the human being) that lives well. Hence, Plato is telling us that a human being's function is to live a certain kind of life, and that human goodness would be to 'live well'.

[90] Thus far, I have predominantly referred to the notion of *eudaimonia* as 'human flourishing', but I use the word 'happiness' interchangeably with this, since this is the word that is frequently used in the translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics.*

[91] Like Plato, he uses the notion of *ergon* to refer to this particular 'role' or characteristic activity of man, see Rackham, in Aristotle (1926) and Ross, in Aristotle (1925).

[92] See *The Republic* 353b-c.

[93] Plato uses the example of an ear (mentioned above).

[94] *1097ᵇ24-25* or book I part 7.

principle', (Aristotle, 1925, p.4).[95] Aristotle observes that man's chief function is not merely living (which other animals also do) but to live a certain kind of life; specifically, he says it is 'an activity of soul[96] which follows or implies a rational principle,' (Aristotle, 1925, p.13).

There is an important point that needs to be spelled out a bit more here. In seeking to understand what human goodness consists in, Plato immediately attributes this as a function of the *psychē*, whereas Aristotle begins with an examination of the function of 'man'. However, Aristotle also discerns that the function of man fundamentally relates to activities of (what is often translated as) the soul (*psychē*); in this way, he *too* determines that 'goodness' relates to the *psychē*, though he qualifies this by stating that it is the part of the *psychē* that is specifically guided by *logos*.[97] Again, the function of humans is related to activities of the *psychē* which reflect *logos*. Aristotle then reveals that any 'activity of our *psychē*' that is performed 'well', is 'virtuous' activity.[98] More specifically, he appears to be telling us that when our *psychē* is continuously guided by *logos*, this is equivalent to having *aretē*. *Aretē* is often translated as 'virtue', and does not have a particularly moral connotation (as there are various types of virtues).[99] Hence, Aristotle ultimately proposes that *eudaimonia*, or to live well, means to live virtuously.

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[95]Aristotle places a lot of emphasis on this notion of *logos*, particularly as a unique function of humans. Though it is translated as 'rational principle', 'rule', 'argument', 'reasoning', Ross (1925) admits that of all the frequently occurring words in the Ethics, *logos* is the hardest to translate, (p.4). He explains that though 'reason' was often an accepted translation of the word, he says it is 'quite clear' that this word isn't meant to represent the faculty of reason, but rather something 'grasped by reason', (Ross, 1925, p. 4). Though there is clearly a level of scholarship involved in the translation of ancient Greek, and perhaps the more confident translations have provided a deeper understanding into Aristotle's ideas, it seems odd that there is a general acceptance to such translations. Particularly, when such translations are embedded within cultures and ideologies; it is important to remember that these translations are, to a certain extent *interpretations*, and that it is quite difficult to make sense of such work, flawlessly.

[96] The notion of *psychē* is translated here as 'soul', though in Plato's work, it is often translated as 'mind'. Again, neither the modern day conceptions of 'soul' nor 'mind' fully capture the concept that Aristotle is attempting to shed light on. Nonetheless, I continue to use 'mind' and 'soul' somewhat interchangeably to refer to *psychē*.

[97] One can infer that the reason he makes this qualification is because there are elements of the *psychē* which all animals have in common (as Aristotle points out above). But *logos* is that part of the *psychē* which is particular to humans. Hence, if 'goodness' is a function of the *psychē*, Aristotle says it must particularly relate to this 'rational principle' or *logos* which only humans have.

[98] Book I, Part 7, 1098[a]15.

[99]Often the word 'excellence' is used in place of virtue by translators so as to appeal to something broader than a moral idea. Specifically, all things which have a function, also have a corresponding *aretē* (that is, 'excellence'). And so, to this extent, the notion of *aretē* is not necessarily limited only to humans. For further reading on this see Carr (1991a) Chapter 2.

As outlined in the previous section, Plato also says that the good for humans is to live well, though he says that living well consists in living *righteously*. These two qualifications (*aretē* and *dikaiosunē*) set the two thinkers apart, but what do these concepts consist in? It is important to examine the two concepts, as I claim that they have significant implications for how character could be understood.

3.2 Psychē

3.2.1 Plato's analogy between the city and the individual

At the beginning of Book II of the *Republic*, though a number of arguments have been put forth about *dikaiosunē*, Glaucon and Adeimantus (Plato's brothers) express their dissatisfaction with the way the ideas have been presented. They outline a conventional view that righteousness is never actually freely chosen for its own sake, and that people do right as a contract (in the sense that they do not want to be wronged, so they agree not to do wrong to others). Thus, they challenge Socrates to not only show that righteousness is better than unrighteousness, but also show why the possession of righteousness makes the person who possesses it good, (367e).

In order to respond to the challenge, Socrates begins to illustrate the correlation (which he imagines) between an ideal city[100] and an ideal individual. He claims that an individual is a reflection of a larger entity (the city), and that one can use the latter as a tool to understand the former.[101] Socrates assumes that the elements of righteousness in a person may not be readily evident; that if one is to study the city, which consists of the same components as a person, only enlarged, then one can

[100] The Greek word *polis* is translated here as 'city', though, this is not to say that it is a city, as understood in modern terms; the ancient Greek city (or city-state as it is often identified) was a self-contained entity within a larger nation, with its own political unit, customs and culture. The *polis* was an important entity, for, as Annas (1981) writes, 'though the Greeks did think of themselves as having a common nationality this meant little to them in comparison with citizenship in the *polis*,' (p. 72).

[101] Whether or not this is an accurate analogy is not a concern at this point, though it is discussed further below.

successfully understand righteousness. Thus, the city is used throughout the dialogue in a metaphorical sense.[102]

The parallel between the city and the individual is accepted as valid (by Plato), and thereafter, he spends much time referring to the components of the city, though he does remind the reader that these components essentially correspond to the person.[103] The first stage of his argument is to introduce, what has come to be known as the 'principle of specialisation' (PS), or the idea that each person ought to pursue one particular job[104] (370b). Within the city, he says, there are various individuals who are interdependent. This co-dependency arises out of the realisation that it would be to the benefit of all people if individuals shared their resources. The example of a farmer is offered to illustrate that it would be beneficial for the farmer to spend all his time farming, and share the fruits of his labour, rather than spend a fraction of his time farming, and the other parts of the day carrying out other tasks (getting his own clothes, shoes and shelter).

In this way, a community is better off when individuals do not try to do it all, but rather do one particular activity; it is not merely that the latter is a *simpler* option, rather Plato is suggesting that particular people are fitted to take on particular roles, (370a). This is a significant point that Plato is trying to make. Waterfield (1993) explains 'the idea here is that each of us has a particular contribution we ought to make towards the welfare of the whole,' (p. 389). The principle of specialisation adds an important point to Plato's concept of *dikaiosunē*, in that to be righteous, means following PS, or fulfilling the role that one is meant to fulfil, (433a).[105] Plato continues his argument with acceptance of the credibility of PS.[106]

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[102] It is important to note that this account reflects an *ideal* city as well as an *ideal* person, which is no surprise since righteousness, as a concept and as a virtue, is an ideal state of being (to a certain extent). In other words, *dikaiosunē* is the highest good (according to Plato).

[103] The relationship between the 'city' and the 'individual' is further discussed below.

[104] Shorey (see Plato, 1935) calls this 'task'; both are referring to *ergon*. Earlier it was mentioned that Plato indicates that everything has a particular *ergon* that is particular to it. This point is reinforced by this analogy, as the various 'people' refer to the various limbs (or capacities) of a human being. This is discussed further below.

[105] This is discussed further in a later section.

[106] The principle of specialization (PS), like many of Plato's ideas, faces much criticism. Questions such as: Is this meant to be a sort of caste system, in the sense of a system based on birth; then, does it maintain the status-quo? If not, what are the chances of mobility within this seemingly rigid system? Does Plato *actually* believe that each person ought to stay committed to one activity for their entire

The imaginary community expands in order to fulfil various needs of the population, and naturally the population too expands. As a result of this growth he breaks the city into two categories of people; that is, two main groups of citizens who are essential to the day-to-day functioning as well as overall maintenance of the community. The first group are referred to as the *Guardians;* they are the class of soldiers who, according to Plato are the (natural) leaders of the *polis* and are in charge of governing and defending the community.[107] They are then split into two types: the auxiliaries and the rulers (or those who are the 'Guardians proper').[108] The rest of the community is made up of the workers (farmers, merchants, and so forth) and are simply known as the 'masses' or the 'majority'. Hence, the ideal city has three components to it: the Guardians proper (rulers), the auxiliaries, and the masses.

This division is essential to the overall argument about the primacy of righteousness, though it has been a target of criticism, as is evident from the criticism of PS. However, the antipathy towards Plato's claims about this division is often unnecessary, owing to misconstruing of the text. After all, there is ample evidence to show that Plato did not mean for these divisions among members of the community to be taken *literally*; the limbs of society are meant to be representative of the various limbs of a person's soul.[109] Thus it is not inconceivable to suggest that these categories are not meant to be understood as a new social taxonomy. Though Annas (1981) acknowledges the parallel that Plato attempts to draw, she does not agree with his claims, and says 'the idea that justice in the city can illuminate justice in the individual only gets off the ground if "justice" has the same sense as applied to both,' (p. 72). The point she tries to make here is that Plato's analogy between the city and the individual is not actually a like for a like. Without examining the rest of her criticism, at this point it is important to note that whether or not a person is

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life? These questions are valid *if* one takes Plato's claims seriously (i.e. if we assume that he actually meant for his divisions to be taken literally). This is discussed further below.

[107] This is, no doubt, a crude generalisation. Socrates details the qualities of Guardians, their life and duties from 412b-427c. For the purposes of this chapter, it is sufficient to understand the division that Socrates makes between the Guardians and the masses.

[108] The rulers are chosen, from amongst all the Guardians, for their demonstration of certain qualities. They are the actual rulers of the community (as opposed to the auxiliaries).

[109] This is discussed further below.

convinced by Plato's analogy is not what is of significance; what is important is to acknowledge that Plato thought (so it seems) that his analogy between the city and the individual was a sound comparison. For this reason, his arguments ought to be read with this in mind, regardless of whether or not one agrees with his claim. Thus, though we may not agree that the divisions within society are a magnification of the divisions within a person, in order to get to grips with the implications of his claims, we must continue to read Plato's argument as though we are in agreement with him (if only, to understand his wider thesis).

Annas' (1981) discussion about the ideal city is limited; she does not seem to accept the parallel that Plato is drawing between the city and the individual. Whereas Plato believes that there is no difference between the *city* and the *individual* (for him the city *is* the individual), Annas (1981) simply sees this as a comparison and seems fixed on exploring the legitimacy of Plato's claims about the city, rather than examine implications of the metaphor. For example, at one point Annas (1981) addresses the critique that Plato's ideas about the unity amongst a community are completely unrealistic:

> Plato's insistence that unity is *constitutive* of a state leads him to recommend measures that are avowedly designed to destroy a great part of that privacy and separateness that we take to define our individual lives... politics is often defined as the area in which major conflicts of interests are resolved...But Plato does not want to regulate or cope with conflicts of interest. He wants to remove them altogether, (p. 104).

This statement is not inaccurate in identifying Plato's underlying desire; he *does not* want there to be conflict, but the conflict he seems to be referring to is an *internal* conflict.[110] It is no surprise that Plato's ideas seem unrealistic and he does not appear to be 'interested at all in politics in our sense of the term,' (Annas, 1981, p. 104). He is not putting forth a political manifesto; he is offering a metaphor for human nature, and so any literal translation of his work is bound to appear problematic and perhaps at times, nonsensical.

[110] That the 'divisions' in society are meant to represent inner 'psychological' states, is something which is discussed by Waterfield (1993) in his introduction.

It might seem unusual to acknowledge that Plato's ideas ought to be understood in the figurative sense, particularly when 'this way of reading the *Republic* is not the one which is usually found in scholarly books on the subject,' (Waterfield, 1993, p. *xvii*). There are many though, who rightly recognise and draw attention to the relationship (in Plato's view) of the *polis* and the individual.[111] It is not merely because of the evidence that one ought to accept that Plato was speaking almost entirely about this metaphor; it seems that even if one is unconvinced or in disagreement with the metaphor, in order to do justice to the ideas in the *Republic*, one ought to at least take the time to *consider* the possible repercussions of any such correlation that Plato suggests. If the city that Plato imagines is a magnification of the individual, then are the numerous debates and discussions about (the relevance of the division) actually futile? Perhaps this might be too strong of a critique, but the point is that there are criticisms of Plato (some outlined above) and perhaps misguided assumptions that seem to pervade essays on Platonic thought. For, 'to suppose that Plato ever thought that the *Republic* was attainable would be to suppose him capable not merely of optimism or idealism, but of sheer political *naiveté*.'[112] Consequently, rather than mislabel his work as political, and then attack his ideas under false pretence, it seems that there is a serious need for further work to be done in studying the validity of his claims.

Although this work cannot offer such an in-depth analysis, I look at some implications of his claims, with relation to deepening an understanding of human flourishing and character. For example, understood as a metaphor, the implications of Plato's reference to the polis as a magnification of the person are numerous, and perhaps too many to outline in this short space. Of significance to the discussion on character is his relation between the three groups (guardians proper, auxiliaries and the masses) to the three parts of the *psychē*. To reiterate, Plato introduces the Principle of Specialisation (PS), whereby he insists that everyone (i.e. each of the divisions in society) has a particular role that they are fitted for; righteousness, Plato tells us (or at least one account of righteousness) is the unswerving carrying out of this role and this role alone. In this way, a person who is able to fulfil their own

[111] See, Guthrie (1975); Murphy (1951); Shorey (1935); Waterfield (1993).
[112] Saunders, T (1970) *Plato: The Laws*. Penguin Classics: London, p.27-28.

duties, without interfering with someone else's role, is a righteous person. However, it is important to recall the significance of the metaphor; Plato tells us that each division (Guardian, auxiliary, the working class) corresponds to an element of the *psychē*. He first makes two divisions, identifying them as rational and irrational/desirous elements (439d).[113] He then goes on to show that there is a third element of the mind, which is distinct from the previous two, and is understood as the passionate part (441a). Hence, the Guardians proper represent the rational aspect, the auxiliaries are constitutive of passions, and the masses are the irrational/appetitive element.

Once this metaphor is in place, and the connection is made between the parts of the *psychē* and the parts of the *polis*, Plato explains that *dikaiosunē* occurs when a person has internal concord between the three factors (the rational, passionate and irrational elements of the *psychē*). *Dikaiosunē*, that is, depends on the balance of the elements within the *psychē*. This is a significant paradigm shift; distancing himself from the conventional view (held at that time) that righteousness is carrying out a prescribed set of duties[114], Plato argues that righteousness does not consist in fulfilling external actions, *per se*.[115] Rather, 'its sphere is a person's inner activity: it is really a matter of oneself and the parts of oneself,' (Plato, 1993, 443c-d).

3.2.2 Virtue as an activity of the *psychē*

Aristotle says one must understand the nature of virtue and that such an understanding lends itself to an understanding of happiness (since happiness lies in doing virtuous deeds). He begins his discourse on *aretē* by clarifying that it is something of 'the soul' and not 'of the body'. Rackham (1926) translates the activity

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[113] Similarly, when the imaginary community was first under construction, Plato had identified two main groups (the Guardians and the workers).

[114] A view which Cephalus expressed in his dialogue with Socrates.

[115] That is not to say that Plato disregards the importance of action or activity. On the contrary, he highlights its significance in the very same passage (443e). However, he emphasises the point that righteousness or *dikaiosunē*, consists in an internal harmony, and that once this internal accord is secured then only should a person act. An action that is performed as a reflection of this internal accord (i.e. as a reflection of *dikaiosunē*) is a 'right' action.

of virtue to be an *excellence* of *psychē*, (p. 61).[116] What then is the *psychē*? At this point, Aristotle refers to ideas about this concept, which, as noted by Rackham (1926), are a sort of doctrine or accepted argument, and Aristotle outlines them here as such, (p. 62). Aristotle says that the soul is divided into two parts: one, which he calls 'irrational' and the other, having a 'rational principle' (or capable of reason).[117] These two elements are then further divided. In the irrational element, there is a nutritive faculty which causes nutrition and growth (which is common to all living beings and not only humans), (Aristotle, 1925, p. 25). Next, he identifies another aspect which, he says, shares both an irrational as well as a rational element. The appetitive aspect of a person's soul can be understood as one which impels her to conduct herself in particular ways. This element is thought to show both rational and irrational qualities, because of the various ways it manifests; at times it resists and moves against *logos*, and at other times it adheres to it. For example, a person thought to have self-control (the *continent* person, as Aristotle would say), is admired for their ability to control this desirous element, and in this sense, their desires follows a rational principle. On the other hand, when a person deliberates upon a particular course of action, but actually acts in a way that is counter to *logos*, this is said to be representative of the irrational aspect of the appetitive element. In this way, the appetitive aspect of the soul is at times rational and other times, irrational. There is also an aspect of the soul, which Aristotle considers to be purely rational, or an intuitive following of *logos*.

In short, the soul has two divisions which Aristotle identifies as 'without *logos*' and 'with *logos*'. Each division has one element attributed to it (the former has the nutritive aspect, and the latter has the pure intellect). In addition, the two divisions share an appetitive element which is said to be continuously fluctuating, at times obeying *logos* and at times succumbing to the irrational element. Hence, his perception of the *psychē* is in line with that of Plato.

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[116] Though there are often complexities involved in using the word 'soul', for the purposes of this work I use this notion to specifically refer to Aristotle's conception, as opposed to other conceptions of the soul.

[117] At this point, Aristotle explains that whether these two parts of the soul are *actually* separate (as in distinct parts of the body) or are actually inseparable aspects of one entity, are not a matter of concern at this stage, (Aristotle, 1926, p. 63).

Aristotle does not offer an in-depth analysis of these divisions of the soul in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as he does in some of his other works such as *De Anima*, hence at first glance it seems as though he glosses over the concept of the soul. However, the purpose of explaining these divisions in the context of the Ethics is to *remind* the reader (or rather, his students, for whom these lectures were meant) of some basic principles: namely, that virtue (a) consists in activity that is guided by *logos*, and (b) is an activity of the soul. By explaining that the soul has both rational (with *logos*) and irrational (without *logos*) aspects, Aristotle clarifies that virtue deals with the aspect of the soul with *logos*. Since this rational aspect is further divided into two elements (identified above as one which is purely rational and the other which is appetitive), he concludes that there are two types of virtues which correspond to these elements: intellectual and ethical.[118] Wisdom and understanding are offered as examples of intellectual virtues, and represent the aspects of the pure intellect, whereas liberality and temperance are examples of ethical virtue.

At this stage, Aristotle begins to present, in more detail, an account of what is often translated as 'moral virtue.'[119] It is within the context of this discussion that the notion of character is often placed. It has been necessary to get a sense of his fundamental ideas about human flourishing, and in turn, about the concepts of *logos*, the soul and *aretē* (virtue), as they form a foundation upon which some discussion of character takes shape. In other words, Aristotle's concept of character (if there is such a thing) cannot necessarily be isolated from these essential ideas.

Of importance to the discussion is Aristotle's assertion that virtue is an activity of the *psychē*, and that virtuous living is a reflection of a *psychē* that is consistently in line with *logos*.

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[118]Though this word is frequently translated as 'moral' virtue, it is probably more appropriate to use the term 'ethical', so as to include a broader meaning than 'moral' might imply at this present time. It is difficult to identify a particular ancient Greek concept interchangeable with morality as it is understood today, as Aristotle and most likely his predecessors, did not conceive of the moral life as starkly separated from the non-moral life (see, Williams, 1985). Thus it is misleading to use 'moral virtue', as it evokes particular beliefs about morality that did not necessarily exist in ancient Greek thinking, hence 'ethical virtue' is used hereafter.

[119] See above note

3.3 Similarities between Plato and Aristotle

What seems evident from this brief exploration of Plato and Aristotle's ideas is that the two important thinkers might not be as opposed in some of their philosophical views, as some might believe. Though Aristotle is critical[120] of Plato, undue focus is placed upon such criticism, thereby minimising and even overlooking significant similarities, and consequently ignoring the implications of any such similarities. That is not to say that there aren't genuine differences between the two philosophers. Aristotle is said to have espoused a more realistic view of human nature, based on an awareness of the limitations and fallibilities of humans and embedded within the practicalities of everyday living, (Wild, 1960, p. 75). Plato, on the other hand, is considered to be more of an idealist[121] and subsequently more imaginative and poetic in his writings.[122] This distinction gives rise to the familiar claim that one is either born a Platonist or an Aristotelian.[123] Or more specifically, one is either an idealist or a scientist.[124] However, this is a misleading claim. For one, it is like asserting that one must *either* be a theorist *or* a practitioner: a philosopher or a scientist, as though the two are mutually exclusive. Secondly, this statement wrongly suggests that the two thinkers are diametrically opposed, automatically placing their ideas and arguments into pre-determined boxes: for example, 'Plato endorsed the theory of 'Ideas', whereas Aristotle opposed it.' Or, 'Aristotle revered the life of contemplation, whereas Plato endorsed a life of service to others.' The assumptions the clichés above make are problematic.

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[120] In particular Aristotle is critical of the theory of 'Ideas' in book I of his *Nicomachean Ethics*.

[121] I recognise that the word 'idealist' implies various conceptions about a person; I am simply referring to the idea that Plato is attributed as a 'dreamer without the firm grips on the facts of life', (Wadia, 1953, p. 53).

[122] Though, many thinkers would rightly argue that Plato, too, was aware of human shortcomings, and wasn't *simply* concerned with an ideal state of human existence that was divorced from everyday life; some say he acknowledged how difficult life could be, and hence wrote the *Laws* in an attempt to address the practicalities of life, (see, Wadia, 1953, p. 65). Perhaps it was just that he wasn't as pessimistic as Aristotle was about human capability, and chose to emphasise that potential more than anything else. Wren (2008) writes '...although it would be wrong to ignore the difference between Plato's idealist approach to morality and Aristotle's contextualist approach, it would be equally wrong to ignore the fact that Aristotle inherited the categories of his old teacher even though he used them quite differently,' (p. 17).

[123] McEvilley (2002) cites W.K.C. Guthrie as speaking about this in a talk delivered by the scholar (p. *xix*); Wadia (1953) attributes this saying to Schiller, (p. 53).

[124] Wadia (1953) uses 'scientist', whereas Wren (2008) describes Aristotle as a 'contextualist', and McEvilley (2002) uses 'empiricist'.

The first point, that one thinker was perhaps more of a realist while the other was more of a theorist is not necessarily wrong. The concern I am trying to address is whether this distinction automatically implies that the two were consequently *mutually exclusive*. Mars and Chand are both interested in the best way to make a vanilla cake. Mars purchases dozens of ingredients and practices until he reaches a suitable method, whereas Chand looks through several recipes and consults others on their experiences with baking before coming to her own conclusion. Both end up with the same vanilla cake, though they decided to take very different paths. In the same way, one could confidently make the case that Aristotle and Plato examined problems very differently: but of significance is that the approaches they used are a matter of a difference in *method* and not necessarily one of underlying *content*. That is, the attitude with which either thinker approached any particular issue might have differed, but some of the basic conclusions they arrived at did not.

For, as Wild (1960) rightly observes,

> We cannot ignore the fact that Aristotle was nurtured during his formative years in a definitely Platonic atmosphere, with which he was intensely sympathetic. He reached his own position gradually through a careful and searching criticism of the ideas of his master. But the *basic* notions are the same, (p. 74).

In other words, though Aristotle may have differed on some accounts with Plato, there are larger fundamental views (which are quite significant) that are shared.[125] For example, they share the same teleological and metaphysical views, that there is structure to the world 'which exists independently of human opinion or desire,' (Wild, 1960, p. 74). Both thinkers endorse the same teleological view[126], though they appear to differ in the method by which a person might arrive at this end[127] (i.e. the goal is the same, but the path differs).

However, merely because Aristotle's conclusions *might* have been the result of personal experience or empirical observation that is not to say that those conclusions were any more laudable than Plato's. After all,

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[125] In his introduction to *The Ethics*, Rackham (1947) wrltes 'Aristotle's debt to his master was very great...in philosophy he built on Plato's foundations. He assumes in his readers a knowledge of Plato's writings...' (*p. ix*).

[126] The *telos* or 'end' that they agree upon is that human goodness consists in living well (*eudaimonia*).

[127] Plato says it is through undestanding *dikaiosunē*, whereas Aristotle says it is through *aretē*.

> the basic insights are still maintained. The soul is clearly distinguished (though not separated) from the body. Reason is the highest cognitive power, capable of grasping the immobile structures of nature. This is Platonic rationalism, but now more clearly formulated..., (Wild, 1960, p. 75).

It seems odd to rule out Plato's lofty ideals, in favour of Aristotle's more 'grounded' conclusions, when the two appear to endorse similar fundamental views. Of significance to this thesis is the view of the *psychē* that the two seem to share. More specifically, both reveal that human flourishing is related to the *psychē*. Whereas Plato attributes *dikaiosunē* to the harmony within the *psychē,* Aristotle offers less detail, though he is obviously convinced that virtuousness is a consequence of the activities of the *psychē,* and his discourse seems to imply that he is in agreement with Plato's discussions on the *psychē*.[128] Though, Carr (1991a) does not seem convinced by this and claims that 'Aristotle's conception of the soul differs markedly and profoundly from Plato's,' (p. 48). He goes on to cite how Plato conceived of the soul to be a separate entity from the body, whereas for Aristotle, little sense was attached to this, (Carr, 1991a, p.49). However, regardless of whether or not Aristotle conceived of the *psychē* to be separate from the body, is not of major concern for this thesis; Aristotle himself writes in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that whether or not the soul is separate from or attached to the body is not of particular concern to him (that is, at the time when he was compiling his notes), as it is more important for him to acknowledge the three divisions which comprise the soul (and which virtue are directly related to), (Aristotle, 1926, p. 63).[129] In this way, he is very much in line with Plato's conception of the soul.[130] Hence, it is misleading for Carr (1991a) to suggest that the two thinkers 'profoundly' differ, without addressing any overlapping consensus, as it implies that there is no such similarity.

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[128] Aristotle underlines the importance of studying the soul, but writes that 'some things are said about it, adequately enough, even in the discussions outside our school, and we must use these', hence implying that his students ought to be familiar with Plato's discussions of it, (Aristotle, 1925, p.25).

[129] This point was also mentioned earlier on in the chapter.

[130] Carr (1991a) also makes a point to say that Plato conceived of the appetitive element within the *psychē* as something negative, whereas Aristotle did not, (p. 53). However, this sort of comparison distracts from another point, which is that both Plato and Aristotle acknowledge that this appetitive element needs to be properly guided by the 'rational' element, (which, interestingly, Carr does recognize, but doesn't seem to give much importance to this point). This is an important similarity which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

This chapter began with an acknowledgement that the notion of character is often attributed to ancient Greek philosophical thought, and so, getting clearer about the notion of character involves an examination of such thought. Though this thesis endeavours to get clearer about the notion of character and its relation to school education, in doing so, I also consciously seek to explore the relationship between character and human flourishing. In an effort to elucidate on these matters, this chapter has studied theories on human flourishing according to both Plato and Aristotle, focusing on the basic question of what it means to live well. Whereas Plato determines this to be a life in which a person lives *righteously*, Aristotle argues that this is a life which is lived *virtuously*. However, these so-called differences are soon reconciled upon further examination, which reveals that both of these thinkers fundamentally argue that human flourishing relates to the *psychē*. Though, questions still remain about the nature of the *psychē* and its relation to character. Nonetheless, this chapter shows that there are significant similarities between Aristotle and Plato which are often overlooked. Of significance to this thesis is the relevance of these ideas to the concept of character, and so the fourth chapter looks at the important implications of this thought in relation to character and education.

Chapter 4: Ancient Greek perspectives on Character and Education

Should character be used interchangeably with moral character? Previous chapters have triggered this question which is of vital concern for this thesis. For, if character shouldn't merely be understood as moral character, then how might the concept be understood? What are the implications of this on the development of character in school education? There are many concerns that this basic query (whether character should be used interchangeably with moral character) can shed light on. This chapter seeks to examine this initial question from an ancient Greek perspective. It was necessary to study ancient Greek perspectives on human flourishing in chapter 3, as ancient Greek ideas about 'character' are embedded within such perspectives. This chapter develops the ideas from chapter 3 and sheds light on Plato and Aristotle's conception(s) of character. I reveal that both thinkers allude to a 'broader' sense of character, than is often adopted by contemporary educators. The implications of Plato and Aristotle's ideas are fundamental to understanding the development of character in schools.

4.1 Perspectives on Character

It is interesting that theorists on character as well as proponents of character education often cite the ancient Greeks in their conceptions of moral character. Lickona (1991) credits Aristotle as having conceived of good character to be characterised by leading a life of right conduct. James Arthur (2008) credits Plato's *Republic* as the foremost work in philosophy of education to discuss character. However, to what extent are contemporary ideas on character reflective of ancient Greek perspectives? The previous chapter revealed that neither Plato nor Aristotle seemed to espouse a morality in the narrow sense in their seminal writings (the *Republic* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, respectively). What are the implications of this conclusion on the concept of character? This chapter looks at ancient Greek ideas on the concept of character.

At the outset, it should be stated that neither Plato nor Aristotle have one particular word for the concept of character, though translations often refer to 'character', 'moral character', 'goodness of character', 'states of character', and so forth. Thus, any claim to *the* ancient Greek conception of character (or say, to the 'Aristotelian' conception of character) would be far-fetched, though there is ample space for interpretation. And so accordingly, this section outlines plausible views on character.

4.1.1 Plato and Character

Looking first at the work of Plato, translators use the word 'character' in their translations, to describe several ancient Greek concepts.[131] Thus, it might seem difficult to outline Plato's conception of 'character', as he does not seem to explicitly do so.[132] One might argue that if Plato does not seem to have a single concept that can be referred to as character, then it is absurd to even put forth a Platonic view of character as such a view might merely be speculation. However, although it might be difficult to argue for a Platonic conception of character, it is certainly not difficult to identify implications of Plato's ideas on modern conceptions of character, as there are aspects within his work on *dikaiosunē* and the analogy between the individual and the *polis*, which can *inform* such notions of character.

For example, Plato seems to be convinced that there is some driving force, or some particular element within a person that aids her on her journey to attaining righteousness. Although Plato appears to have several ways of describing this entity (as outlined above), it is not unreasonable for contemporary theorists to deduce that he is referring to a person's 'character'; though, there seems to be various senses in

[131] Specifically in the *Republic*, *tropos* is translated as character. In addition, φύσεις or *phuseis* is translated in several places (for example 375d,424a,489e) by Waterfield (2003) as 'character', whereas Shorey (1930) translates that same concept as 'nature', as in the particular nature of someone or something. In another interesting passage (400e) the word εὐηθεια or *euetheia* is translated as 'goodness of character' by Waterfield (2003, p. 99), but the same word is translated as both 'good disposition' and 'goodness of heart' by Shorey (1930, p. 255). In the same passage, both authors translate ήθος as 'character'.

[132] Although this is discussed in the next section on Aristotle's *Ethics*, it seems that Plato might have held a particular conception of what could be understood as 'character' that is tacitly embedded within Aristotle's own writing in the *Ethics*.

which the concept is used.[133] Is character one particular entity which is embedded, by nature, within a person; do all people have character (in the way that all people have a *psychē*) or is it something which we must acquire? Though sometimes translated as 'nature', it is obvious that Plato is not talking about human nature in the sense of something which we are born with and which we innately and automatically adhere to. So whereas one might say that it is part of one's nature to eat when one is hungry, in the sense that a person does not necessarily have to be taught this, Plato makes it clear that there is an element of character (perhaps an innate *capability*) which is educable, and moreover, which *needs* to be properly educated in order to promote righteousness.[134] And so, we can say that character is both embedded within a person (as a capability), but needs a proper education in order to make best use of it. This is a significant point, as it is essential to acknowledge that Plato is talking about something more than just human nature (though he might accept that aspects of character are part of a person's nature).

It is interesting that contrary to many contemporary conceptions of character, Plato does not seem to be endorsing a type of moral character. For example, the idea that a person's character could consist of a particular set of character traits seems largely foreign to Plato's thinking in the *Republic*. That is not to say that Plato does not endorse certain qualities that are *favourable* to the development of *righteousness*, but the point is that he does not seem to insist that there are certain *qualities* that are necessary for good character. Though he explains that good Guardians ought to exhibit certain qualities, a person's character does not necessarily consist in those particular qualities, but rather the way in which those qualities are utilised.[135] In this way, to say of a person that he is a 'good Guardian' is to say that he has certain

[133] As described above.
[134] This is further discussed below.
[135] From 400d-e Plato explains that the way we make use of language (the manner of our speech) has to do with what he refers to as 'character'. Here he is referring to a larger chain of occurrences: the reader is told that 'grace' depends on 'rhythm'; 'rhythm' depends on our 'speaking style'; our 'manner of speech' depends on our character. And so, when we have really equipped our character, then the result is a chain reaction (harmony, grace, rhythm, good use of language). If all these things depend on character, the one could claim that behaviour, in general, depends on character. This may be the case, but although the way in which a person acts depends, to a certain extent, on her character, that is not to say that a particular set of actions *define* character.

qualities, but to say that the same person has good character is to reveal something about how those qualities manifest.[136]

Of significance, Plato seems to be telling us that it is 'good' character that engenders righteousness. To reiterate, Plato tells the reader that righteousness consists in harmony between the three elements in the *psychē*. Prior to that he talks about education; although this is discussed in a further section, at this point, it is important to acknowledge that Plato reveals that the type of education he envisages, 'proper education', is one that results in (or teaches the pupil) harmony, (412a). That which seems to have an influence on harmony or how well we are able to balance is our character. For this reason, it is often said that Plato conceives of education to be an education of the character, where the pupil learns how to be harmonious in all aspects of life; for a seeker of righteousness, such an education is imperative, as education is meant to teach us harmony and to create unity within the *psychē* (412a). In this way, it seems that the development of character is necessary and comes prior to the attainment of righteousness. And in turn, the development of character is central to leading a flourishing life.[137]

For the purposes of this work, it is enough to recognise that although these ideas on righteousness and character aren't necessarily the ones that are espoused by contemporary theorists, there is much in Plato's *Republic* to suggest that a person's character is vital to her leading a righteous life, and that such a character is not by any means limited to a set of particular traits, nor is it exclusively tied to behaviour. The sense in which Plato seems to refer to character is more closely tied to Peters' (1981) idea of having character discussed in chapter 2, where character isn't indicative of a set of behaviours, but is rather characterised by the manner in which we display those behaviours. Specifically, he implies that character is related to harmony (though that which is meant by 'harmony' is not entirely straightforward).

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[136] In the passage at 376c, Socrates is quoted as outlining particular qualities that good Guardians must have, but Guthrie (1975) notes that this passage is trying to say that 'the perfect guardian is the perfect man, for his character must be a delicate balance of what will later be described in detail...' (p. 450).

[137] Chapter 3 revealed that for Plato, human flourishing consists in being righteous. If righteousness is induced by the development of character, then in this way, the development of character is necessary for human flourishing (according to Plato).

In this way, Plato's ideas, in so far as they have been examined in this section, do not endorse a conception of character that is merely moral character, where the latter conception encompasses morality in the narrow sense. These ideas are further examined and elucidated in the next section on Aristotle.

4.1.2 Aristotle and Character

Are the claims made above limited to Plato, or does Aristotle also conceive of character as broader than moral character? Similar to Plato, it is no easy task to get to grips with Aristotle's conception of character. Despite his systematic account of the characteristic activity of man, the notion of virtue, and the divisions of the soul, it seems that the notion of character is either taken to be understood or left to the imagination of the reader.[138] Though translators often refer to 'character', these are not necessarily based on a genuine concept. I elucidate this point below.

At the end of book I Aristotle distinguishes between ethical virtue and intellectual virtue. 'When describing a man's moral character we do not say that he is wise or intelligent, but gentle or temperate,' (Rackham, 1926, p. 69); here Aristotle uses the notion of *ēthos* which is translated as 'moral character'[139]. In this section, I refer to this as 'character'. Aristotle says that character consists of ethical virtues (*aretai ēthikai*).[140] Ethical virtues are formed as a result of habit (*ethos*).[141] The habits that are formed as a result of repeatedly performing particular actions are also referred to as 'dispositions'.[142] However, where Rackham (1926) translates *hexeis* as 'dispositions'[143], Ross (1925) uses 'states of character', perhaps contributing to the confusion.[144] Ethical virtue, Aristotle deduces, is a 'state of character' rather than a

[138] Although, one could take the line of argument that Aristotle espoused the same views on character as Plato, and that he might have assumed that his pupils would be familiar with Plato's ideas. Just as he seemed to espouse other views of Plato such as views on the *psychē*.
[139] Ross (1925) translates this as simply 'character', (p. 29).
[140] Aristotle, 1925, Book II, Section I.
[141] Aristotle, 1925, Book II, Section I.
[142] Aristotle, 1925, Book II, Section I.
[143] Though sometimes as moral disposition, see, Rackham, 1947, p.75.
[144] What exactly does 'state' of character refer to? Perhaps the most obvious sense in which 'state' is understood is that of 'condition', in that by talking about the 'state' of character, we are talking about a particular *manner* in which character is revealed. However, it might be misleading to use 'states of character', thus Rackham's (1926) translation of 'disposition' is used.

'passion' or 'faculty'.[145] For this reason, ethical virtue (which is a culmination of perfectly formed ethical habits) is often referred to as 'excellence of character'. Though habits and dispositions are distinct concepts (again, Aristotle indicates that habits *form* dispositions, hence a disposition could be a number of habits) they are sometimes used interchangeably by translators. And so we see that the Greek word *hexeis* is translated nowadays as 'habits', but by Rackham (1926) as 'disposition'. This is perhaps due to the relative closeness in conceptual meaning of the two words. However, of importance is the point that character is a distinct concept from habits, dispositions and ethical virtues, though it is not always adequately presented in translations;[146] rather, character is sometimes used interchangeably with habits.[147] With such unsystematic translation, it is no surprise that the notion of character remains ambiguous.

One could argue that character (according to Aristotle's translation above) is said to consist of ethical virtues, and for this reason is described as ethical or moral character. However, even if it seems that Aristotle indeed conceived of character to be interchangeable with moral character, the question still remains: what exactly is moral character? Should it primarily be understood in terms of how we behave towards others, or a prescribed set of character traits? Aristotle would have most certainly rejected the idea that a person's character merely manifests in their behaviour. Although he emphasises the importance of action, and insists that the best sort of life for man is one in which he is engaged in virtuous *activity*, Aristotle is by no means suggesting that actions alone define who a person is. After all, virtuous *activity* is not akin to virtuous *behaviour* alone. For in referring to virtue Aristotle is referring to the 'activities of the *psychē*', which involve a process of internal regulation and balance.[148]

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[145] Aristotle makes the point that elements in the soul fall under the category of being (a) a feeling, (b) a capacity or, (c) a disposition (state of character), (Aristotle, 1926, p. 87). Ethical Virtue belongs to one of these categories. The point he is trying to make is a logical one; virtues aren't feelings or capacities because a person isn't deemed 'good' or 'bad' because of the feelings or capacities she has. Thus, he proclaims ethical virtue to be a disposition.

[146] Though, Rackham (1947) acknowledges the similarity between the concepts, while distinguishing between them: 'it is probable that ἔθος, 'habit' and ἦθος, 'character' (whence 'ethical,' moral) are kindred words,' (p. 70).

[147] See, Kristjánsson (2007).

[148] This was discussed in Chapter 3.

Hence virtuous *activity* is based, first and foremost on the internal activities of a person, prior to manifesting in behaviour. And so, Aristotle carefully emphasises that virtue consists, not only in the deed itself, but additionally includes that which comes before and comes after the actual deed. In other words, simply the act of helping a person across the street with his groceries, is not enough to be called virtuous activity; a person must first know that it is the 'right' thing to do, then proceed with the action, and be content with the action (of helping). If I were to help someone across the street, because I know it's the right thing to do, but I do not enjoy doing it, then Aristotle would not say this is virtuous behaviour. Action that is in line with the right thoughts, motives, and feelings are virtuous. In this way, if character is understood by Aristotle to consist of ethical virtues such as honesty and courage, that means the person is not only capable of displaying the virtue (for example, telling the truth), but also of knowing the action is appropriate and being content with the action. And so, character (be it moral/ethical character) can be thought of as the external manifestation of an internal motivation. That is to say, one's character is not based upon fulfilling specified acts, but rather based upon the harmony between those acts and an individual's inclinations towards the act.

Expanding upon the point that Aristotle would not have endorsed a characterisation of character that was bound to a morality in the narrow sense, in Book II section 2, Aristotle clarifies that specific *acts* cannot be prescribed, but they must rather fall into the mean, or be decided upon and balanced by each individual. For he says that 'matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely...matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, any more than matters of health,' (Aristotle, 1925, p. 30). This is similar to Plato's ideas on establishing rules of legislation for people to follow; from 425a-e in his *Republic* he discusses the unimportance of rules claiming, 'it isn't right to tell truly good men what to do...' (Plato, 1993, 425d).[149]

If modern day character educators attribute the notion of character to Aristotle then it does not follow that character should be used interchangeably with moral

[149] This is a challenge to Peters' (1981) claims about 'rule-following' identified in Chapter 2. The relation between rules and character is further discussed in Chapter 6.

character; particularly when moral character is defined as a particular set of acceptable character traits or behaviours. Although various concepts within his writings might be translated as 'character', it is very important to note that no particular word used by Aristotle corresponds to the word 'moral'. It would more appropriately be translated as 'ethical character', though this is not limited to the particular ways in which people behave towards others. In other words, the notion of moral character as espoused by many thinkers today, is narrow in comparison to what Aristotle might have envisaged. Hence, those thinkers who attribute contemporary conceptions of 'moral character' to Aristotle are misguided.

4.2 On Education

4.2.1 Educating Aristotelian Virtue

In contemporary educational discourse, particularly in the field of philosophy of education, there is talk of 'education of the virtues'[150], which is to a certain extent attributed to Aristotle's emphasis on the development of virtues in young people. Contemporary talk of education of the virtues is similar to that of character education, in the sense that there is an overlap in the language that is used to describe it.[151] To a certain extent, it is often assumed that character consists of character traits, where such traits are synonymous with virtues (these points have already been discussed in previous chapters); for this reason the education of a person's character is discussed in tandem with the education of virtues.[152] Though, that is not to say that all advocates of character equate it with a set of character traits.[153] In any case, I have maintained from the outset that character does not merely consist of a set of character traits. In so far as the development of character is seen as the cultivation of virtue, I do not examine this idea on the education of virtues, for this thesis is concerned with a broader sense of character (which is discussed further in chapter 6). That is not to say, however, that the notion of virtue

[150] For instance, see, Carr (1991a); Carr & Steutel (1999).
[151] See, Carr (2003), (2008).
[152] See, McLaughlin and Halstead (1999).
[153] See, Kupperman, 1999.

is insignificant to the wider thesis. For it is in understanding virtue that one can identify the implications of Aristotle's thought on education.

Aristotle expands upon his account of the virtues, by first stating that intellectual virtue is taught, and is both produced and strengthened by *instruction*. Ethical virtue, on the other hand, is produced as a result of habit (*ethos*). He insists that ethical virtues aren't natural to a person (they aren't innate), but that people are 'adapted by nature to receive them'.[154] In other words, we are not born with virtues, but we are born with the potential to develop virtues. When something is given to us by nature it is first bestowed upon us, and then its potential is exhibited. Aristotle offers the example of eyesight: we have sight and so we are able to see, and not the other way around. It's not that we are able to see and so we have eyesight. *In the case of the virtues*, however, Aristotle tells us that we must first repeatedly exercise them before their potential is reached. In this way, the virtues are *unlike* anything else we receive by nature. It is important to recognise that, at this stage, Aristotle does not make the particular distinction that only some people are capable of being virtuous (although he was speaking to a particular group of students from a particular social class); he is in effect saying that all people are inherently capable of being virtuous, but they need to be given the opportunity to practice and experience virtuous activity.

Next, Aristotle explains that the type of activities a person engages in determines the type of dispositions he acquires, and thus warns his listeners that they should be particular about the habits that they acquire from a young age. At first glance, he seems to be suggesting that we should learn appropriate ways to respond to these activities/situations (although he does not explicitly say this). He offers the example of a dangerous activity, and says that one person may learn to be fearful, whereas another person might learn to be courageous from this experience. Thus, the same activity yields different responses. Aristotle obviously esteems one disposition

[154] Both Ross (1925, p. 28) and Rackham (1926, p. 71) use 'receive them', but perhaps 'receive them' is not a good translation because this suggests that they are 'given to us' (in the sense of receiving gifts or instructions), whereas virtue is something we must work very hard at, in order to secure. We are adapted in such a way so that we may make use of virtue and understand our potential to be virtuous (if we are educated in a certain way). In other words, we are adapted by nature to *develop* virtues.

(bravery) over another (cowardice), but he does not say that a particular situation has necessarily made us this way; he says that it is our own individual behaviour that has brought these dispositions upon us. And so, '...some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances,' (Aristotle, 1925, p. 29). Although it seems that he is not telling us the types of things we should or should not do, actually, he says that we must control the type of activities we engage in, for these determine our dispositions (or states of character). The two points he seems to be making are: (a) habits and dispositions are formed as a result of activities, and so (b) we should control the sorts of activities we expose ourselves to. However, if one activity has the possibility of bringing out both virtue and vice (such as the example of the dangerous activity above), isn't it the *type of response* that is more important than the actual activity itself? This does not seem to be entirely clear in the translation of Aristotle's account.

Of importance is the point that education ought to bring about virtuous people, since living virtuously is the key to *eudaimonia*. Living virtuously, according to Aristotle, ought to ultimately manifest in virtuous *action*; if not, then one cannot be truly virtuous. As it was mentioned earlier, Aristotle's educational influence appears to dominate the discussion around the education of the virtues, and around cultivating virtuous dispositions. However, Aristotle reminds his audience that action is fundamentally controlled by the *psychē*: more specifically it is the elements of 'sensation, reason and desire,' which determine action, (Aristotle,1925, Book VI.2). That is, if education aims to develop virtuous activity, and it is the *psychē* that commands such activity, then shouldn't education, to a certain extent be an education of the *psychē*? This is something that needs more exploration. I consider the notion of *psychē* in the next section as well as in chapter 5.

4.2.2 The idea of Education in the *Republic*

The question of education is of vital importance in the *Republic* because it is the 'right' kind of education that brings about the ideal society (i.e. the ideal individual),

(see, Barrow 1976, p. 16). So a discussion of education inevitably mingles with Plato's examination of righteousness and human flourishing.

In the *Republic* the discussion of character often occurs in tandem with education, for, as Waterfield (1993) notes 'nowadays we think of education, especially school education, in terms of information and skills above all. But it is important to realise that the kind of education Plato is offering here, which is primarily education of character, is *all* the education a contemporary Athenian child could expect,' (p. 391). It is, perhaps, misleading to say that Plato is concerned with character education, because, for Plato, education fundamentally exists to create goodness of character, and people who are righteous. And so, to say that Plato endorsed character education is untrue, to the extent that in his opinion, there was no separation between education and the education of character; hence the term 'character education' would seem superfluous as it was accepted that education was for the advancement of character. Thus he explains, 'a good educational system, if maintained, engenders people of good character,' (Plato, 1993, 424a).[155] And such an education is a pre-requisite to establishing righteousness, which is, in his opinion, the route towards *eudaimonia*.

Looking at Plato's ideas about the divisions amongst people, as there are three classes of people, often it is said that Plato imagined various forms of education to correspond to these groups. Barrow (1976) explains that each group receives a form of education that is appropriate to it. In particular, Plato painstakingly (or, what seems pain*ful* to many critics) outlines an education that is meant to correspond to the Guardians. For this reason, he often comes under criticism for his seeming divisions and outlandish prescriptions for education. Barrow (1976) rejects the idea that Plato did not address the educational needs of the masses, and explains that Plato refers to such an education 'more than once', (p. 28). He refutes Popper's (1966) ideas and says 'it would be a mistake, I think, to conclude as some have done that the masses are so much human cattle to Plato, that they do not

[155] Waterfield (1993) tells us 'nowadays we think of education, especially school education, in terms of information and skills above all. But it is important to realize that the kind of education Plato is offering here, which is primarily education of character...is *all* the education a contemporary Athenian child could expect,' (p. 391).

interest him and that he does not wish to educate them,' (see, Barrow, 1976, p. 28).[156] He draws attention to the point that Plato intended for certain aspects of education to be shared, in the sense of applying to both the Guardians as well as the majority of people.

Supporting this claim above is the idea that there is an expectation that the masses share the same values as the Guardians, and so, 'the majority must share at least the moral upbringing of the Guardians,' (Barrow, 1976, p. 28). Waterfield (1993) attributes these shared values of the community not to schooling, but due to the fact that the masses are socially conditioned to accept these values. With reference to Plato's ideas on education, Waterfield (1993) is unambiguous in his stance: 'Plato's focus throughout is on the ruling class,' (p. *xxiv*). However, he acknowledges that most of the claims made about the masses is supposition: guesswork based on an attempt to fill in the gaps in Plato's thought, since he *appears* to have left few clues about the subject.[157]

Though it seems that little can be said for certain about the education of the masses (or for some, the merits of Plato's educational ideas on the whole), it seems odd for one to accept that Plato might have left out the discussion of the education of the masses, particularly when he places importance on education and provides intricate details for such an education. However, as the previous chapter suggests, Plato's divisions among his ideal community, are meant to be the divisions within the human *psychē*. His discussion of the education of the Guardians is representative of the education of the rational and passionate aspects of the person; that is, elements of the *psychē*, as opposed to one group of civilians. In other words, Plato's focus on the education of the Guardian class suggests that it is this particular element within the *psychē* that can be educated, and that the other aspect (the appetitive element) *cannot* be educated. It is not an unreasonable suggestion, as it could account for the fact that Plato seems to completely ignore the education of the masses. Hence, it is

[156] Barrow (2007b) makes a similar point in his *Plato*, maintaining that Plato certainly *cares* about the education of the masses, though such an education might take a different form; after all, he says, The *Republic* is ultimately concerned with finding a means of happiness (*eudaimonia*) for *all*, (p. 41).
[157] Barrow (1976) would not disagree with this point, as he too acknowledges that Plato said close to nothing about the subject of the education of the masses *explicitly*, (p.28).

not necessarily the case that Plato is guilty of some sort of educational tyranny, rather he is focused on providing details for, what he considers to be, the teachable aspect of the *psychē*. By training and strengthening the Guardians and auxiliaries (the rational and passionate aspects), Plato (1993) tells us that they will be able to rule over and control the appetitive element of the person (which has a tendency to be insatiable),(441e-442b).

Plato outlines the form that education should take for the Guardians (that of cultural studies and physical exercise), which are supposedly education for the mind and body, (Plato, 1993, chapter 4). However, even after he meticulously does this, he reveals that ultimately, 'the mind is the main objective in both cases,' (Plato, 1993, 410c). To reiterate a point made above, education for Plato always entailed the education of character. This implies that the education of character consisted in the development of the *psychē* and that this was of utmost importance.

This chapter has, to begin with, looked closely at the idea of character in Plato and Aristotle's thought. I have not presumed to outline *the* ancient Greek conception of character, but have located a plausible account of character in the work of each thinker. In other words, though this chapter doesn't identify a single ancient Greek definition of what character *is*, it certainly makes a case for what character is *not*. What this chapter reveals, most importantly, is that both Plato and Aristotle imply a sense of character that is broader than moral character. Specifically, neither would have endorsed a sense of character that is strictly tied to a set of character traits that imply specific behaviour. On the other hand, character has to do with something broader: Plato implies that character has to do with harmony and balance in a person's life, whereas Aristotle's depiction of ethical virtue suggests that character entails harmonising one's external activities with one's internal inclinations. Accordingly, there is a relationship between the concept of character and notions of balance and harmony. What's more, both thinkers imply that education is significantly concerned with the development of the *psychē*.

Chapters 3 and 4 make valuable contributions to this research. This chapter reveals that though the two thinkers do not put forth a single explicit account of character,

they most certainly imply that character is broader than moral character. This is important because it shows that those thinkers who attribute Plato or Aristotle with modern notions of moral character which consist in a set of prescribed behaviours or character traits, are wrong. What's more, both chapters reveal that both Plato and Aristotle emphasise the significance of the *psychē* to a person's wellbeing, and that the development of the *psychē* is of central importance in education (which, according to Plato, is always an education of character). It seems that the notions of human flourishing, character and *psychē* are inextricably linked. In an effort to become clearer about these ideas, I expand the exploration of ancient philosophical thought by studying ancient Indian perspectives of human flourishing.

Chapter 5: Ancient Indian perspectives on Human Flourishing

The previous chapters have provided groundwork for demystifying the concept(s) of character. The first chapter brought out the important question: should character be used interchangeably with moral character? Prior to looking into this question, I have stepped back to look at *why* character and moral character might be used interchangeably, beginning with the work of Plato and Aristotle; for, the earliest philosophical writings on the concept of character, is said to date back to ancient Greek thought, where Plato argues that having good character makes a person fully human.[158] Hence, it is necessary, if not customary, to begin by looking at the work of the ancient Greeks. However, rarely is this question approached from an alternative lens.

This chapter claims that there are significant similarities between ancient Indian and Greek philosophical thought, and that an examination into some of these overlapping ideas, might shed light onto notions of human flourishing. What's more, an examination into ancient Indian philosophy elucidates how the concept of character *ought* to be understood. I begin by providing a rationale for the inclusion of Indian philosophy in this thesis. Next, I examine some similarities between Indian and Greek thought, particularly related to human flourishing and the concepts discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Finally, I consider the implications of ancient Indian thought on the larger investigation of character.

5.1 Why *Indian* Philosophy?

To begin, it is natural for one to ask 'why an excursion into ancient Indian philosophy?' For, the notion of character and corresponding ideas about human flourishing are often said to have their roots in ancient Greek thought, so it's expected that one look at the work of Plato and Aristotle. Prior to addressing this

[158] Arthur (2008) claims that Plato's *Republic* was the first major work in the philosophy of education to make this point.

issue though, it is necessary to explain the term 'Indian' philosophy, as it is used throughout this work. In discussing 'ancient Indian philosophy', I am referring to a large body of philosophies, which dominated Indian thought from the Vedic Period through the Epics of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to various schools of thought such as the Sāmkhya and Yoga, and perhaps, some Buddhist thought. These periods range from 1500 B.C.- 200 A.D., though these dates are at best, very rough estimations, as the writings themselves were continuous sets of thought, which remained un-authored, and largely undated. As Radhakrishnan (1999) writes, '...so unhistorical, or perhaps so ultra-philosophical, was the nature of the ancient Indian, that we know more about the philosophies than about the philosophers,' (p. 57). This is perhaps a mark of Indian philosophy; that is, its reverence for and emphasis upon 'truths' and ideas rather than for the ephemeral bodies who expounded them. All these philosophies, barring Buddhism, either: accept as authority, derive from, or complement the most ancient philosophical texts in India, the *Vedas*, which are sometimes referred to as ancient 'Hindu'[159] scriptures. It may seem that the discussion is dominated by Hindu texts, but the emphasis on *ancient* Indian philosophy suggests that the discussion centres around a particular period of time; the *ancient* philosophies of India were primarily (what is now referred to as) *Hindu* philosophy.

The above digression has been necessary, in order to gets to grips with what is meant by ancient Indian philosophy, but the question remains as to *why* the inclusion of Indian philosophy. Though this hopefully becomes clearer as the chapter progresses, the central premise is that there are significant similarities between ancient Indian and ancient Greek philosophy, and that, for the most part, these similarities have not been given serious attention in philosophy of education. Though Guthrie (1965) boldly alleges 'The motives and methods of the Indian schools, and the theological and mystical background of their thought, are so utterly different from those of the Greeks that there is little profit in the comparison,' (p.

[159] Notions of 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism', for the purposes of this thesis, are at best, labels used for the purposes of classification, rather than a reference to a particular set of religious doctrines or practices. The notion Hinduism, to this day, is a vague marker of a vast number of intertwined doctrines, philosophies and schools of thought; an inadequate label for a formidable body of knowledge.

53), I seek to challenge this claim. More importantly, I suggest that examining these similarities enhances the investigation of human flourishing and character.

It is no surprise that the origin of character is detected in ancient Greek philosophy, since any historical account of philosophy, or account of great philosophical thinkers always begins with the various contributions from ancient Greece. In the majority of these resources, it is unusual to find any references to philosophical thinking that pre-date this golden era of ancient Greek thought, or even the possibility of any other system of thought as having influenced the Greeks. For example, in his introduction to *A History of Philosophy: Volume I, Greece and Rome*, Copleston (1946) asserts that:

> this philosophy of the Greeks was really their own achievement, the fruit of their own vigour and freshness of mind, just as their literature and art were their own achievement. We must not allow the laudable desire of taking into account possible non-Greek influence to lead us to exaggerate the importance of that influence and to underestimate the originality of the Greek mind, (p. 11).

The reader is rightly encouraged to appreciate the originality of ancient Greek thought and readily accept the influence of its philosophies on many thinkers. However, though we can and should accept that the Greeks profound work influenced the ideas of many others, is it really implausible to suggest that they themselves were influenced by any group? Though, this work does not want to 'underestimate the originality of the Greek mind', neither does it want to assume the seeming originality.

As mentioned above, the purpose of this chapter is to shed light on *similarities* between Indian and Greek thought. It is *not* to argue for the dominance of one ancient culture over another, but rather to show that parallels between the two only enhance the investigation of the concept of character. Kabir (1961) sums up this position quite well,

> I have always been suspicious of national labels when attached to man's pursuit of truth. The essence of truth is its objectivity and its indifference to personal or national predilections...Just as there can be no science which is valid only for the German or the Russian, there can be no philosophy which is valid only for the Indian or the Greek, (p. 166).

The point being made here is not one for historical accuracy; it is not an opinion about who did what first, though the implications of history and chronology are most certainly important when examining works of ancient philosophy. Rather, the purpose of unearthing old biases is to challenge those long-standing views about the primacy of ancient Greek philosophy, and to consider the implications of any cross-cultural influences the two remarkable civilisations had upon one another, with particular reference to notion of human flourishing and character. Thus the assumption being made is that an understanding of concepts in Indian philosophy might lend itself to understanding some Greek concepts, and more importantly, to the notion of character. That being said, at this juncture, it is still important to acknowledge that the two ancient cultures may have interacted and shared ideas, and that this supposition is closer to reality than to fiction.[160]

5.2 On Similarities

Whether they are considered to be coincidence[161] or conscious[162], McEvilley (2002) observes that there is an array of parallel between Indian and Greek thought, (p. xx). Yet, most thinkers do not actually appear convinced by any such links, even though Plato's ideas are frequently considered to have more of a 'spiritual' element, (with comparison to Aristotle). Instead, it is speculated that Plato's influence naturally came from the Pythagorean's.[163] Though the philosophical foundations of this group are not discussed in detail, for the purposes of this work, it is significant to acknowledge that 'for the Pythagoreans philosophy was tied up with a way of life, and intellectual endeavour was connected to an ideal of fulfilment. Their values included such typically Greek values as limit, moderation and order...,' (Barrow, 2007b, p. 20). Barrow's observation is important for one particular reason: that

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[160] This is assertion is based on the work of McEvilley (2002).

[161] As it was mentioned in the previous section, many thinkers, be it out of genuine uncertainty or blind rejection, would consider similarities to be happenstance. For example, see Radhakrishnan, 1999, pp. 23-24.

[162] McEvilley (2002) cites M.L. West's *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* as uncovering an ideological connection between the two civilisations, writing: 'This single instance of a rigorous scholarly proof demonstrates that philosophical doctrines *were* in fact travelling between India and Greece in the pre-Socratic period. Prior to West's book, that premise (however plausible) remained hypothetical, but it now must be taken as established...' (p. xxxi).

[163] For example, Barrow (2007b) writes, 'There is also an unmistakably spiritual side to Plato's thought and this too may owe something directly to Pythagorean theory, even while it's clearly distinct from it,' (p. 19).

being that although the ideas of the Pythagorean's were more mystical in nature, their ideas were still representative of typically Greek values. In other words, their ideas weren't a 'drop of alien blood in Greek veins,' as it has been wrongly alleged.[164] This is a crucial shift from those that believe that there are particular philosophers within the Greek tradition that are *more* Greek than others. Though it seems reasonable to deduce that one may never know for certain the particular influences upon Plato's thinking, Barrow (2007b) rightly admits that working this out 'is a matter of interpreting and extrapolating from his own texts...' (p. 13). Although this thesis does not seek to prove that the Indians had an influence on Plato (and Aristotle), the work in the sections below could be suggestive of this.

5.2.1 Human Flourishing in ancient Indian thought

As in any philosophical tradition, there are particular claims put forth, which are later established as axioms. These claims and the concepts they encompass are thoroughly detailed and complex; encompassing rich ideas and arguments which entire theses could be dedicated. This is more than this single chapter can do justice to, and so for the purposes of this work, I establish a few basic points concerning the notion of human flourishing. This investigation begins with some assumptions that have already been established in previous chapters. To begin, although there is often emphasis upon the differences in the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato, there are also fundamental similarities. The two share a basic teleological view that all humans endeavour to obtain happiness (*eudaimonia*), and that the highest good for a person is to live well. Hence, human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) consists in living well. Though they both have ideas about what living well consists in, *both* emphasise that in order to live well, one had to be a certain *type* of person.[165] Hence, they both emphasise that who one is largely determines whether or not she flourishes.[166] For this reason, they each arduously outline a path for the type of person one should endeavour to be and the type of life one should live.

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[164] McEvilley (2002) borrows this quote from Erwin Rohde (1969) 'Die Religion der Geichen,' in *Kleine Schriften* (vol 2), Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, p. 338.
[165] Plato says one must be 'righteous', whereas Aristotle says one must be 'virtuous' (see chapters 3 and 4).
[166] Plato, 1993, 353d-e; Aristotle, 1925, p. 5.

Thus far, the above can be said to be in line with Indian philosophy, for the most part. Though ancient Indian philosophy encompasses a number of schools of thought, there are some features which are taken for granted by many; Indian philosophers exclaim that purpose of human life is to live in happiness (i.e. it is our job to be happy).[167] Happiness is both a function as well as a goal of human endeavour; that is to say that people act in an effort to secure happiness (hence it is a goal of human endeavour), but in being happy, people are able to secure the ultimate goal of life.[168] Most Indian philosophers consider there to be one ultimate end (*moksa*), which all living beings attain at some point. However, unlike Aristotle and Plato, the ancient Indians emphasised that though the goal may be one, there are many ways to reach it. And so, they talk about three particular paths which are known as *jñana* Yoga, *karma* Yoga, *bhakti* Yoga, representing the path of knowledge, the path of action and the path of devotion, respectively.[169] Each one has its own tenets; hence a person's life and duties are very much shaped by this path. Accordingly, there is not one good life or one specific conception of human flourishing, nor is any one path superior to the others.[170]

The point above (that there may be many paths which engender flourishing) is a deviation from the ancient Greeks. Aristotle discusses various paths of happiness, but says that the highest or true way to reach happiness is the path of contemplation.[171] Whereas, though Plato acknowledges the importance of attaining knowledge, he ultimately argues that this knowledge ought to be put to use, and that

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[167] In order to appreciate what happiness consists of, it is necessary to mention the concept of *dharma*, as it is of immense significance to Indian philosophy. De (1952) describes *dharma* as 'a goal of human endeavour, [which] represents the principle of righteousness as a means of salvation,' (p. 90). Human activities are motivated by particular ends, and *dharma* is considered to be the highest and most 'supreme' end, (De,1952, p. 78). The notion of *dharma* is both a principle (righteousness) as well as a theory of human action and duty; in other words it may be conceived of both as an ends as well as a means. At times it is considered as the summation of all virtue, and at other times as a particular virtue. Sastri, in S. Radhakrishnan, 1952, refers to *dharma* as 'virtue' and then at another point as 'law' (p. 107). This is remarkably similar to the notion of *dikaiosunē* used by Plato in his *Republic*. This concept has been discussed in previous chapters (3 and 4), but it is useful to repeat the point that *dikaiosunē* seems to refer to both the entirety of virtue, as well as to a particular virtue, (see Chapter 3).

[168] See Radhakrishnan, 1999.

[169] See Mascaró, 1962.

[170] That is not to say, though, that thinkers have not attempted to establish one path as 'better' than the others.

[171] Ross, 1925, p. 263 (Book X. 7)

the best way to do this is to spend life serving one's community.[172] Perhaps the point of this comparison is to show that the emphasis upon these various paths has caused much division between the work of Plato and Aristotle; often a tension expressed is the one between justifying the contemplative life versus a life of action. This question acts as a deterrent to a much more important point: that Aristotle and Plato shared many teleological and metaphysical views which serve as pre-requisites to human flourishing. In other words, prior to substantiating the best type of life that a person ought to pursue, there is perhaps a more fundamental element of human flourishing within these ancient philosophies that is often overlooked: that, one's way of life is determined by one's *psychē*.

5.2.2 The *Gunas*

In the *Republic* Plato gives a lot of importance to the divisions within the *psychē*, claiming that they are fundamental to understanding *dikaiosunē* (righteousness).[173] Closely studying ancient Greek and Indian texts, McEvilley (2002) observes that Plato's tripartite notion of the *psychē* presented in the *Republic*[174] (which is parallel to the divisions within society) is analogous with the idea of the three *Gunas* (a Sanskrit word which connotes 'qualities' or 'attributes') described by various Indian schools of thought.[175] Plato describes the rational, passionate and appetitive elements, which McEvilley (2002) purports corresponds in Indian tradition, to the *sattvic, rajasic* and *tamasic* elements of the human personality, (p. 182).[176]

The doctrine of *Gunas*, is said to derive from the Sāmkhya school of thought (or Sānkhya, as it is referred to by Raju, 1960), which is considered to be the oldest philosophical system in India, (Radhakrishnan, 1999, p. 58; Cooper, 1996, p. 24). The *Gunas* are classified under the Sāmkhya theory of evolution[177] which is adopted

[172] Plato, 1993, 519c-e
[173] See, Chapters 3 and 4
[174] See, Plato, 1993: 439c-441a
[175] McEvilley (2002) attributes this observation to A.N. Marlow (1954) 'Hinduism and Buddhism in Greek Philosophy,' *Philosophy East and West*, **4**: 3-38.
[176] Wadia (1953) acknowledges that Dr. Urwick in his *Message of Plato* also made this link between the faculties in Plato's philosophy with the *gunas* in Indian philosophy, (p. 65).
[177] 'As already indicated, evolution as understood and explained by science, is practically absent from classical Indian thought. But if the word can be used for the issuing of the world from some ultimate principle or principles, then there are some theories of evolution of man,' (Raju, 1960, p. 282).

by various schools of thought such as the Vedāntic as well as Patanjali's[178] Yoga, and Vaisesika, (Raju, 1960).[179] One need not be familiar with various schools of Indian philosophy to understand the significance of this point; that is, though there may be striking differences between these major schools of thought (as there are bound to be), they all accept the theory of the *Gunas*. Similarly, in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, one finds significant differences, but they also share certain fundamental ideas.[180]

The Sāmkhya theorised that all Matter (or, *Prakrti* in Sanskrit) contains these three elements or *Gunas*, known as *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*, in various degrees. At the most basic level, the *Gunas* represent the characteristics of purity (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*), lethargy (*tamas*), (Raju, 1960). However, these aren't by any means meant to be direct translations of the concepts, as they are identified using various descriptions. They can primarily be distinguished as follows: *sattva* is that which provides illumination and is closely associated with concepts such as purity, harmony, goodness; *rajas* is considered to be the passionate element, which brings about restlessness, and outward movement; *tamas* represents the element of sloth and is related to concepts such as dullness and inertia, (Radhakrishnan, 1948; Raju, 1960). In nature, the *Gunas* are likened to light (*sattva*), fire (*rajas*), and darkness (*tamas*), (Mascaró, 1962). The Sāmkhya allege that the natural and original state of Matter holds the *Gunas* in equilibrium; if this balance is disturbed, it results in the formation of various types of Matter (plants, animals, humans, and so forth). It is the interaction between the *Gunas* which has an effect on the nature and type of creation.[181]

Of importance to this thesis is the relationship between the *Gunas* and human beings. As with other types of matter or creation, it is theorised that humans also contain the *Gunas* and that humans are, to a certain extent, bound by them. That is,

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[178] Ancient Indian scholar, said to have authored the *Yoga Sutras*.
[179] Radhakrishnan (1999) explains that the cosmology and psychology of the Sāmkhyas was also accepted in the Epic of the *Mahabharata*, (p.502).
[180] See Chapter 4.
[181] Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (2002) says that 'Nature is but the permutation and combination of these Gunas,' (p. 238). But to say that all these different forms of *Prakrti* (Matter) contain and are shaped by the three *Gunas*, is not to claim that various plants, animals, etc, are formed *out of* the *Gunas*. The point is that these characteristics, to a certain extent, define the type of creation.

who you are and the type of life you lead is said to be the result of the interaction between the *Gunas*, (Radhakrishnan, 1999). The *Bhagavadgītā* explicitly outlines the significance of these qualities in human life; the *Gunas* take on an ethical sense, with *sattva* translated as 'goodness', *rajas* as 'passion' and *tamas* as 'dullness', (Radhakrishnan, 1948, p. 316). Interestingly, *sattva* appears to be given preference as a means to happiness, followed by *rajas*, and with a note of caution on the *tamasic* element. Of significance, we are not told to get rid of the *tamasic* element, but rather to (eventually) rise above the limitations of this quality; this may be due to the belief that one cannot dispose of any of these elements as they are the basic constituents of one's nature.

Although McEvilley (2002) explains that the *Gunas* are similar to the divisions of the *psychē* which Plato describes in his *Republic*, this might be misleading. For, the *Gunas* aren't aspects that develop *out of* a soul or human life, and they aren't particular to human beings. And so, it is not the case that because there is a soul therefore there are *Gunas*, rather these qualities are said to exist in all forms of matter. Nonetheless, an examination into Plato's discussion of the three faculties and the *Gunas* make the similarities between the Indian and Greek notions more apparent.[182] For one, both Plato and Aristotle[183] would have agreed that the way in which a person leads her life is very much determined by these faculties. For this reason, Plato places much importance on these three elements, arguing that dikaiosunē and other virtues are determined by one's 'state of mind', (See Waterfield, 1993, p. xxxvi). He also indicates that a person can be, to a certain extent, controlled by a particular faculty, 'And we know that anyone whose predilection tends strongly in a single direction has correspondingly less desire for other things,'[184] in the same way that the *Gita* explains that one of the elements may

[182] Though, not everyone seems convinced by this. Wadia (1953) claims that the Indian concepts are more ethical than Plato's concepts; though, what he means by this isn't entirely clear. For, the very purpose of describing the elements of the *psychē* is to talk about the right use of it, and the relationship between these elements and righteousness. It is difficult to claim that Plato thought that these faculties could be anything but ethical, as they engender ethical living. Wadia is mistaken in his claims. It is, perhaps an effort to lessen the implications of similarity between the two.
[183] See chapter 4.2.1 where Aristotle attributes 'action' to the *psychē*.
[184] Plato, 1993, 485d

dominate over the other two.[185] This point is significant as it underpins part of Plato's educational ideal: that it ought to strengthen the 'rational' faculty.[186] For, if there is a particular element that is considered to be of great consequence, it would seem logical that Plato emphasises the education of this particular element. And similar to the *Gita*, Plato stresses the importance of the rational faculty, insisting that it should dominate, followed by the passionate element, and that if this happens, then the desirous/appetitive element falls under the command of these. Waterfield (1993) explains Plato's underlying position here: 'people must be prevented from feeding their baser parts too often,' (p. xxxviii).

Though, that is not to say that a person should depend entirely upon one aspect alone, as the three elements are qualities that all beings need, to a certain extent. That is to say, the three elements serve different purposes: *tamas* longs to satisfy the appetite, *rajas* is motivated into action and dedication, while the element of *sattva* guides a person towards goodness and intellectual knowledge. Accordingly, one particular element cannot replace another, as all have to be harnessed towards the betterment of the individual. So, for example, if a person is particularly led by *sattva*, it is not necessarily to her benefit to subdue or ignore the other two facets; if she ignores her appetitive element, she may end up starving herself of food and water, under the pretext that she is overcoming these desires. But it is important to point out that neither Plato nor the *Bhagavadgītā* endorse such an extreme ascetic lifestyle. If the elements are neither meant to be eradicated nor to be fully relied upon, then what is the proper use of them? McEvilley (2002) explains that 'the soul is to arrive at an inner balance of its three elements in which reason dominates, ambition serves reason, and the appetites are submissive, lacking fuel to fire them up,' (186). He shows how Patanjali's explanation of the 'mind', as dependent upon the interaction between the three *Gunas*, also correlates to Plato's view above: 'The nature of the mind's activity depends on how the three qualities are interacting...The opposing qualities- *rajas*, activity, and *tamas*, passivity- are finally brought, through

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[185] 'Sometimes *sattva* may prevail over *rajas* and *tamas*, at others *rajas* over *tamas* and *sattva*, and at others *tamas* over *sattva* and *rajas*,' (Mascaró, 1962, p. 67); The *Bhagavadgītā* Chapter 14, verse 10.

[186] See, '4.2.2 The idea of Education in the *Republic*'

austerities and ethical practices, into balance in which reason (*sattva*) is the ruling element,' (McEvilley, 2002: p. 186).

At first glance, the idea that the three elements ought to be in balance with one another seems contradictory to the view that one element (*sattva* or the 'rational' faculty) ought to rule over the others. However, to say that these elements ought to be in balance is not to say that they ought to be *equal*, suggesting the *same amount* of influence; it is, rather to say that these elements ought to be in equilibrium, where they are no longer working against one another as opposing forces, but instead working together. This may also be referred to as a state of harmony, where there is concord between these elements. At this point, these ideas are primarily conjecture: ideas that are rooted in both Plato's as well as much ancient Indian philosophy. But they aren't improbable. Imagine a group of school kids playing tug of war against a heavy weight champion. It might take 10 kids to match the strength of this one man, but that is what is required for that situation in order to neutralise the force. In a strong cup of coffee, only a small amount of milk is needed to counterbalance the bitterness of the coffee. One does not necessarily need equal parts of milk and water. What this theory about the *Gunas* suggests is that the *tamasic* element is very persuasive, and in order to counterbalance it, one needs a strong and stable *sattvic* element, and a *rajasic* element which conforms to the *sattvic* element. Hence, there is a need for one element to 'dominate' the others, in order for harmony to exist between them.

5.2.3 Imperturbability

The *Bhagavadgītā* theorises that ideally, a person should move beyond the pull and attachment to the *Gunas*. The metaphysical point being made here is that a person is not simply these three qualities; she is something more than this. One need not accept the metaphysical claims in order to appreciate the practical point being made: that the highest good for a person is to lead a life where she is not a slave to her emotions, desires (even the desire for goodness), whims, etc. This notion is often referred to as imperturbability, and reveals another similarity between Indian

and Greek philosophy. The concept of imperturbability[187] relates to a particular attitude 'which regards with the same emotion or valuation those events which are to one's personal worldly advantage-such as pleasures and fulfilled intentions- and those which are not- such as pains and frustrated intentions,' (McEvilley, 2002, p. 595). An examination into Indian philosophy readily reveals that this concept is given a lot of weight.[188] This concept is closely aligned with the theory of the *Gunas*; it is suggested that if these three elements were in balance with each other then imperturbability would ensue.

> Think of this one point...Man is happy at one time, miserable at another. He is afraid one moment and courageous at another. Why? Because he is shaped by the Gunas. They alone can transform man from one phase to another like this... (Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 2002, p. 241).

An implication of this observation is that one ought to maintain a state of internal equanimity by getting beyond the fluctuations of life; this can easily be interpreted as imperturbability. Waterfield explains that for Plato [a state of] righteousness involves 'harmony or concord between the three parts of the mind under the rule of reason,' (p. xxxix). One might ask whether there is a difference between the Indian account of harmony (i.e. the balance between the elements of the soul) and Aristotle's ideas about the soul? Aristotle's account of the psyche and its relation to virtue reveal that he has much in common with Plato.[189] Though, that is not to say he agreed entirely with Plato's account. However, specifically relating to the 3 elements within the soul, Aristotle certainly acknowledges that the 'good' for humans is to follow *logos*, and that virtuous activity fundamentally is related to the soul (with the rational element of *logos* as the governing element).[190] To this extent, Aristotle's ideas about the ordering of the soul, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, are similar to Plato's and consequently to the Indian ideas.[191]

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[187] McEvilley (2002) says this is the translation of the Sanskrit word *upeksā*.
[188] McEvilley (2002) says 'In the case of India it is not controversial that the ideal of imperturbability dominated ethical systems of all periods,' (p. 601).
[189] For a more thorough explanation on Aristotle's concurrence as well as possible hesitations with Plato's account of the soul, see chapter 3.2.2 and chapter 5.2.2.
[190] This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3. To reiterate, in chapter 4.1.2 it is written "For in referring to virtue, Aristotle is referring to the 'activities of the psyche', which involve a process of internal regulation and balance."
[191] Aristotle's ideas about the three elements of the soul and the notion of imperturbability are also discussed in 5.3.

It was suggested above that the notion of imperturbability is fairly uncontroversial in Indian philosophy, but interestingly enough, McEvilley (2002) suggests that this was the case for Greek philosophers as well, and that this stance corresponds to the Greek notion of *ataraxia* (p. 595). However, McEvilley (2002) claims that Aristotle does not necessarily endorse imperturbability, as this conflicts with Aristotle's idea that people should perform actions with full-feeling, (p. 600). In particular, McEvilley (2002) notes that 'he does not recommend that his students attempt to extirpate the passions,' (p. 600). But there are some assumptions being made here that need to be looked at more carefully.

For one, McEvilley (2002) wrongly assumes that imperturbability automatically entails that one become indifferent to life in this world. He considers this as a transcendentalist approach, in which one becomes dead to this world, and associates this with Platonism, Neoplatonism, the Vedanta and schools of Mahayana Buddhism, (McEvilley, 2002, p. 596). Yet, there are many examples, in particular within Plato's *Republic*, which suggest that a person be fully engaged in this life. The suggestion, which is made both in Plato's *Republic* as well as in the *Gita*, is that a person ought to live in a spirit of lifelong service to their community and that one's duties should always be fulfilled with the benefit of others in mind.[192] These points suggest that these philosophies aren't concerned with creating a society of ascetics who live in the forest, dissociated from the world; on the contrary it seems these views endorse a vision of human flourishing which is very much based in the world we live in.[193]

Another assumption that McEvilley (2002) makes is that imperturbability demands the complete eradication of passions, and for this reason he says that Aristotle would not have endorsed this. However, the doctrine of the *Gunas* does not allege that a person get rid of *rajas* (the passionate element). The passionate element, after all, is an important facet; it is what stirs a person into action. Plato gives importance to this element with his insistence that it be properly educated so as to be in balance

[192] Plato, 1993, 519c-520d, 540a-b; Kupperman, 2007.
[193] With reference to the *Bhagavadgītā* Kupperman (2007) writes that it 'presents a philosophy...including the possible combination of spiritual enlightenment with active participation in the world,' (p. 43).

with a person's rational element (or what in Indian philosophy is identified as *sattva*).[194] Accordingly, it is not that the passions are to be discarded; rather they are channelled into productivity. Aristotle would have most certainly agreed with this view, indicating that the passions need not be cast aside, but they do need to be modified, (Nussbaum, 1994, p. 78). Hence these so-called differing views are actually in line with one another.

5.3 Implications

This chapter reveals some fundamental similarities between ancient Indian and Greek thought, which are suggestive of interaction and influence between the two ancient cultures. It is hard to overlook the implication of diffusion of thought, though some might claim that 'similar ideas often arise in different minds in different countries,' (Wadia, 1953, p. 65). However, the likelihood of similarity becomes less like a reasonable argument, and more of a defensive excuse. There is a difference between similarities based on coincidence, those based on particular circumstances, and those that are borrowed or transmitted. For example, if we look at the similarities between the three faculties, it is not simply the case that there is correspondence in the *descriptions* of these faculties; a metaphor which is used in the ancient Indian text *Katha Upanisad* to describe the three qualities is also used by Plato in his *Phaedrus*.[195] Both use the allegory of a chariot and charioteer to describe the role of the charioteer (which represents *sattva*, or the rational aspect of the *psychē*) in ascending over physical pleasures/desires/sense gratification (which are considered to be illusory), to achieve a higher reality. Although this description may be somewhat vague, and some might disagree with the implications of it, what's important is the recognition of common imagery used to convey similar philosophies, hence, this is not simply the case of similar *ideas*, it is also the case of similar terminology and corresponding metaphor. McEvilley (2002) argues that 'when such similarity holds good in detail, the researcher has to be alert to the possibility of diffusion,' (p. 644). Hence, there are remarkable parallels in Indian and

[194] See chapter 4.
[195] See, McEvilley, 2002: p. 185

Greek thought that *imply* more than mere coincidence and these parallels are very much worthy of further investigation.

Of importance to this work, it seems that an observation that one can make with more certainty, is that this chapter debunks the myth that Indian philosophy is more mystical and therefore poles apart from ancient Greek philosophy.

> In response to the nineteenth-century imperialist view that the western tradition is logical, the eastern mystical, this investigation has shown that every mystical element in Indian thought can be found in Greek thought too, and every rational element in Greek thought can be found in Indian, (McEvilley, 2002, p. 643).[196]

Cooper (1996) makes a similar observation, that 'there is no serious account of perception familiar to Western readers...which was not developed in one or another Indian system,' (p. 14). This chapter invalidates Guthrie's (1965) earlier claim that Indian thought is vastly different from Greek, and this section shows why it *is* profitable to compare the two, thus rejecting Guthrie's (1965) statement altogether.

Thus far, this thesis has claimed that there is something inadequate about the notion of character which is reflective of morality in the narrow sense. Such a characterisation is underpinned by an idea of character as (a) consisting in a particular set of virtues, traits, qualities and/or (b) being determined by usual behavioural manifestations; it implies that character education ought to primarily influence our habits and behaviours. However, I claim that character is broader than this, and that character education should not primarily be directed at the conduct of individuals.

Ancient Indian philosophy (as it has been outlined here) would most likely find such a narrow characterisation of character deficient. For, at the very least, what this brief investigation elucidates about Indian philosophy, perhaps unsurprisingly, is its emphasis upon one's inner being. What's more, in examining the similarity between Indian and Greek ideas about human flourishing, this chapter *reveals* that this focus on an inner being is not just an Indian fixation: ancient Greek thought related to human flourishing is fundamentally concerned with linking it to a person's *psychē*. It

[196] That is, McEvilley (2002) notes, aside from the practice of Yoga, which he considers as a 'distinctively Indian accomplishment,' (p. 655).

tells us who we are and the type of life we lead is very much the product of one's *psychē*, and not simply based on behaviour. There are two points, at least at this juncture, which need to be clarified: what is meant by 'inner being' and is it the case that the Greeks and Indians are dismissive of the role of behaviour in human flourishing?

To speak of a person's inner being[197], is simply to draw attention to those mental and emotional processes which occur inside a person, as opposed to, say, one's outer being which might refer to behaviour or physical expressions. The 'internal state' is reflective of (the interaction between) the three *Gunas*. A person's inner being is dictated by her internal state. That is, the various types of thoughts, desires and feelings we have, result from the interaction between the *Gunas*. The significance placed upon the *Gunas* implies that the behaviours, emotional responses and physical expressions which comprise our outer being are mere reflections of our inner being. In other words, what we do and say are fundamentally influenced by our internal state. For this reason, it was stated earlier that who you are and the type of life you lead is based on the interaction between these *Gunas*.

That is not to say that behaviour does not play a role in human flourishing. After all, for Aristotle, it is not enough to merely know and understand what is 'good', it is also important to *act*, (Aristotle, 1925, p. 30). It seems that he is trying to say that there is no point in having a particular 'state of mind' (even a balanced 'state of mind') or to understand virtue, unless one is ready and able to *be* virtuous. For this reason he appears to give prominence to action, (Aristotle, 1925, p. 16). This point is an important one, and is echoed in the quotation from the film *The Matrix* that 'there's a difference between knowing the path and walking the path,' (Wachowski and Wachowski, 1999). However, just because Aristotle gives importance to action, does not lessen the significance of one's *psychē* or inner being. After all, Aristotle clearly says that action is controlled by the three faculties in the *psychē*. In emphasising action, Aristotle is perhaps reminding his audience that just because the *psychē* is of fundamental importance that is not to say that it should be given excessive importance. Plato (1993), too, appears to insist that once people are able to

[197] By 'inner being' I do not mean an embedded *self* that is meant to be enduring.

understand and experience goodness, they must come back to the community and share their knowledge and experience with others, (519c-d; p. 247).[198]

This chapter demonstrates that human flourishing, from both ancient Greek and Indian perspectives, do not underestimate the necessity of behaviours, but neither do they ignore the primacy of the inner activities of a person, which might contribute to behaviour. In placing importance on the *Gunas*, Indian philosophers weren't necessarily saying that these elements were of *sole* importance, just as it would be wrong to say that Aristotle thought action was of *sole* importance to human flourishing. The point is that who a person is, the elements which contribute to her character, and the type of life she leads is not a case of either one (the *psychē*) or the other (actions). At the very least, the two should be balanced. It seems that contemporary educational practice has given much importance to developing virtuous behaviour or right conduct, without examining the role of a person's inner being in the development of character.

An implication particularly related to the notion of imperturbability is that Aristotle and Plato, as well as those Indian philosophers who endorsed the theory of the *Gunas* felt that an action should be performed with full-feeling. Aristotle's reference to full-feeling implies that an activity be performed sincerely and with complete dedication. However, McEvilley (2002) seems to imply that the notion of full-feeling is something that is *particular* to Aristotle. This misperception might be rooted in the idea that Aristotle emphasised that one should express emotion[199] whereas Plato supposedly endorsed the view that emotions should be suppressed. This assumption is misleading, though. For one, Aristotle did not endorse a view of a

[198] What's more, Plato is actually critical of the view that a person can just remain in a heightened state of awareness about the 'good' without actually *being* good. For in reference to perhaps, the leaders of his time, he writes 'we musn't let them get away with what they do at the moment...staying there and refusing to come back down,' (Plato, 1993, 519d).

[199] Though I will not go into depth about the concept of emotion, it is useful to take not of some features. Nussbaum (1994) outlines particular features of emotions that 'any major ancient Greek thinker held.' She says that emotions are *not* bodily reactions, but rather 'forms of intentional awareness' which are particularly directed at or are about some object. Emotions are thought to be connected to beliefs, in that beliefs are a sort of necessary condition of an emotion. Finally, emotions can be understood as either rational or irrational and also true and false depending on the beliefs they are attached to. (Nussbaum, 1994, p. 80-81).

person who was *emotional* (in the narrow sense).[200] For, there is a difference between expressing an emotion and being emotional. Whereas Aristotle views emotions as 'essential forces motivating to virtuous action,' he also acknowledges that emotions aren't always correct, and that above all else, they need to be guided by reason, (Nussbaum, 1994, p. 94-96). And so expressing emotion, where one's higher faculty sees fit, is different from being emotional which is often considered to be unnecessary or irrational.[201] For this reason, we are told that the passionate or *rajasic* element within us must fall into line with the rational or *sattvic* element. Hence the notion of full-feeling does not mean that one ought to perform an action with a full bout of emotions, but rather, whatever work one undertakes, the three elements are in harmony.[202] Consequently, it seems as though Aristotle would not have rejected the notion of imperturbability.

If one examines the basic notion of imperturbability, that it is to one's benefit to move beyond the fluctuations of pleasure and pain which occur in the mind, there is an element in this which is of practical relevance. There are many factors in a person's life which are out of her control (such as a travel delay due to severe weather conditions), yet they seem to disturb a person, sometimes causing seemingly irrational responses. McEvilley (2002) says that although one may not accept a transcendental argument in support of imperturbability, there are naturalistic grounds which are based on the 'uncontrollability of experience', (p.596). In other words, it is favourable for a person to be unaffected by good and bad experiences, because there are many things which she has no control over. If anything, the only thing that a person is guaranteed to have control over is her response to a situation. Hence, rather than being controlled by external situations, imperturbability places a person in control of herself and her responses. It seems

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[200] The narrow sense of 'emotion' and 'emotional' refers to a strong feeling that one may have that is considered to be separate from reason, or the display of such emotion, respectively.

[201] There are places in which Aristotle obviously endorses imperturbability in the sense of maintaining equal-mindedness 'for the man who is truly good and wise, we think, bears all the chances of life becomingly and always makes the best of circumstances...nor, again, is he many-coloured and changeable,' (Aristotle, 1925, p. 21).

[202] This sense of harmony is similar to the ideas discussed in 5.2.3. And so, it seems there isn't a significant difference between the ideas of balance discussed in 5.2.3 and the ordering of the soul according to Aristotle. Though, that is not to say that there aren't differences in the *implications* of these ideas.

this naturalistic view of imperturbability minimises the importance that luck can play in a person's life.[203]

Thus far, I have presented specific implications of this survey into Indian philosophy related to the work on character and human flourishing; however, there are broader implications of these observations, and in particular, there is much that philosophy of education can gain from further studying the parallels of these two ancient cultures. A closer study of the two does not seem like an implausible idea. In talking about Aristotle's Ethics, Urmson (1988) observes that there are three common sources for misunderstanding the *Ethics*: for one, he notes that it is easy to misinterpret the ancient Greek concepts which were untouched by Judaeo-Christian culture and ideas; secondly, he claims that the translation which went from ancient Greek to Latin, then from Latin to English can easily mislead readers, often leading to confusing passages or seemingly disconnected ideas; finally, Urmson (1988) points to the text itself, saying that it was most likely formulated as lecture notes as opposed to a comprehensive book. What these observations tell the reader is that it is difficult (albeit, not impossible) to come to grips with Aristotle's (and arguably, Plato's) work, and that one cannot be too careful in her interpretation.

As an example, Urmson (1988) goes on to explain that 'Aristotle approaches the problems of conduct from a point of view and makes use of many concepts that are different from those with which we are familiar today. In the English-speaking world, whatever our personal beliefs may be, our Judeo-Christian cultural heritage has profoundly influenced our ways of thinking; Aristotle, writing in the fourth century BC, was untouched by these influences,' (p. 4). Here, Urmson (1988) identifies the difficulty with interpreting the work of Aristotle, and possible reasons for misunderstanding. It is only natural for the reader to attempt to fit Aristotle's work within the boundaries of certain pre-conceived concepts. There are several dangers in doing so however. When dealing with abstract constructions, often argument is based on various concepts, where one concept is laid as the foundation upon which other concepts develop; if there is a general confusion or

[203] Chapter 8 discusses the notion of 'luck' and its relation to character.

misinterpretation of one concept, it might have a domino-effect on the entire argument.

The point I am trying to make above is, in Aristotle, there has often been vagueness associated with certain concepts[204], and often these concepts are crucial to the treatise as a whole. I am suggesting that further study of Indian philosophy could provide new and alternative ways of understanding various concepts, which are not limited to only human flourishing and character. This is further discussed in the conclusion.

An examination of these similarities need not imply that there is nothing unique about the philosophies of the ancient Indians and Greeks. For, an important distinction between the two is that the Indians argue that human flourishing does not consist in one good life. Rather, there are good *lives*, and that the *goodness* corresponds to the type of person you are. And so, two people pursuing different lifestyles (an ascetic and a politician) can both flourish, and that, their flourishing does not depend on the particular *path* they have chosen for themselves. The Greeks (Plato and Aristotle, specifically) are said to differ in many ways: one being on their interpretation of which type of life was the best to pursue. Much emphasis is often placed on this difference. However, as I have shown in this chapter, the Greeks also acknowledged that flourishing was affected by the type of person one is, though, this is a point which does not seem to be given much consideration. In this way, the philosophy of the Indians seems to be more 'inclusive' to the extent that it acknowledges that there are a wide range of paths, beliefs, and lifestyles involved in a flourishing life. This is one significant distinction that this study has revealed.

Nonetheless, an examination into the philosophy of the ancient Indians has been important to the study of human flourishing and character. It has revealed similarities between the two cultures, but has also emphasised similarities between the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Studying Indian philosophy has also shed light on the theory of the *Gunas* and its relation to the *psychē*. In this way, a study of Indian philosophy has illuminated elements of ancient Greek philosophy in

[204] For example, see the discussion on the concept of *logos* in chapter 3.

significant and novel ways. It has also supported a fundamental premise that one's wellbeing is very much connected to the type of person one is (one's character).

The first Part of this thesis has sought to study various perspectives of character in an effort to get clearer about the role of character in school education. However, identifying 'what is character' has proved to be an intricate task. I have questioned whether character should be used interchangeably with moral character, as is often the case in contemporary discourse on character education. This query led me to examine ancient Greek perspectives on character, human flourishing and education in chapters 3 and 4. These two chapters demonstrate that neither Plato nor Aristotle would have endorsed a notion of character that is primarily or solely tied to specific character traits, but rather would have agreed to a broader characterisation of character. What's more, the two seem to imply that there are significant links between character, human flourishing, and one's *psychē*, and that it is the development of the *psychē* that is fundamental to education. The final chapter of this Part has looked at ancient Indian philosophy, and has emphasised that the type of person one is (based on the elements of the *Gunas*) is intrinsic to whether or not she flourishes. That is to say that wellbeing depends first and foremost on who the person is, and not necessarily on the life path she has chosen. Aristotle and Plato are often attributed with differing accounts of the good life, but they too acknowledge that the *psychē* is a significant factor that determines a flourishing life.

In this way, this first Part has examined this complicated question of what is character and in doing so has revealed that character need not necessarily be understood as moral character. What's more, it has shown that a broader understanding of character (one which arguably would have been espoused by the ancient Greeks and Indians) is intrinsic to an individual's wellbeing. Significant questions still remain. If character is not merely moral character, then how should it be understood? And what is the place of character in school education? The second Part of this thesis addresses these questions.

Part 2: Character as a Central Aim of Education

Chapter 6: How should Character be understood?

The first Part of this thesis has been an inquiry into perspectives on character: that is, what do others conceive character to be? The first two chapters revealed a sense of character which was, for the most part, reflective of morality in the narrow sense. These chapters also revealed that though there is much discussion about character and character education, the very notion of character remains vague. Hence, there was a need (a) for the notion of character to be demystified, and in particular, (b) to determine whether character should be used interchangeably with moral character. In an effort to address these issues, I studied ancient philosophical perspectives of both the Greeks and Indians, looking closely at their conceptions of human flourishing. This inquiry revealed interesting similarities between Plato, Aristotle and Indian philosophical thought. Of significance to this thesis, it seems that these thinkers would be more likely to endorse a conception of character which is broader than morality in the narrow sense, and they give particular importance to one's inner being in the understanding of human flourishing. I claim that these ideas have far-reaching implications for how the notion of character ought to be understood, and herein, I put forth a characterisation of character that is informed by ancient Indian and Greek philosophical thought.

I have claimed from the outset that character is broader than contemporary thinkers recognise. What's more, I claim that such a broader understanding of character is both necessary and beneficial to school education.

Whereas the first Part of the thesis dissected the notion of character from various perspectives, in an effort to shed light on this vague concept, this second Part puts things in order. Specifically, I elucidate what a broader conception of character entails, and examine the relation of this concept to other educational aims. Hence, this Part of the thesis defends a particular characterisation of character, and will

make a case for why this notion of character ought to be a central aim of school education.

Specifically, this chapter spells out what I mean by 'character', and addresses questions which have been raised by this investigation: what might character be, if not a collection of character traits, which result in particular behaviours, and is this conception related to what is commonly understood to be 'character'?

6.1 What is 'Character'?

As chapters 1 and 2 have shown, it is often suggested that character consists of our values, beliefs, attitudes, actions, mannerisms. And so, it is no surprise that character is identified as essentially, who we are. But this loose characterisation of character, I claim is both a deficient and unhelpful observation that does not seem to tell us anything about the person we are referring to.[205] On the other hand, when we say that Chand *has* character, we aren't making an open-ended reference; we are saying something particular about who Chand is. Hence Peters (1981) is right to make this distinction between (a) the notion of 'having character' and (b) a sense of character which could refer to any number of personal attributes.[206] It is this former sense of character that schools ought to be concerned with, and it is this sense of character which is the focus for this chapter.

I claim at the outset that the characterisation of character that I am putting forth, is one which has a positive connotation; that is, to say that a person has character, always refers to something of value. This is an important point, for it suggests that having character is more often than not a good thing. In this way, character is inevitably an ethical concept, and so one could argue that the sense of character I refer to has to do with morality in the broad sense.[207] These assertions are put forth for the time being, and will be elucidated as the chapter progresses.

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[205] I do not necessarily contest that values, beliefs, attitudes and so forth, are to a certain extent related to character. Nor would I disagree if somebody said that these qualities were a *part* of her character. I am contesting the view that character is merely an amalgamation of these.
[206] See, Chapter 2.
[207] For more on morality in the broad sense refer to the Introduction.

Peters (1981) asserts that having character is a style, a manner. I claim that this manner is not simply an external manifestation though. An examination into ancient philosophical thought reveals that the manner in which we live is based on internal elements, or 'inner being' as Chapter 5 identified it.[208] Though, that is not to say that our character merely has to do with these internal elements; however, the significance of these factors, I claim has been overlooked by educators and those interested in the development of character. And so, the basic rationale for this characterisation is that there is a meaningful relationship between one's inner being and outer expression. For this reason, I'm going to argue that *character is unity of thought, word and action*: to say that a person has character is to say that she has unity of thought, word and action. The reasons *why* we should understand character as such, as well its relation to conventional views of character are discussed in this chapter.

To begin, it is necessary to identify what is meant by 'thoughts', 'words' and 'actions'. Any statement or remark expressed by a person could count as her words, whereas actions refer particularly to conduct, mannerisms and demeanour. Thoughts are indicative of an array of ideas, beliefs, convictions, opinions and desires.[209] It seems uncontroversial to include words (what a person says) in this equation, as this is often included in an understanding of behaviour. For example, if I call Mars hard working, this is probably something that I can observe in his actions (he's always working late in the office) and in his words (he is constantly talking about new ideas and plans for work). A person's thoughts may not be as easily discernible; however I claim that thoughts are often the root of a person's words and actions. This means that to a certain extent, words and actions are influenced by or derive from thoughts. Using the example above, it is evident that at the bare minimum, some of Mars' dialogues derive from his thoughts (discussion of new ideas could be the result of thinking about new beliefs about how to move his company forward). Hence, character is unity of thought, word and action. It is when one's external behaviour is

[208] Again, 'inner being' refers to mental and emotional processes (possibly) involving desires, appetites, intellect, and is distinct from some concept of an enduring *self*.
[209] One might argue that it seems as though superficial thoughts could be at the centre of a person's character below, and that this is unsatisfactory. I will address this point on the next page.

in line with one's thoughts: when there is no conflict between the two, character ensues.[210]

By *unity* of thought, word and action, I mean that there is concord *between* a person's thoughts, words and actions: what she thinks, she says, and what she says, she does. However, the mind is able to conceive of hundreds upon thousands of thoughts per day. Accordingly, it would seem that any thought which is entertained both in action and speech could result in a person having character. For example, sometimes I think to myself 'I would like cupcakes.' I then go and tell my friend Jade about this thought, and we inevitably go out together and buy some cupcakes. Hence, it would seem that I have character according to the characterisation above. In the same way, a person who thinks that it is important to help others in need, discusses this with her friends, and decides to serve food weekly at a local soup kitchen, also has character. There are countless examples of people who have unity of thought, word and action. Even someone who believes that it is going to rain, warns her friends, and decides to wear a raincoat, has character because her thoughts, words and actions are in harmony.

And so, it is conceivable to think of a variety of examples of people who have character. In this way, it appears that everyone can and probably does have character. This is a correct deduction: everyone *does* have character, to a certain extent. One might claim that examples such as the cupcake scenario above are somehow trivial, and suggest an unfortunate level of superficiality; or that, it seems odd that an account of character could be based on such superficial thoughts. However, it must be emphasised that to 'have character' is something that depends on our thoughts, words and actions on a *moment to moment* basis.[211] That is, it is

[210] The basic rationale for this is that there is a meaningful relationship between one's inner being and outer expression. Though it has been mentioned in several places, it is important to emphasise that 'inner being' refers to the activities of things such as desires, appetites, intellect, and mind- those elements of our being (existence) that aren't outwardly (in the sense that we cannot 'see' these elements, though we may be able to detect them in a person's behaviour) apparent. This is not to be mistaken with the notion of an embedded *self* which could be a potential source of enduring qualities; such an entity, I claim, does not determine character. Of importance to this work is that unlike the *self*, this inner being *does* contribute to our character because it shapes and determines our thoughts. Character, or more appropriately, to *have character* develops from the attempt to harmonise our external activities with this inner being. It is the *habit* of unity of thought, word and action that is important. This will be discussed more in 6.2.2 and the conclusion.

[211] To say 'moment to moment' suggests that character isn't something that is pre-meditated.

based on a particular time frame (at that particular moment). And so, there are moments when we think about (seemingly) superficial things (what to wear, what to eat, whether to go to a jazz concert or watch a film), and other moments where we might think about more important things (should I wear clothes that were made in a sweatshop? Should I buy and eat produce from local farmers?). Day to day living is filled with those moments that seem trivial, as well as those which might be more significant. The point is that our thoughts are changing on a moment to moment basis and that when a person's behaviour is in line with what she thinks (at that particular time), then she has character (according to the characterisation I have introduced).[212]

However, I claim that it is not enough for people to have character at random, but rather one should strive towards strengthening his character. Consequently, it is strength of character that schools should encourage.

6.1.1 'Strength' and 'Weakness' of Character

I take for granted that all people are *capable* of having character, and perhaps already do, but in varying degrees. An implication of this is that not everyone necessarily has character *all the time*. If character is understood as unity of thought, word and action, then the strength of one's character is determined by whether or not she can maintain this unity, or how often she has unity. The development of character, hence, is more appropriately a process of *strengthening* character, or encouraging people to cultivate unity of thought, word and action *consistently*. Strength and weakness are variations determined by consistency. That is, to say that someone has character is to say, to a certain extent, that there is something about this person that one can rely upon; it is to say that this person embodies consistency. However, it is not that a person says the same thing or does the same thing, again and again. By consistency, I don't mean that Mars should be expected to behave in the same way all the time; rather I mean that one should expect his behaviour to reflect his thoughts and his words, at all times. Hence, strong character engenders an element of stability. This is discussed further below.

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[212] That this characterisation of character seems to be at odds with conventional notions will be addressed in 6.2.2.

The notion of strong character brings to mind examples of activists, like Martin Luther King Jr., who hold very strong convictions, articulate them to the masses, and relentlessly live by those convictions on a daily basis. This example epitomises strength of character. King maintained his unity of thought, word and action at all times, even in the face of adversity. But that is not to say that a person with strong character must always maintain the same beliefs. Imagine if Chand grows up in a meat loving household, and also enjoys eating meat throughout her adolescence. Though she comes across some vegetarians during this time, she is happy with her lifestyle and is convinced that it's okay to eat meat. One day she reads an article about the realities of the meat and dairy industry. Consequently, her beliefs begin to shift and as she does more research into the matter, she is attracted to a lifestyle which shuns animal products. Though Chand drastically changes her ideology, she continuously stands by her convictions; her thoughts might change, but she adjusts her words and actions accordingly. Chand too has strong character. Hence, to have consistency of thought, word and action over time does not necessarily mean that a person has the same thoughts, words or actions over time.

One might ask how much changeability of beliefs is compatible with strong character. I maintain that strong character isn't necessarily characterised by a particular fixity of belief (though that is not to say that a person with strong character cannot uphold the same beliefs). This is different from the conventional view that suggests that character implies some sort of rigidity in beliefs and behaviour. Since I am suggesting that character is *broader* than such characterisations, I maintain that there need not be such specific rigidness.

It is important to emphasise that just because a person with strong character doesn't necessarily have the same beliefs over time, this doesn't mean that there is no place for steady commitment in this characterisation of character. For, a person need not be committed to the same thoughts or ideas over the span of her life, but that doesn't mean she cannot be committed to the same basic virtues or values. Imagine the following scenario. Chand grows up on a farm, and learns to care for the land from an early age. For years, she accepts the idea of spraying her apples with insecticide;

after all, she loves her farm and wants to protect it from a possible infestation. After many years of this practice, she realises the insecticide (though protecting her apples) is damaging the soil. So she decides to refrain from spraying her apples, because she believes a few bugs are not as bad as devastated land. Chand clearly has steady commitment to caring for her farm, but her specific beliefs about what this entails change. In this way, the characterisation of character I have put forth allows for amendment to beliefs, but doesn't overlook the importance of commitment.

On the other hand, weakness of character can be understood as a lack of unity of thought, word and action on a consistent basis. For example, Mars considers himself to be a religious person, attends his religious service every week, and is able to openly talk about his faith amongst his fellow believers. However, Mars does not always feel comfortable talking about his faith to his colleagues at work, so when asked about his religious views, he says that he's an agnostic. In this way, Mars reveals his weak character. Though Mars holds particular religious beliefs, he does not express them in a consistent manner; he has inconsistency between his thoughts, words and actions.

6.1.2 'Good' and 'Bad' Character

The section above asserts that it is important for schools to assist in the development of strong character. It seems that there are several types of people who might have strong or weak character as described above. For example, what about a fanatic, whose beliefs are convincing, though, violent and reprehensible? Isn't it dangerous to encourage people to have strong character, as this could result in exceptionally positive or negative personas? It seems that there are an endless number of people who have certain thoughts, which appear to be in harmony with their words and actions, but they don't seem to be morally good. How are these people to be described?

If we can think of an example of a thief who believes that it is okay to steal cars, tells his friends that he is going to steal a car, and eventually follows through with his plans. This person seems to have character, but one that is not very admirable (from

certain perspectives). Would we say that this thief has *bad* character? Perhaps more importantly, if schools encourage pupils to have strong character, could they be promoting either very good or very bad characters?

There are several important points being made above. In order to address these points it is necessary to make a distinction between (a) having character and (b) the person (who has character). The person is the one who has various qualities, virtues, thoughts, desires, habits, and so forth. We might use these qualities to ascribe labels on a person (good, bad, virtuous, etc). To have character, on the other hand, as I have identified it above, is to have unity of thought, word and action. This, I have claimed, always refers to something positive or admirable, and yet it seems possible for a person with negative thoughts or vices to have character. It *is* plausible. However, just because a person has negative thoughts or vices, does not mean that they have negative or bad character; the very notion of good and bad character is problematic.

One might say that in the example of the thief above, he has bad character. In this way, the negative label is ascribed to the thief's thoughts, words and actions. However, these bad thoughts, words and actions belong to the person, not to the character. To have character has to do with the *unity* between these thoughts, words and actions. For this reason, the thief may be bad, but we can still say that he has character because there is unity between his thoughts, words and actions. What then, does it mean to have bad character? Accordingly, this would imply that there is bad unity between one's thoughts, words and actions. Or, in other words, there is *lack* of unity. Hence, the very notion of bad character appears to refer to a *lack* of character, which is a reference to weakness of character. In the same way, good character is good unity between one's thoughts, words and actions; or, consistent unity of thought, word and action. Hence good and bad character, essentially refer to strength and weakness of character, respectively.

However, one could argue that the point above is a technical one, and that important concerns remain. In particular, there are fundamental questions related to the type of person that need to be addressed. Whether we ascribe goodness or badness to

the *person* as opposed to *character,* what difference does it make if we still have people who have good and bad qualities? In other words, why should a person have character or strong character, as I have asserted?

Though I have distinguished between (a) having character and (b) the person (who has character), that is not to say that the two are unrelated. At the beginning of the chapter I noted that when we say that someone has character we are saying something about that person; specifically, I have claimed that this is something that schools ought to promote strong character in their pupils. In doing so, I am assuming that it is beneficial to have character. Hence, I am implying that there is a relationship between strength of character and the type of person you are.

Can a person who has negative qualities (where those qualities manifest in her thoughts, words and/or actions) have strong character? According to the characterisation of character that has been outlined in this chapter, it might be possible. If we look again at the example given above about the thief, it seems that he has character. At that moment, when his thoughts, words and actions are in harmony, he *does* have character. However, there is likely to be instability within this person's character. If the same thief is questioned by police, or by the victims of the theft, it is *doubtful* (though not impossible) that he will admit 'yes I believe it is okay to steal cars, therefore I stole that vehicle'. It is difficult, though not impossible, for a person with strong character to have negative qualities. For this reason, one might claim that Stalin could have arguably had strength of character. Having strong character, in this way, doesn't necessarily imply that a person must submit to the dominant social mores.

I asserted above that schools ought to encourage pupils to have strength of character, and that this means that a person should have unity of thought, word and action on a consistent basis. I claim that though it might be *possible* for a person with strong character to have negative qualities, it is more likely for such a person to be morally good (as opposed to a person with weak character).[213] [214]

[213] This point will be discussed towards the end of 6.2.2 as well as in the Conclusion.

Though I claim that it is difficult for a person with negative qualities to maintain unity of thought, word and action, it may seem like a bold assertion to some. For, there are numerous examples, one might claim, of people who seem to have unity of thought, word and action, and yet, who have a number of bad qualities. One might argue that there is the example of a liar who continuously lies (he thinks of a lie, he speaks a lie and his behavior matches the lie accordingly). However, this is faulty reasoning. On the one hand, if the so-called 'liar' *knows* that he is telling a lie then he does not (in fact) have unity of thought, word and action, for he knowingly commits to falsity. On the other hand, we might perceive someone as lying to us, but that person (either out of his own naiveté or for whatever reason) genuinely thinks that what he is saying is true; in that case that person has character.

A question might be raised as to whether someone with strong character always has to be candid? One element of this is whether a person always has to be outspoken about his views. Strength of character is determined by whether a person's behaviour is in line with his thoughts. And so, if a person thinks it's necessary to remain silent or speak minimally, and acts in such a manner, that person still has character. In this way, it isn't necessary for a person with strong character to always vocalise his views (unless the situation necessitates). Though, there is also an element of candidness that evokes honesty. Can a person with strong character maintain a lie, particularly in a situation where the withholding of information could prevent harm? A person who thinks to himself 'I am going to lie' and tells a lie, cannot have strong character (according to the characterisation I have outlined). However, one could argue that a person who withholds information to prevent some perceived evil, is not acting with a sole intent to lie, but is acting with the thought of preventing evil. For example, Miep Gies wouldn't have withheld information about Anne Frank's family for the *sake of lying*, but rather for a different purpose. Arguably, her thoughts, words and actions were in harmony.

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[214] That is, it is of value to have strong character, and a person who has strong character is better off, more often than not, than a person who has weak character.

The idea that a person with good character is inevitably a person with strong character is compatible with Plato's sentiments below:

> let's start our discussion by reminding ourselves of the fundamental points in our description of the kind of character a truly good person will inevitably have. If you remember, above all he was led by truth: if he didn't pursue truth absolutely and wholeheartedly, he was bound to be a specious imposter, with nothing whatsoever to do with true philosophy, (489e-490a- p. 210, Waterfield).

He writes that a good person is one who pursues truth. Arguably, to have strong character, is to be truthful in the sense that what that person thinks, he says and does. Truth is understood in the sense of integrity or wholeheartedness. Wholeheartedness can be understood as pursuing something to the full extent (in thought, word *and* action); in this way, wholeheartedness comes as a result of having strength of character.[215] A person with strong character can only be truthful in this sense, for it becomes his nature.

Aristotle, in a similar light, argues that in order for a person to be virtuous, he has to act with full-feeling in the sense that he must know what he is doing, he must choose to do it, and in this way, it is not merely the *action* that is of importance, but the entirety of its performance. And so, a person does not necessarily 'have virtue' as a child, as he must acquire the understanding and knowledge about the actions he is performing. However, Aristotle says that a person becomes just by doing just acts; he gains virtue by being virtuous. This means that the child can 'fake it until he makes it'; that is, if a child acts virtuously from a young age, he is predisposed to behaving virtuously later on his life (he acquires particular habits). Though it is evident that Aristotle obviously places importance on the process of virtuous action, to have virtue is very much linked to specific virtues as conducive to human flourishing.

This sense of having virtue (in the sense of being virtuous) differs from the notion of having character that I have outlined in this chapter thus far. For one, I have argued that having character need not necessarily consist in possessing a particular set of virtues. For this reason, a person who has character need not behave in a manner which is necessarily predictable (to an outside observer). To have virtue on the

[215] Wholeheartedness will be further discussed in chapter 8.

other hand, is to have specific qualities, or character traits as they are often referred to; and being virtuous entails that one's qualities and corresponding behaviours are to some extent fixed. McKinnon (1999) reveals that it is virtues (not character) that allow us to predict behaviour, but that 'one's virtues are a *part* of one's character. They are what permit others (and sometimes oneself) to predict behaviours in certain kinds of situations and to see what one values,' (p. 66).

Imagine a situation in which a child is running in the middle of the street, when a car comes bolting down the same street. Chand and Mars both run after the child to get her safely to the sidewalk; both are courageous. Mars has virtue in the sense that he knows that he should save this child, wants to save this child, and runs to save her; what's more, this is a quality which he can be expected to display when the occasion arises. Chand thinks about saving the child, drops whatever she is doing at that moment, and goes on to save the child. Chand has character. She does not profess to always be courageous, but she can be counted on to always do whatever she thinks and says (though in this situation, she did not have to say anything). Both Mars and Chand display courage. Is one better off than the other? Is it better to have character or to be virtuous? In a situation such as the one just described, it is hard to say. I am not trying to claim that a person who has character is better than a person who has virtue, or vice-verse. And although McKinnon (1999) writes above that virtues are a part of character, I am not necessarily endorsing this claim, at this stage. However, I claim that having unity of thought, word and action, is something of value, which is distinct from being virtuous. For example, though Aristotle claims that a child cannot be virtuous (as he might lack the understanding of why he is behaving in a certain way), a child can most certainly have unity of thought, word and deed. And so, it is something that schools can develop in young people. This is explored in the next section and subsequent chapters.

6.2 Why should this broader characterisation take precedence over other conceptions?

To write a chapter on how character *should* be understood, is to imply that there is something inadequate about the way that character *is* understood. An underlying

premise of this work is that contemporary interpretations of character within philosophy as well as the wider educational context are incomplete. I have examined numerous perspectives of character; from ancient to contemporary, west to east, conceptual as well as concrete (i.e. existing in practice). I am suggesting that contemporary characterisations are missing something: either they are lacking particular components *or* they are unable to provide a rationale for their characterisation. And so, I have put forth a characterisation for what it means to have character, which differs from contemporary conceptions of character. In this section I explore why this new characterisation ought to take precedence over contemporary accounts.

6.2.1 A comprehensive characterisation

To have character, I have argued, means to have unity between one's thoughts, words and actions. It is this particular sense of character, which I claim is broader than contemporary conceptions of character. The first chapter poses an important question: should character be used interchangeably with moral character, as is often the case in contemporary educational discourse. I claimed that such characterisations are narrow, and that a broader characterisation of character is necessary. Earlier, I claimed that broad could be understood as wide (in scope). More specifically, in the introduction I said that character reflects something broader than morality in the narrow sense. The characterisation of character put forth in this chapter is broad in its scope because it does not merely place importance on behaviour, but also on thoughts: it is a rarity to come across accounts of character that refer to the significance of thoughts in character development. This chapter has not only included thoughts as a significant factor of having character, but has revealed that the type of thoughts we have plays a large role in the development of strong character.

Two people, Mars and Chand, might not behave in the exact same way, but this does not mean that one has character and the other does not. Imagine they both drive by someone with a flat tire, but only Chand thinks that she ought to pull over to help the other person. Chand goes back to help the person with the flat tire, whereas Mars

does not think twice about it and continues driving. Both have character. An account of character which reflects morality in the narrow sense, might perhaps say that only Chand has character, because she goes back to help, completely disregarding the fact that Mars has stayed true to his own self. To attribute only one of the two as having character is inadequate. Hence, this characterisation, which takes into account elements of thought and behaviour, can be said to be broad in the sense that it is broader than morality in the narrow sense.

Not only is this *characterisation* wide in scope, but it is also wide-ranging in the sense of being 'inclusive'; this broader characterisation includes elements from other characterisations. As identified in chapter 2, Peters (1981) also utilises the notion of having character to refer to something broader than a particular set of traits. In particular, he claims that to have character is to have the qualities of consistency, incorruptibility and integrity, and to adhere to those regardless of what one's virtues might be. He rightly insists that educators concerned with the development of character would probably not have a problem with promoting this sense of character. However, his characterisation is not without its shortcomings.

A major difficulty with his account is that his three components (consistency, incorruptibility and integrity) require the existence of some virtues. This can be illustrated by the following example: if Mars is kind, honest and punctual, all the time, over time, in all places, and in all situations, then Peters (1981) would say that Mars has character. If Chand is courageous, humble, and peaceful all the time, over time, in all places and in all situations, Chand too would be credited with having character. Both Mars and Chand have different traits, yet they both have character. Hence, although he says that to have character does not necessarily mean that one ought to have a prescribed list of virtues, according to his account that person still ought to exhibit some set of virtues. And so, Peters (1981) is not *wrong* to claim that having character is not indicative of *any particular* set of traits; however, it is misleading to a certain extent because according to his characterisation, in order for Mars or Chand to have character they have to have *some particular* set of traits. Hence, having character, *is* indicative of having a set of particular traits, it's just that this set may differ from one person to another.

Studying the three components, there is something valuable in his initial criteria of having character, though Peters (1981) does not look extensively into this; hence a shortcoming of this work is that these components remain quite vague. For example, though it seems reasonable to claim that consistency is an important aspect, he does not fully consider what this consistency might entail. Does consistency mean that the specific trait in question ought to be followed at all times and in all circumstances? This seems to be what Peters (1981) is suggesting (p. 30). However, this interpretation of consistency is limited because it falls into an either/or situation (either a person is consistent or they're not i.e. either a person has character, or they do not). Peters (1981) gives the example of a Spartan who may behave consistently under particular circumstances, but upon leaving his city, may fall prey to other influences (p. 30). The moment he abandons certain traits, he no longer shows the inter-related qualities of consistency, integrity and incorruptibility. Even if this happens once, it appears that Peters (1981) is suggesting that this is an immediate weakness or sign of man who is without character (p. 30). In this sense, it's doubtful that anyone consistently practices a trait at all times, in all situations; accordingly, it is unlikely that a person, in this sense, has character. What Peters (1981) is suggesting is that in order to say that Chand has character, Chand needs to display *particular traits* over a specified period of time. Therefore, to say Chand shows *inconsistency* is to say that she did not display the same trait from one situation to the next. However, is it correct to assume that consistency implies consistency of a *particular trait* over time?

Similar to Peters' (1981) observation, I have indicated above[216], that strength and weakness of character are determined by consistency. However, I have argued that such consistency is not dependent upon behaving in the same way or displaying the same trait, but rather on consistency between one's thoughts, words and actions. The account of character that this chapter puts forth confirms that Peters' (1981) three qualities of consistency, integrity and incorruptibility are correct indicators of having character, though that which we display with consistency, integrity and incorruptibility differs. Peters (1981) would probably disagree with the argument

[216] See, section 6.1.1.

that a person cannot have bad character, as he alleges that that having character may be indicative of strength and weakness of character, but not necessarily of good or bad character, (p. 30). However, this chapter has shown not only that one cannot have bad character (though one might have bad qualities) and that more importantly, it is less plausible for a person with strong character to have bad qualities. Hence, this characterisation, to a certain extent, is divergent to Peters' (1981) account.

Interestingly, the first chapter pointed out that Lickona (1991) seems to assume that good and strong character are interchangeable, though he is unable to provide a rationale for this. For, in underlying his proposal for educators to develop character is his view that children today 'lack strong personal character,' (page 50). Does he assume that educating for good character automatically ensures strong character? Is he using 'good' and 'strong' character interchangeably? This is somewhat unclear since he does not specifically spell out what he means by strong character; though, the fact that children are 'soft and undisciplined', he suggests, can be attributed to this lack of strong character, (Lickona, 1991: page 50). The broader characterisation that I have outlined introduces a rationale for why strong character ought to be developed (though I continue to make a case for this in the next section). Hence, it provides a rationale for Lickona's (1991) sentiments, and also reveals why strength of character engenders good character.

From the outset of this work, I have claimed that a broad conception of character is needed, and that such a conception can lend itself to school education, more so than contemporary conceptions of character. I also contrasted the notion of broad with that of narrow, associating the latter with something that is incomplete in the sense of not-whole. In this way, broad refers to a conception of character which is wide-ranging; in particular, this conception adequately addresses the shortcomings of other perspectives on character. What's more, I contend that the notion of character introduced in this chapter is not only compatible with ancient Greek conceptions of human flourishing, but those of the ancient Indians as well: a revelation which is perhaps unique to this work. Thus this broader conception of character does not undermine fundamental ideas of these philosophies; rather it supports them and is

very much *influenced* by them. Underpinning much ancient thought about human flourishing is the idea of harmony. In chapters 3 and 4, I claimed that both Plato and Aristotle's ideas imply that character is related to harmony and balance, though I acknowledge that these are all complex terms. This chapter introduces a sense of character which is very much determined by harmony (between thought, word and action). In this way, the characterisation I have introduced is not only *broader* than contemporary characterisations; it is a *comprehensive* characterisation in the sense that it provides fuller delineation of character which is also compatible with seemingly diverse traditions and societies.

6.2.2 Compatible with School Education

I claim that this broader characterisation makes the notion of character more compatible with school education. This implies (a) that this characterisation is better suited than any other contemporary characterisation and (b) that there is something valuable in developing character in schools. This section discusses both points.

There are a variety of difficulties within contemporary character education, and chapter 1 and 2 addressed some of these points. I do not examine these shortcomings further, as there are a number of other thinkers who have already done so;[217] some, go as far as to say that the idea of character education should be discarded.[218] I have argued, in previous chapters, that these problems lie in misguided conceptions of character; namely, those that are indicative of morality in the narrow sense. On the other hand, the comprehensive characterisation that I have put forth is better suited than any other characterisation, because it is able to address shortcomings of other characterisations. There is one particular belief about character which has yet to be addressed, though it has been implied in various ways. This is discussed below.

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[217] For example, see, Hunter (2000), McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) and Kristjánsson (2007).
[218] See, Harman (2000), and Hunter (2000).

Recent explanations often accept that there is something within a person's character that is enduring; this quality is best understood in the sense of something which is persistent or lasting. Hence, there is an expectation of permanence of a person's character or the components of character. For this reason, the notion of character often evokes ideas about pattern or reliability. Because character has often been used interchangeably with character traits, or, a person's character is understood to be a particular set of behaviours, often it is assumed that character is a *pattern* of behaviours; or that to say of someone that they are reliable is to say that we can predict how this person will *act*. This so-called enduring nature of one's character prompts many to challenge the idea that there actually exists such a thing as character. For this reason in chapter 1 we were introduced to the situationist perspective, and cautioned over the problematic claim that there are enduring qualities of character.

Similarly, many opponents of character education today, clouded by the assumption that character merely represents predictable behaviour, are disillusioned when they do not see results of character education.[219] Hence, a significant shortcoming of contemporary perspectives on character is that they fail to provide an adequate explanation of the enduring nature of character. If character, as I suggest, is not merely a set of behaviours, then how does this alter the interpretation of enduring? I claim that it *is* possible for an individual's character to be enduring, and that this has interesting implications for school education.

The notion of enduring is more often than not linked to the reproduction of a particular behaviour over time. However, the sense of character which I have presented has alternative implications. To say that to have character is to have unity of thought, word and action, is to adjust the expectations placed on character. In other words, instead of assuming that a person must always behave in a particular way, now the assumption is that their behaviour must be in line with their thoughts and words. The enduring quality of character, it is often assumed, entails that behaviour is relatively entrenched, in that once we have secured particular habits, that it is difficult to free ourselves from these particular ways of being; in particular,

[219] See, Hunter (2000).

the older one gets, the more they are said to be stuck in their ways and unable to change. For example, if Mars has woken up early and gone for a run everyday for the last ten years, we could say that this pattern of behaviour has become a habit; it is, to some extent, ingrained. I am suggesting that it is not necessarily the case that habitual behaviour is embedded within a person, to the extent that once a person has secured a particular way of behaving, it is difficult to change this habit.

I claim that there is something faulty in this way of thinking. For, the idea of character I have outlined above suggests that if a person consistently has unity between their thoughts, words and actions, then they have strong character. To say that a person has 'strong character', in this sense, their habits aren't particular *behaviours*; rather, their habits consist in continuously ensuring that their thoughts, words and actions are in harmony with each other. Having strong character, (i.e. always having unity between thoughts, words and actions) becomes habitual: the master habit, perhaps. I am suggesting that if a person has strong character, then they are not necessarily bound to particular *behaviours*; it is not particular ways of behaving that are entrenched. Rather, it is the ability to have unity of thought, word and action, which is ingrained. What this means is that one's character (as it has been outlined in this chapter) is not classified by *behaviours*, but rather this unity mentioned above. In other words, it is not a pattern of behaviour that is *enduring*, but rather one's strength of character. Perhaps, for this reason, Peters (1981) says that when we say that X has character, we do not mean X has a string of pre-approved traits.

Incidents of people who have completely changed their behaviours, lifestyles and habits abound. For example, there are people who are able to break the habit of smoking, sometimes after many years of addiction; this is often portrayed as particularly difficult, not simply because of the habitual behaviour associated with smoking, but because of the chemical-dependency it entails. Yet, there are those who are still able to quit 'cold turkey'. Another example is a person, who at one time, weighed an excessive amount, and was able to shed the weight in a matter of months. In order to do so, that person had to break habitual eating and lifestyle patterns. We often say of these people (both the ex-smoker, and the weight-loss

marvel) that they are strong-willed; often their stories are considered to be rarities. However, even if these examples are exceptional, there is still recognition that people are able to break habitual cycles of behaviour (particularly, destructive ones), if they are strong. I claim that this requires *strength of character*. In other words, entrenched behaviours are not as rigid and permanent as may often be believed.

Interesting as these ideas might sound, one might ask how they relate to formal education. McLaughlin and Halstead (1999) observe that 'education in character...involves the development of some sorts of persons rather than others,' (p. 136). They recognise the difficulty that common schools in a liberal democratic society face, in choosing and justifying which qualities student's should have.[220] This chapter has introduced a broader characterisation of character. And so, the development of *character* (which I have identified as unity of thought, word and action) does not automatically entail the acquisition of any particular set of attributes.[221] Instead, character development is suggestive of the observation of one's own inner elements and the manifestation of those elements into action; the *education* of character consequently involves practice, or (as it was mentioned above) developing the *habit* of unity between one's thoughts, words and actions.

Aristotle (1925) rightly asserts "it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference," (p. 29). And so from this perspective, the development of character should be emphasised from an early age (in primary school), though it is something that should continue throughout a person's formal education.

Education of character (in the sense that I have introduced in this chapter), one might argue, seems simplistic. Perhaps it is simple in the sense that it is quite basic and foundational to other educational endeavours. It seems that having character is something that is perhaps given importance, but not explicitly acknowledged: it is

[220] These points were discussed in more detail in 2.2.
[221] Though, that is not to say that a person *cannot* develop specific virtues as a result of having character.

taken for granted. The expectation of moral educators and values educators is that a pupil will, to a certain extent, not just acquire particular beliefs, but also act upon those beliefs. In other words, these practices take for granted the importance of having character, without explicitly saying so. Looking at ongoing educational endeavours, it is difficult to imagine a programme of moral education or values education that would not champion the unity of thought, word and action. Having character is indispensable to living virtuously or abiding by values and principles. For this reason, the education of character is neither a type of, nor an approach to, moral or values education.[222] It is a foundation for such endeavours.[223]

So, it is not necessarily the case that values are the source of good character[224], but rather it is more plausible that character prompts the exercise of values. Though, there is certainly more work that can be done in this area of values and character.

In this chapter I have argued that character should be understood as unity of thought, word and action, and that such a characterisation is broader than contemporary notions of character, but also addresses shortcomings of other conceptions. The focus of this chapter has been to argue for a comprehensive characterisation of character. However, it may not be enough that this conception of character addresses the shortcomings of other perspectives. Some might wonder what the worth of developing even a comprehensive notion of character is. Do people need to have character to live in a liberal democratic society or to flourish? This is examined in the final two chapters. I examine the relevance of this comprehensive characterisation of character to two other prominent educational aims: autonomy and wellbeing.

[222] In chapter 1, it was noted that Arthur conceives of character education to be 'a specific approach to morals or values education, which is consistently linked with citizenship education,' (p. 239).
[223] That is, to the extent that these endeavours are concerned with the actualisation of a set of beliefs.
[224] See, Lickona, 1991, in Chapter 1.

Chapter 7: Character and the development of Autonomy

The previous chapter has outlined a broader conception of character. The impetus to demystify the notion of character has been to ultimately illustrate its role in school education. Though I have asserted that the development of character should be a central aim of school education[225], it is necessary to address *why character*. The previous chapter revealed that the development of strong character leads to the betterment of the person. Interestingly, in the introduction I identified that it is often assumed that education leads to the 'bettering' of individuals; and so I wrote, 'in other words, there is an implicit idea that this education enhances the life of persons involved.' School education exists to develop particular types of knowledge and underlying this endeavour are particular aims. The development of character is arguably of educational value, since it leads to the bettering of individuals (as argued in the previous chapter). In this chapter, I show that it is not merely that character is of *educational value*; it also complements another educational aim, which is often given prominence: autonomy. This chapter examines the relevance of the development of strong character to autonomy (as an educational aim).

7.1 Autonomy and Character

As it was noted in the introduction, within the field of philosophy of education, the concept of autonomy has been centrally featured. As there are numerous contributors to the field, there are also a variety of competing accounts of autonomy, with few overlapping similarities between these accounts, or so it seems.[226] For this reason, it is necessary to outline the parameters of this discussion, as it is not possible to examine all thinkers and conceptualisations in detail. For one, I *primarily* restrict myself to accounts given by philosophers of education. I also begin with some basic assumptions. The notion of autonomy is often linked to concepts such as freedom and independence. Bonnett and Cuypers (2003) explain that the ancient

[225] In doing so, I assume that aims are necessary and useful, (see, Introduction).
[226] See Hand's (2006) reference to Dworkin (1988) on p. 6.

Greeks used the notion to refer to an ideal city state, in the sense that it ought to be independent and self-governing. Thus the idea of autonomous *individuals* as independent and free-thinking stems from this original characterisation. The connection between freedom and autonomy, might suggest that a person is free to do as they please, as the notion of freedom is sometimes narrowly interpreted as non-interference by others; that is, the idea that a person can think or act without pressure from outside forces. And so, many conceptions of autonomous individuals, at a basic level, begin with an idea of a person who is self-directed.

The notion of self-directedness is easily discerned in contemporary discourse on autonomy. Hand (2006) refers to two senses of autonomy, calling them the 'ordinary' senses, which he feels embody everyday usage of the notion autonomy. The first sense of autonomy is described as 'circumstantial autonomy', as it is reflective of the external conditions which determine how free a person is to act; that is, the less rules imposed upon a person, the more autonomous they can be. To say that someone is autonomous, in this sense, therefore, is a 'political assertion rather than a psychological one,' (Hand, 2006, p. 537). While this first sense encompasses the idea that one is *allowed* to be self-directed, the second sense refers to one's *inclination* to be self-directed, (Hand, 2006, p. 537). Hand (2006) calls this second sense 'dispositional autonomy' and remarks that 'to possess this trait is to have a preference for relying on one's own judgment, to be independent-minded, free-spirited, disposed to do things one's own way,' (p. 537). Hand (2006) rightly observes that circumstantial autonomy does not qualify[227], particularly, as an aim of education, and moves on to examine whether dispositional autonomy *ought* to be an aim, ultimately arguing that it should not.

However, it seems that Hand (2006) is too quick to dismiss the significance of one's *ability* to be self-directed, claiming that this is merely a 'technical' sense of autonomy. However, one could argue that it's not enough to merely be *inclined* to act autonomously, but rather one should be *able* to act autonomously. There is an important distinction being made here. Let's say Chand moves away from home for

[227] Hand (2006) rejects this sense of autonomy as an educational aim, because he claims that educators can't change a person's 'circumstances', which are imposed externally.

her first year at University. Coming from a moderately orthodox family, she has not always been given the chance to make decisions on her own. So, for the first time in her 18 years of life she is exposed to different lifestyle choices, many of which are attractive to her. She welcomes the idea of making her own decisions, and is amenable to it. However, often she lacks the *ability* to follow through with this disposition, because she is used to a lifestyle where people have given consent to her decisions. She is used to a moderator. This is not merely a matter of being unsure about how to make decisions, it's also a matter of not having faith in one's own convictions, or not being able to evaluate which decisions are the right ones. Hand (2006) is too presumptuous with his claim that a person can just pick up the ability to be independent, (p. 541). What I'm claiming is that it's not just a matter of attitude, but also of aptitude.

I claim that a person can be self-directed in her thoughts or in her thoughts and actions. Though some may question the necessity of such a distinction, I show how it is significant to the development of character and autonomy. It seems that many proponents of autonomy would place emphasis on conduct, stressing that it is freedom of action, independent from the coercion or manipulation by others that is important. White (1999) confirms this point, explaining that individuals should be able to choose their major goals and not be bound by goals laid down by custom or authority, (p. 185). It is favourable for a person to be 'autonomous' in this sense because it is believed that it enables a person to choose a life that brings her happiness. The point to be made here is that when we are free to act and make decisions of our own accord, we are given the opportunity to choose our own good life. Hence, promoting autonomy is essentially enabling a person to choose a life and a way of living that is best for her. Brighouse (2000, 2006) agrees with the point that autonomy is vital to human flourishing.

The distinction above can be said to represent autonomy of thought and action, for it seems uncontroversial to say that a certain thought process is necessary to be self-directed in action. That is, in most situations, self-directed thinking goes hand-in-hand with and may be necessary for self-directed action. However, the opposite is not necessarily the case. That is, a person might be self-directed in his thoughts but

not in his actions. Haydon (1983) considers autonomy to be 'some set of qualities of mind and character which persons can in principle have despite external constraints on their action,' (p. 220). He says that this is distinct from 'freedom of action' in which a person is free to choose what they want to do, which he calls 'self-determination'. He gives the example of a slave as being autonomous to the extent that he is in control of his own emotions and attitudes; though, Haydon (1983) acknowledges the slave's autonomy is very much constrained because he is not fully in control of his own life, (p. 220). This example is illustrative of Hand's (2006) sense of 'circumstantial autonomy' in which a person is restricted by external forces (such as the State).

However, there exists another type of person; one who might be self-directed in his thoughts, but who fails to act (for reasons of his own). This person is not restricted by external forces such as the slave in the example above, but is restricted by his own internal forces. He may not have the *ability* to act, or the *disposition* to do so. Such a person has *weak character.* Whatever the reason may be, he has a certain set of convictions which he is unable to put into practice. He does not have unity between his thoughts and actions. The stronger one's character is, the more likely he is to behave according to his convictions. Hence, to a certain extent, the stronger one's character, the more likely he is to have autonomy (in the sense of being self-directed in thought and action). The previous chapter argued that a person with strength of character has unity between his thoughts, words and actions. This person is more likely to be autonomous in the sense that he is more likely to act upon his convictions.

To reiterate, personal autonomy, as it has been identified above, entails that a person is 'self-directed' in that she is free to do and/or think things of her own choosing. Whether this is independence of thought, or thought & action is not a major concern at this point. Of importance are the notions of self-directedness and independence in relation to personal autonomy. One might claim that just because a person has strength of character, does not *necessarily* mean that such a person is self-directed in his thoughts, words and actions. For example, such a person, someone might claim, may not freely choose their beliefs and convictions, and so

even if they act upon their thoughts, that does not necessarily mean they are autonomous (in the sense of being *self-directed*). But what exactly does it mean to be self-directed or to have independence of thought, or to be free to act as one's chooses? Though I do not examine this question in depth, as doing so is beyond the scope of this investigation, I nonetheless briefly consider this point.

Looking back at the accounts of autonomy presented above, it seems that self-directedness refers to non-interference by other people, groups and so forth. Hence, White (1999) talks about the importance of being free from the coercion of others, (p. 185). Imagine the following scenario. Mars and Chand both have to decide what university to attend. Mars is given the opportunity, by his parents, to choose any school that he gets admission to, whereas Chand is told by her parents that she can only attend Columbia or Cambridge. Mars is free from the interference of his parents, whereas Chand is not. At first glance then, it appears that Mars has more autonomy than Chand, where personal autonomy is interpreted as independence of one's thoughts and action.

However what if we are told that Mars is inclined to choose the school which has the best party scene. Whereas, Chand fundamentally knows (regardless of what her parents say) that she would be happiest at either Cambridge or Columbia. Mars does not actually know where he wants to study, so he is willing to choose a school at random, or follow his friends. One could claim that at least Mars still has the opportunity to freely choose, even if his choice is based on an irrational whim; he is self-directed in the sense that he is given the opportunity to be free from outside influences.

On the surface, it seems that Mars is more autonomous than Chand because he is free from external interference. However, what about the suggestion that there is also an element of 'internal' interference that one must avoid? Just as a person can be tempted by the convincing arguments of a friend, in the same way, he can be persuaded by his own desires, appetites, and so forth. Kant suggests that an autonomous person is one who is driven by their own reason, rather than their passing inclinations, (Bonnet and Cuypers, 2003, p. 327). The suggestion being

made here is that it is not enough for a person to be left on his own to make decisions; he must also be able to use elements of his mind in a particular fashion, in order to arrive at the decision. Hand (2006) explains Kant's position:

> since we do not choose our desires and preferences, but have them bestowed upon us by nature and nurture, submission to their governance is no less heteronomous than submission to the governance of other people. A person is only truly autonomous when her decisions are not affected by what she wants or likes or cares about, but are determined by pure practical reason alone, (p. 541).

Hand (2006) considers this to be a more extreme view of autonomy, and is critical of Kant's claim that there is a 'pure' form of practical reason (p. 541-544).[228] However, both the ancient Greeks and Indians purported that human flourishing was largely influenced by certain internal factors; not only did they maintain that there is an appetitive faculty which is separate from the rational faculty, they revealed how one's ability to control the appetitive elements that are part of his constitution is of substantial significance to his wellbeing.[229] Hence, they argued that a person's actions should not be led by her passing inclinations.[230]

One need not necessarily be settled on the view that there is a 'pure' form of practical reason, in order to examine whether or not a person *ought* to be primarily led by her appetites. Of importance is whether one who is led by her appetites, should still be considered self-directed in her behaviour? The ancient Greeks and Indians would have most certainly said no. Another point is that though we may not *necessarily* choose our desires and preferences, that is not to say that we cannot choose which desires and preferences to *act* upon. For this reason, Aristotle says action that is line with *logos* is that which leads to a flourishing life, because he acknowledged the importance of this internal factor to our external behaviour. Hence there are interesting and important questions regarding the particularities of what 'independence' entails (is it merely freedom from the influence of outside factors?).

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[228] One might liken Kant's account of pure practical reason to that of the ancient Indian concept of *sattva*, though this point is not examined in this thesis.
[229] See, Chapters 3,4 and 5.
[230] Plato (1993) writes, 'people must be prevented from feeding their baser parts too often,' (p. xxxviii); see, chapter 5.

A person is autonomous when she is able and willing to be self-directed in her thoughts and actions. Leaving aside the fact that what it means to be self-directed is not straightforward, I maintain my earlier assertion that, a person who has strong character, is at least, *predisposed* to have autonomy, in the sense that such a person is more likely to live according to her convictions. That is, it is taken for granted that a person with strong character is both able and willing to act according to her thoughts and convictions. And so, such a person has the disposition to be autonomous.

This first section has outlined some assumptions and basic perceptions related to the notion of autonomy. In the process, I have raised some concerns and limitations of these perspectives. Of significance, I have claimed that having strong character predisposes a person to being autonomous, in the sense that it has been introduced in this chapter. And so, if autonomy is an aim of education, then the development of character is a worthy contender as an educational aim. This is examined below.

7.2 Autonomy as an educational aim?

It is not enough for one to understand and value autonomy, many philosophers of education call for the promotion of autonomy as an educational aim; some go as far as citing it as the most fundamental aim and one which should underpin educational policy.[231] It is evident from the excursion above that the notion of personal autonomy varies, and so, the educational implications of this concept also vary. For one, depending on how autonomy is understood (is it self-directedness of thoughts, or of thoughts *and* behaviour?), this could have an influence on what the educational focus might be (is it to provide pupils with a variety of lifestyle options or to be independent thinkers?). Secondly, the fact that people need to be self-directed, but that what exactly this entails is ambiguous, is a point worthy of concern. An implication of 'non-interference' is to teach students to be critical: critical of others but perhaps critical of themselves, as well. Is 'critical thinking', then, a natural

[231] 'The first fundamental value that should guide the design of educational policy is the ideal that all children should have realistic opportunity to become autonomous adults,' (Brighouse, 2006, p. 65).

consequence of the promotion of personal autonomy as an educational ideal?[232] Any conception of autonomy as an educational aim would need to address these issues.

Brighouse (2006) asserts that autonomy *enables* people to lead flourishing lives, (p. 15). He explains that an element of flourishing lives is that they contain 'objectively valuable goods', (p. 16). Brighouse (2006) seems to be suggesting that schools offer their students a diversity of goods. That is, in order to make 'well-informed' and 'well-thought out judgements', as Brighouse (2006) calls them, we need a wide range of alternatives to choose from, (p. 14). Hence, he seems to be suggesting that in order for an education to nurture an individual's autonomy, it needs to offer a range of subjects representing a variety of values, in order to truly maximise choice. However, if we are aiming at *autonomy*, and this can be understood as our ability (and inclination) to make judgments and decisions, it is unclear why Brighouse (2006) thinks that introducing students to a range of choices enables them to do so; being introduced to a range of goods would most certainly enhance their wellbeing, but not necessarily their autonomy. Providing pupils with a range of valuable goods *might* enhance their autonomy *if* they took the time to learn about and understand each and every option they are presented with, and weigh their options thus.

It seems that Brighouse (2006) assumes that there is a positive correlation between the number of choices we have, and our autonomy. However, this seems to be a misguided assumption. Bonnett (1976) rightly argues that we do not necessarily need a range of options in order to be autonomous;

> Autonomy requires only that one rationally chooses for oneself between the options as they are believed to be. That is to say that in this respect, autonomy involves rationality, but not necessarily knowledge, (Bonnett, 1976, pp. 110-111).

Accordingly, autonomy only requires that we freely choose, not that we have a plethora of choice. This can be illustrated in the following example: Chand and Mars are on a mission to find the best birthday present for their respective daughters. Chand goes into one small shop that has only two options, whereas Mars goes to a megastore that has dozens of options to choose from. Would Brighouse (2006)

[232] Though, critical thinking as an educational aim won't be examined in detail in this thesis, as I assume that critical thinking plays a role in the development of autonomy, (see, Winch, 2006, p. xi).

claim that Mars has the option to be more autonomous than Chand because he (Mars) has more items to choose from? Perhaps, one could say, with slightly more certainty, that Mars' wellbeing is enhanced, because he is given more choice, and so he is more likely to flourish.[233] However, by quantifying the goods, Brighouse (2006) misses the point that an important facet to autonomous behaviour is one's *ability* to choose and not necessarily with the choice itself.

Imagine the same scenario above. Mars and Chand both walk into their respective stores. Mars is thrilled by all the options he has to choose from, but is unable to make a decision, whereas Chand easily decides between the minimal options she has. Bonnett (1976) argues that even if we had a range of choices to choose from, it does not mean we know which choice is appropriate for which situation. In this way, providing a person with too many choices could be a hindrance. The basic point being made is that, an individual's autonomy has to do with her *ability* to choose, and not with the particular choices.

Autonomy, to a certain extent is being self-directed in one's thought and actions. Often emphasis is placed on the idea that an autonomous person is free to choose his own goals, values, pursuits: in short, such a person is able to choose his own good life for himself. However, as it was already noted, being self-directed is not a straightforward concept. What does it mean to be free from influence?[234] Is it the influence of others, or also the influences of one's own appetites, desires, destructive thoughts, and so forth?

Although White rightly (1999) argues that we should not be pressured into accepting the values that are laid out in front of us, he assumes that pressure is merely reflective of outside influence, without exploring the possibility that one

[233] The idea of human flourishing as an educational aim is further explored in chapter 8.
[234] Mackenzie (2007) cites how Communitarian thinkers such as MacIntyre (1991) and Sandel (1982) argue that nobody can make decisions that are wholly isolated and independent of the influence of others; the decisions we make are reflective of larger social settings (the community/society we live in).

might also be burdened by their own thoughts. Though this is an interesting line of thought, I do not pursue it further at this juncture. It is important to acknowledge that the notion of self-directedness is vague, and that perhaps serious attention needs to be given to the consideration of freedom from internal thoughts, appetites, desires, before one can assert that this ought to be an aim of education. Such an investigation would also benefit from an examination into ancient Indian and Greek philosophy, which shed much light on this current discussion.

Interestingly, Hand (2006) rejects his 'dispositional' sense of autonomy on the grounds that it is not always the case that we are the best decision-makers for our own actions, (p. 538). In other words, he questions why we should rely on our own judgment, when such judgment may not be the 'best' thing for us to do? He gives the example of asking someone for directions, or a medical patient asking a doctor for advice, (p. 538). In these situations, it may be better to rely on others. However, what Hand (2006) seems to overlook is that even if we seek the counsel of other people, at the end of the day, we choose whether or not we want to utilise or dispose of such advice. In this way, it is still our own autonomy that prompts us to act. For example, I may consult the doctor about an ailment, but to a certain extent, it is my choice whether or not I want to take the medication she has prescribed, or seek further advice; ultimately, my decision is based on my own judgment about what to do in that particular situation. And so, whether a person decides to rely on her own judgement, or whether she seeks the advice of another, is still an autonomous act.

In this thesis, I have maintained that the development of character ought to be a central aim of school education. The previous chapter shed light on the notion of character as well as revealing why strength of character should be developed in schools. Philosophers of education have often advocated for the development of autonomy as a central aim of school education. And so, this chapter has briefly studied the notion of autonomy, explaining important facets of the concept, as it is understood by various philosophers of education. This brief excursion reveals that that which is understood as 'autonomy' (just like the notion of character) widely varies, and so the implications for 'autonomy' as an educational aim might also vary. Nonetheless, I claim that there are particular components of autonomy that relate to

character, and that to a certain extent, the development of character could enhance one's autonomy.

What is important to this thesis is that there is another important factor to being autonomous: not only that one is free, but that one is *able* to exert one's thoughts (convictions, deliberations, beliefs). Surely, a function of autonomy as an educational aim is not just to get people to be strong, independent thinkers, but to exercise their beliefs: to *act*. The previous chapter argued that a person with strong character often has unity of thought, word and action. Such a person, I claim, is more likely to be autonomous.

This chapter has briefly examined the notion of autonomy, and looked at its value as an educational aim. This thesis does not challenge the assumption that autonomy ought to be promoted as an aim of education. I concur that the development of autonomous individuals has a rightful place in schools (though what exactly this entails is not always straightforward). What I have revealed in this chapter, is that if Brighouse[235] (2000) is right to say that '... autonomy is important enough to justify a requirement that all children be subject to an education designed to facilitate it,' then such an education should place the development of character at the forefront, (p. 15). For it seems that the development of strong character can certainly enhance one's autonomy, and at the very minimum, it is *compatible* with autonomy as an educational aim.[236] This chapter has also recognised that the development of autonomy is often seen as a component of human flourishing. White (1999) claims, 'Personal autonomy is a central liberal value. It rests on an even more fundamental value in human life- personal well-being,' (p. 193). If this is the case, then what is meant by 'wellbeing', and how might the notion of character (as I have characterised it) relate to it? The final chapter evaluates in detail the claim that wellbeing ought to be a central aim of education, and argues for the merit of the development of character in schools.

[235] And arguably, many other thinkers who make similar assertions about the place of autonomy in the aims of education.
[236] Though, I am not trying to suggest that the development of character necessarily relates to every single sense of autonomy envisaged, as such a claim cannot be substantiated in this thesis.

Chapter 8: Wellbeing, Character and the central aims of education

In this chapter, I particularly focus on the suggestion that wellbeing be a central aim of education. I begin this chapter with two questions: if a basic concern of school education is to bring forth the wellbeing of pupils what exactly does this entail; is preparation for human flourishing something that schools, in particular, are able to assist in? The first and second sections of this chapter particularly draw from the works of Joseph Raz as well as John White, whose ideas are most relevant to the discussion of wellbeing in the context of school education. After outlining their conceptions of wellbeing, I examine the implications of White's (2007b) claim that wellbeing ought to be a central aim of education. I claim that wellbeing (according to the concept illustrated by Raz and White) is not something which schools can necessarily contribute to. The next section of this chapter argues that wellbeing is connected to a person's character, and that if schools are interested in promoting the wellbeing of pupils, they should focus on developing the pupils character. In the final section of this chapter, I look at the relationship between the notion of luck in relation to human flourishing and the development of character.

8.1 Conceptualising Wellbeing

John White (2007a, 2007b) has advocated for educators to recognise the relevance of *wellbeing* in school education, which has, for the most part, lead to widespread acceptance by policymakers. In *The Review of the National Curriculum in England*, a rationale for school curriculum suggested that 'Foremost is a belief in education as a route to: the wellbeing and development of the individual...Education should reflect the enduring values that contribute to these ends,' (QCA, 1999, p. 4). In its final form as *The National Curriculum: Handbook for Primary Teachers in England*, wellbeing was given a similar status, only this time it was coupled with the 'spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development' of the individual (QCA, 1999, p. 10). Most recently, the new secondary curriculum has introduced a non-statutory programme of study for personal wellbeing, and has also explicitly acknowledged a

focus on an aims-led curriculum, (QCA 2007a and 2007b). It seems evident that the educational discourse on wellbeing is on the rise, as educational aims are increasingly recognised as a foundation for curriculum design and development (rather than a trusty sidekick).

White (2007b) maintains that schools should consider the 'master aim' to be helping young people to lead fulfilling lives, an aim which he stresses has to do with the pupils wellbeing. In an effort to get to grips with White's (2007b) claim, this section examines what is meant by 'wellbeing', and examines the extent to which it ought to be considered as the central aim of school education. The concept of wellbeing is very much connected to the idea of human flourishing. That is, one's wellbeing may be understood in terms of one's ability to lead a fulfilling life. In this sense, 'personal fulfilment', 'human flourishing' and 'wellbeing' may be used interchangeably.

Due to the explicit inclusion of wellbeing as chief among educational concerns, White (2007a) has rightly asserted 'the idea that education should equip pupils to lead flourishing lives and also help others to do so is, not surprisingly, very much to the fore,' (p. 17).[237] And he appropriately identifies philosophy of education as a discipline that can shed light on what a flourishing life consists in (see, White 2007a and 2002). Again, I do not get into analysing various accounts on the nature of wellbeing, such as the subjective account, the idea of informed-desire fulfilment, or the naturalist view, all of which White (2007a and 2002) rejects. For the purposes of this thesis I focus on his alternative suggestion, which is allegedly a 'reasonable replacement' (see, White 2007a); however, prior to this I examine the ideas of Raz (1986, 1994) whose work has influenced White's (2002, 2007a, 2007b) thinking in this area.

Joseph Raz (1994) characterises wellbeing to consist in the '(1) wholehearted and (2) successful pursuit of (3) valuable (4) activities,' (p. 3). He first illustrates the concept in his *Morality of Freedom*, where he says that a person's wellbeing is an evaluation of how good or successful her life is (from her point of view), (Raz, 1986, p. 289). This evaluation, he claims is dependent upon one's goals, which is a broad

[237] Similar statements are made in White (2007b) and White (2002).

term covering a person's projects, relationships, commitments, long-term objectives, and so forth. He explains 'in these initial clarifications 'goals' is used so broadly that if a person wants something then it is his goal to get it,' (Raz, 1986, p. 291). Our wellbeing is judged by our goals in the sense that if I have particular goals which are not met, then I am worse-off than if these goals were met. This seems to suggest that wellbeing is highly individualistic. If I enjoy living near the ocean, and I spend my entire adult life living on the coast then I am well-off to the degree that I have fulfilled one of my goals. However, this does not mean that my relatives who live in a large city, hundreds of miles from the ocean are necessarily worse-off, especially if they have no interest in living near the ocean. In this way, it seems that our wellbeing cannot be defined by the goals and values of another. However, in a characterisation of wellbeing that Raz (1994) later puts forth, he suggests that a person must successfully pursue 'valuable activities':

> Only valuable activities contribute to our wellbeing. A life is not a good life for being spent in petty vindictive pursuits, or in self-debasing ones, etc. These make a lousy, despicable, pitiable life-not a good one, (Raz, 1994, p. 4).

Hence, embedded in his conception of wellbeing is the idea that there are certain activities which are good or better than others and a person's wellbeing consists in successfully pursuing these.

Acknowledging the influence of Raz (1986, 1994), White (2007a) characterises a fulfilling life as one that is 'largely filled with successful and wholehearted engagement in intrinsically worthwhile activities, where these are not relative to individual preferences,' (p. 18).[238] He suggests that the components of personal flourishing (worthwhile activities) can be derived from certain traditions and understood as products of a culture. He cites examples of aesthetic values such as an appreciation for jazz music, features of a good novel, film choice, all as cultural goods. Over the last few centuries, these values have had an impact on what is considered to be 'worthwhile' pursuits (listening to certain genres of music, reading or writing certain types of literature and so forth). Other examples of worthwhile

[238] White's (2007a) reference to intrinsically worthwhile activities seems similar to the ideas of Raz (1986, 1994) on valuable activities, in the sense that there are particular activities that are 'better' (though, the two use 'worthwhile' and 'valuable' respectively) than others (although the extent to which Raz is convinced by this is unclear, as identified above).

activities can be found in vocations, relationships, scholarly achievements, and so forth. White (2007a) emphasises the point that these activities 'lie outside us as individuals,' and that they are 'virtually all, if not all, cultural products,' (p. 21).

According to White (2007a), a fulfilled life is one in which a person successfully engages in worthwhile activities and relationships where those activities are almost always derived from external sources. Even if this is the case, it does not automatically mean that personal flourishing is a by-product of one's culture; there is still the element of 'successful' pursuit of the activity. Earlier it was mentioned that Raz (1986) emphasises that wellbeing is a term used to evaluate the success of a person's life, and that 'success and failure in the pursuit of our goals is itself the major determinant of our well-being,' (p. 297). What then does 'success' entail?

Oddly enough, though the notion of success is given much weight, it is not clearly spelled out by Raz (1994). He repeatedly makes the point that failure reduces and success strengthens one's wellbeing, but it is not entirely clear what 'success' consists in. At the outset he offers the following example:

> A promising academic may find that a budgetary crisis in the universities forces him out of his chosen career, a blow to his life from which, depending on age and circumstances, it may be impossible for him to recover, (Raz, 1994, p. 5).

At this point, due to a lack of discussion around this important issue, it seems that Raz (1994) suggests that success can be altered by matters that the agent has little to no control over: matters of luck.

Similarly, in his IMPACT publication, White (2007b) associates a successful life with a flourishing life; he partially modifies his earlier characterisation of a flourishing life, adding that this sort of life entails that an individual have 'success in worthwhile activities and relationships which they have freely engaged in and which they pursue wholeheartedly,' (White, 2007b, p. 32). He then goes on to illustrate this idea by offering examples of successful lives. In each hypothetical situation he compares two individuals who have similar backgrounds, interests and lifestyles. However, one person in each situation encounters some external challenges that inhibit his/her ability to go along with their normal routine. The person who is unable to

avoid hardships (due to bad luck or incompetence) is considered as having a less successful life than the person who able to bypass difficulties. Success, in this sense, it seems is judged by external indicators.

Thus, at first glance, it appears that both White (2007b) and Raz (1994) consider success to be dependent upon luck. Nevertheless, White (2007b) explains that 'The English School Curriculum aims at helping every young person to live a fulfilling life and to help others to do so,' where fulfilment is understood as success in worthwhile activities (p. 24). Accordingly, he claims that it is the role of schools to acquaint pupils with various components of a flourishing life (worthwhile activities) and to encourage reflection on these. However, is this concept of wellbeing something which schools ought to be concerned with?

8.2 Wellbeing and Schooling

There are attractive elements to White's (2007b) argument, which rightly accentuates the point that the wellbeing of pupils is of educational significance. Wellbeing as connected to one's ability to lead a flourishing life seems to be accurate. However, the characterisation of wellbeing is not unproblematic. Although White's (2007b) account of a fulfilling life as characterised by wholehearted pursuit of and success in worthwhile activities (where many of these activities are cultural products) and relationships seems straightforward, there is a problem with his account of what success in an activity entails. Because of this major shortcoming, I suggest that there is a limited extent to which schools can promote this sense of wellbeing.[239]

To begin with, it seems fair to say that White's account above, as suggested earlier, appears to indicate that success is influenced by luck. Looking at the example he cites, of two men who have comparable lifestyles, interests and relationships, one man is struck by a series of misfortunes, causing these various components of his life

[239] Unless otherwise noted, this section is largely a critique of White's (2007b) claim that wellbeing ought to be a central aim of education. In particular then, I am critical of his conception of wellbeing. Of course, his ideas are very much influenced by Joseph Raz (1986, 1994) and so, where necessary the ideas of Raz are considered.

to fall apart, whereas the other man 'does all these things well' (White, 2007b, p. 33). The latter, he says, has had a more fulfilling life. Although White (2007b) does not explicitly define what he means by 'success', from the examples he cites (such as the one outlined above), it can be deduced that he identifies success in terms of how smoothly an individual's life turns out, taking into account uncontrollable or natural circumstances; in particular his examples seem to suggest that bad luck undermines whether or not a person flourishes. These occurrences are what are identified as external factors, and largely determine a person's ability to lead a fulfilling life. But this version of success is surprising. For one, this account is unexpected because if success in worthwhile activities can be undermined by misfortune, as White seems to suggest, then schools can do very little to secure this. If schools aim at helping students to live a fulfilling life, where such a life is identified as success at worthwhile activities, then it is improbable that a school will be able to fulfil this. They may be able to open up various channels by introducing students to a range of worthwhile activities (which White rightly suggests), but they cannot guarantee that a student will succeed in these activities. Also, schools may provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and reflect on these various wellbeing goods, they may equip students with knowledge and understanding of how to make choices, but none of these efforts will guarantee success so long as success is mostly determined by external factors.

It is interesting to note that Raz (1994) *does* acknowledge the element of luck in wellbeing, but regards it as both an inevitable aspect and one that can have a meaningful effect on a person's life. Raz (1994) endorses the view that both success and failure are the fault of the individual, and so it seems that he does not consider success to be determined by luck. Rather, he suggests that if all people have certain 'basic capacities', then they are better equipped to pursue their activities. Thus he claims that,

> we should help everyone to acquire the (nearly) universal capacities, i.e. those necessary for all or almost all valuable pursuits. These include the basic physical and mental abilities of controlled movement and, where disability deprives one of them, appropriate substitutes. They also include the mental abilities to form, pursue, and judge goals and relationships, (Raz, 1994, p. 17).

His point seems to be that if we are equipped with these capacities, then our success and failure in a particular activity is not necessarily damaged by luck.

However, this does not appear to be the point that White (2007b) is trying to make. Referring back to his example of the two men, if we imagine that these two men were given a similar education and introduced to the same wellbeing goods, there is very little in their education that could equip them to succeed. Does it matter whether we introduce pupils to a range of choices about worthwhile activities, when their flourishing *actually* depends on this sort of success? Probably not.

This version of success is also alarming because a successful life should not largely be defined by the ups and downs one experiences, but by the way that one *reacts* to these ups and downs. In other words, a person may be disease-laden, and penniless, but may have a considerably successful life because of the way she responds to her circumstances. She is not a product of her fleeting situations, but of her deepest convictions and values.[240]

If we imagine two young girls, avidly interested in art from a young age and who are introduced to various components of the subject. Because of their preparation in school, they study art history in university, excel academically and become owners of their own art galleries. After some years both of the ladies are involved in an accident where they both lose their eyesight. One of the ladies falls into depression, and is unable to cope with this loss, as she is no longer able to engage in one of the activities she loves (viewing art). The other lady decides to overcome this situation by becoming a lecturer in art history at a local college. It seems appropriate to say that the second lady has had a more flourishing life; however, there is not very much in her school education that assisted in this. Although she was introduced to various components of her field, and most likely had an opportunity to learn about, discuss, understand and reflect upon these things, this process did not enable her to fully

[240]Raz (1994) would probably insist that it is the capacities which determine whether or not a person thrives.

lead a flourishing life. It was certain internal factors that allowed her to sustain her own wellbeing.[241]

Some may contend that the assessments above are exaggerated and optimistic. The ideas presented above may be an overstatement of White's (2007b) argument, because surely he cannot exclude internal factors from having an influence on successful pursuit of worthwhile activities. Particularly, since his ideas are influenced by Raz (1986, 1994), who appears to have a broader notion of success. Because White (2007b) does not explicitly spell out what he means by success, his examples are obviously open to interpretation. However, his examples clearly indicate a tendency to associate success with *occurrences* (both positive and negative). I am suggesting that schools can do very little to promote the pupils flourishing if understood in this manner; they cannot ensure the successful pursuit of an activity. However, there may be some useful implications from the illustration of the two art students above. That is, if we determine a flourishing life *not* based on the occurrence (external factors) that has taken place but rather by one's response (based on internal factors), then there are more implications for school education. Success in an activity does not seem to be as appropriate an indication of wellbeing as the manner or attitude with which an activity is pursued- particularly where school education is concerned.

Perhaps, then, what is necessary is a broader notion of what counts as success in an activity. To sharply distinguish between internal and external factors is deceiving; it suggests that they exist independently of one another. This is not necessarily the case. Let's say I am keen to meet my favourite musician and decide to wait in front of her recording studio until I see her. When the day finally arrives, one could say that I have successfully pursued this activity, and hence enhanced my wellbeing. However, the extent to which I was lucky or it was my persistent attitude which secured my success is blurred. It seems that there is too much emphasis placed on the notion of success to the extent that White (2007b) uses the notion of successful life and flourishing life interchangeably. However, this is misleading, since the

[241] At this stage 'internal factors' is used to broadly refer to attitudes, beliefs, habits and values that an individual has; it largely refers to those personal qualities and preferences that are, to a certain extent, of one's own choosing.

notion of success remains vague. What's more, the idea of human flourishing is often attributed to the ancient Greeks, yet their conception of flourishing was certainly not based on the tides and turns of luck.[242] Thus, perhaps it is not the case that the notion of success needs to be reconceptualised, but rather that successful life should not be used interchangeably with flourishing life, as to do so is misleading. It seems that a lot of the conceptual difficulties with White's account rest on this emphasis placed on success.

White (2007b) perhaps comes close to this idea when he endorses Raz's (1994) suggestion that activities need to be pursued 'wholeheartedly'.[243] Prior to this point, this chapter has largely side-stepped this notion (particularly in the discussion of success above). Nonetheless, it should be made clear that wellbeing not only consists in the successful pursuit of an activity, but also in the *wholehearted* pursuit. Raz (1994) explains 'many activities require certain attitudes, commitment, pure motives, etc, for successful engagement in them,' (p. 5). Thus, this notion of wholeheartedness is clearly linked to the internal factors mentioned above, as well as to the successful pursuit of an activity, yet it is not given a great deal of attention in White's (2007b) account of wellbeing.[244] The final section of this chapter looks at the implications of these considerations.

8.3 Wholeheartedness, Wellbeing and Character

This section, gives more attention to the notion of wholeheartedness; I not only pursue some lingering question related to the notion of wholeheartedness, but also examine the relationship between the concepts of character and wellbeing. It should be made clear from the outset that I claim that there is a connection between these two concepts (wellbeing and character) that remains, for the most part, unexplored by both White (2007b) and Raz (1986). Therefore, in this section I make this relationship evident before moving on to the final section.

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[242] This is examined below.
[243] Although success and wholeheartedness are seen as two separate components of the pursuit of an activity, I am suggesting that perhaps an element of success could include wholeheartedness. This suggestion is left unexplored here.
[244] White (2007b) dedicates a few sentences to his discussion of wholeheartedness

The claim that character and wellbeing are connected is not an unusual one. At the outset of his work, Raz (1994) acknowledges this connection when he hurriedly says 'how good or successful we are depends on who we are (character) and what sort of life we have (well-being),' (p. 3).[245] In this way, he identifies wellbeing and character as two separate components. He does not come back to this point until the very end of the chapter, where he very briefly puts forth the idea that a successful life can be related to character. In fact, he suggests that continuous failure in a particular activity can be character-forming, and in this way, can result in success. Not only does he suggests that failure builds character, but he also considers the reverse (i.e. that character might influence whether something ends up being a success or a failure): 'Our character has a great influence on the course of our life, especially those aspects which determine its success,' (Raz, 1994, p. 25). Raz (1994) also recognises the conceptual connections between the two (i.e. (a) our character and (b) the type of life we lead), but at the same time maintains that they are relatively independent, (see, p. 25). However, even in his very brief treatment of character, it seems he has neglected to recognise that character might not merely be connected to wellbeing, but that one's character could possibly contribute to our wellbeing as well.

Wellbeing, according to both Raz (1994) and White (2007b) results from the successful and wholehearted pursuit of an activity. Though the previous section identified the complexities related to the notion of success, the idea of wholeheartedness was only briefly introduced. If we are to accept Raz's (1994) brief account of this concept, then wholeheartedness can be understood as the *manner* in which we engage in an activity (see, p. 6). Wholehearted pursuit of an activity is characterised by (but not limited to) the absence of certain negative attitudes (such as self-doubt, resentment, self-hate). In other words, a person is acting wholeheartedly when he (a) is in control[246] of the way in which he pursues an activity and (b) does not fall prey to particular debilitating thoughts and attitudes.

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[245] At this point, I want to acknowledge that there are complexities involved in his use of 'good' as synonymous with 'successful', but I do not get into these right now.

[246] One might question the extent to which 'control' might be inimical to wholeheartedness; that is, they might argue that it's necessary to relinquish control and 'go with the flow' at times. However, 'control' in

There are two observations that I want to make from the description of wholeheartedness above. First, being that the concept is a component of wellbeing, it seems that it ought to be given more consideration with relation to its implications for school education. That is, those concerned with contributing to the wellbeing of pupils should give more attention to this notion. Secondly, it seems that wholeheartedness, as identified by Raz (1994) above, is a particular disposition that can be attributed to a person's character[247]. However, it seems appropriate to consider Raz's (1994) account of character, where he explains that it consists in (to a certain extent) a person's abilities and dispositions, (see, p. 25). Does Raz (1994) mean to say that wholeheartedness is one such disposition of character?

It has already been mentioned that the link between character and wellbeing is one which Raz acknowledges (1994) albeit, briefly. In his *Ethics and the Public Domain*, he notes that they are the most basic and interconnected dimensions of a person's life; however, he later claims that these are two separate elements of the good life. I am suggesting that the latter assertion is wrong. Yet another point about the interconnectedness of character and wellbeing is revealed in an earlier statement that Raz (1994) makes, where he says that a good life is not one spent in self-debasing activity.[248] In chapter 6, I argued that the stronger our character, the less we are likely to entertain negative qualities thoughts, word and actions (therefore, the less we will partake in self-debasing activities). Hence the stronger one's character, the more likely they are to develop wellbeing, in this sense that Raz has illustrated. In this way, one's character and his wellbeing are not separate elements of the good life; one's wellbeing is dependent on having strong character.

The notion of wholeheartedness is very much tied to the characterisation of character that I put forth in chapter 6. Specifically, in section 6.1.2 I illustrate how

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this sense that it is used here refers to the *power* to choose how to act (i.e. such a person isn't coerced by another), as opposed to another sense of control which suggests the exercise of restraint over oneself. That is to say that a person can act wholeheartedly in this sense, and still 'go with the flow'.

[247] That is, according to Raz's (1994) account of character, where he explains that it consists in (to a certain extent) a person's abilities and dispositions, (see, p. 25). Though I do not conceive of character particularly as such, one could argue that unity of thought, word and action is an 'ability', and therefore, to a certain extent compatible with Raz's (1994) account.

[248] See, section 8.1

strength of character engenders wholeheartedness, where wholeheartedness is akin to integrity. That is, by having unity of thought, word and action on a consistent basis, one is 'wholehearted' to the extent that their entire being is aligned with their activity. It seems safe to assume that this quality is most certainly necessary for a person to flourish. Hence, if wellbeing is determined in part by the wholehearted pursuit of an activity, and wholeheartedness is a by-product of strong character, then it is clear that a person's wellbeing is not only connected to character, but it is also, to a certain extent, *determined by* one's character.

The wellbeing of pupils is a central concern for school education, and for this reason White (2007b) identifies the school's responsibility of helping them to live fulfilling lives as the 'master aim'. It seems reasonable to say that schooling is considerably linked to the wellbeing of pupils; it is unlikely that educators would claim to be interested in the degeneration of pupils. However, in order for *schools* to enhance the personal flourishing of young people, they should not necessarily be concerned with introducing a range of worthwhile activities; rather they need to recognise the importance of developing wholeheartedness. In other words, a prerequisite to personal fulfilment is the development of an individual's character. And so, if foremost is the belief that school education is a route to the wellbeing of the individual, then a central aim of education ought to be acknowledged as the development of character.

This chapter reveals that there may be more that school education can do to enhance a pupil's wellbeing if it focuses on the development of character. I am suggesting that a flourishing life (and an individual's wellbeing) is dependent upon one's character and not primarily on external factors (as White, 2007b, seems to suggest).

8.4 Human Flourishing and Luck

This thesis has endeavoured to show why the development of character ought to be a central aim of school education. An important aspect of the development of character is that it is not primarily based on factors outside of a person: it has to do

with an individual's own effort to create his own world, rather than be a product of his circumstances. In this way each individual person is responsible for their own flourishing. Hence, the characterisation of character that I have put forth is of something that a person has control[249] over; specifically, I claim that the development of character diminishes the importance of luck. What's more, I reveal that one's flourishing should not be dependent upon luck. In order to do so, I trace back to an Aristotelian perspective.

There is a significant point to be made from the discussion of Aristotle's conceptions of *aretē* and *eudaimonia*, which is of interest not only for an understanding of Aristotle, but also to the wider discussion on character. I suggest that the extent to which Aristotle emphasises external goods and individual fortune as necessary constituents of the good life might be both overstated and misunderstood.

The first point to be made is that the relationship between Aristotle's notion of external goods and the extent to which it can alter a person's *eudaimonia* seems to be exaggerated. Irwin (1999) discusses a commonly identified difficulty in Aristotle's theory. Aristotle first tells his listeners that they must cultivate virtues to attain happiness, but then he goes on to say that this happiness is vulnerable to external factors. He notes that Aristotle recognises this difficulty, and attempts to examine the implications of it. Nonetheless, Irwin (1999) insists that Aristotle *clearly demonstrates* that happiness depends on fortune, (p.4). In defense of this claim he cites several passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and says 'This point needs no qualification when Aristotle defines happiness as activity of the soul expressing complete virtue. For both acquisition and the actualisation of complete virtue requires goods of fortune,' (p. 5). In the same way, Urmson (1988) is confined to the belief that Aristotle held that one cannot be altogether *eudaimon* if one is ugly, childless or solitary (among other flaws), (p. 13). Irwin (1999) makes a similar point, arguing that Aristotle does not identify these goods as instruments of virtuous action, but rather that they are goods which are valued for themselves, (p.6). The latter point, it seems, is an assumption made by Irwin (1999).

[249] That is to say that this person is in charge of whether or not she has character; it something that is within her command, as opposed to something which can suddenly change because of luck.

I claim that the extent to which Aristotle was convinced that external goods and *eudaimonia* were linked, might actually be a misinterpretation of the text. As stated earlier, Aristotle mentions these goods briefly, but never fully elaborates on his points in relation to these goods. For one, he does not seem to fully accept that a life without these goods is doomed, though he acknowledges that it might make things difficult.[250] Even after this statement, it is uncertain whether Aristotle is referring to goods such as beauty, wealth, and so forth, or whether he means 'goods' in a metaphorical sense.[251] Aristotle then goes on to talk about the importance of having good birth, good children, and beauty. However, it is not necessarily the case that he is convinced that these are necessary components of *eudaimonia*. This ambiguity also lies in the fact that directly after Aristotle talks about the significance of these goods, he goes on to say that happiness might require an element of good fortune, and in parenthesis he writes 'though some people identify 'virtue' as being important.'[252] Which view does he hold? Does the inclusion of this section on external goods necessarily mean that Aristotle was convinced of the necessity of luck in attaining *eudaimonia*?

Perhaps the latter question can be answered by considering one of Urmson's (1988) points; that being, because of the way in which the *Ethics* have been compiled (perhaps from Aristotle's lecture notes) it is not entirely clear that Aristotle meant for this passage to be given as much importance as it often has been, or be interpreted as a condition of *eudaimonia*. There is the possibility that Aristotle used these ideas to spark debate, or generate discussion around the relation between luck and happiness, and that, on the contrary to some theories, he simply may not have meant it to be taken as a necessary factor. Could it be that this section of his work has been misunderstood? It is not an inconceivable idea.

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[250] In Book I section 8, a passage from his text is translated as 'for it is impossible, or at least not easy, to play a noble part unless furnished with the necessary equipment,' (Aristotle, 1926, p. 43). Aristotle recognises the difficulty, but does not seem to fully concede on this point.

[251] Rackham's translation quotes Aristotle as saying 'For many noble actions require instruments for their performance, in the shape of friends or wealth or political power,' (p. 43) so it would seem that Aristotle is *obviously* indicating that these 'goods' are material goods. However, the Ross translation of this same sentence reads 'In many actions we use friends and riches and political power as instruments,' (Aristotle, 1925, p. 17). One translation suggests that these instruments *are* obviously external, whereas the other suggests that we use external goods as instruments.

[252] 1099^{b10} (this is referenced back to an earlier passage $1098^{b26\text{-}29}$).

The very suggestion that apart from the individual struggle to attain virtue, one's happiness is dependent upon factors that are completely out of the individuals control, does not seem to fit with the premise of Aristotle's larger work. Aristotle seeks to establish an understanding of the best sort of life that a person can live, and such a life, he argues is a life of virtuous activity (where such activity is not necessarily moral). Practically speaking, what would be the point of understanding the worth of virtuous action and attempting to lead a virtuous life, if this effort was easily trampled by *tuchē* (fortune)? It seems that the purpose of teaching people to understand the merits of a virtuous life was so that the learner could get beyond his individual circumstances, rather than be constrained by them. This was most certainly the position Socrates held. In *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Bernard Williams (1985) discusses Socrates' rejection of fortune:

> 'Impressed by the power of fortune to wreck what looked like the best-shaped life, some of them, Socrates one of the first, sought a rational design of life which would reduce the power of fortune and would be to the greatest possible extent luck-free,' (p. 5).

In other words, he felt that one should live (or think or act) in a certain way *in spite of* particular fortunes or misfortunes. And in that sense, perhaps he sought to reduce the 'significance' of fortune, establishing a realisation that one's life can be self-governed without a dependency on fortune (we are who we make ourselves to be and are not limited by our 'luck' or circumstance). Was this idea limited to those early thinkers? Aristotle explains that 'if it is better to be happy as a result of one's own exertions than by the gift of fortune, it is reasonable to suppose that this is how happiness is won,' (Aristotle,1926, p.45). He is suggesting that a person's efforts can bring him happiness, and that this is in fact *better* than the 'gift of fortune'.

Nussbaum (1986) explores the notion of luck, considering the extent to which a person's life *is* perceived to be changed by it, and more importantly, the extent to which a person's life *should* be altered by it. Nussbaum considers the ancient notions of luck, in an effort to understand implications of such thought on what is deemed to be praiseworthy and what should *actually* be considered as praiseworthy. The significance of making the distinction between what is within our control and what is beyond our control is crucial in our evaluation of our lives. The

more weight we place on that which is beyond our control, the bleaker our livelihood becomes. But we aren't merely dependent upon fortune. As Nussbaum (1986) says,

> However much human beings resemble lower forms of life, we are unlike, we want to insist, in one crucial respect. We have reason. We are able to deliberate and choose, to make a plan in which ends are ranked, to decide actively what is to have value and how much. All this must count for something... there is something about us that is pure and purely active, something that we could think of as 'divine, immortal, intelligible, unitary, indissoluble, ever self-consistent and invariable,' (p. 2).

Nussbaum (1986) makes a valuable point here. Unlike other forms of life that are, in an obvious sense, victims of their circumstance, humans are able to deliberate, choose, change their minds, adapt to their circumstances. A plant that is rooted in the ground relies on particular conditions to flourish. If those conditions aren't met (sunlight, adequate water, and so forth) then the plant may not fare well. Unlike humans, the plant does not have the option to uproot itself to another place with more favourable conditions; its life is left at the mercy of the fortune bestowed upon it.

However, as Nussbaum (1986) rightly suggests, humans are not always shackled to a particular fate as such, in the sense that they can use the power of reason that has been given to them. That is, we are not destined to live solely by the conditions of our birth, nor are these conditions necessarily detrimental to living a good human life, because we possess something that these other sentient beings do not: *logos*. Humans have the capacity to discriminate between particular paths (though not everyone chooses to use this faculty of discrimination). These ideas are not solely those of Nussbaum's (1986). She acknowledges ancient Greek thinking about this matter, and asserts that they did not feel that luck should be given any special priority in the assessment of a human life. Referring back to the notion of reason (*logos*), one which Aristotle gave much priority to, she comments that,

> It seems possible that this rational element in us can rule and guide the rest, thereby saving the whole person from living at the mercy of luck. This splendid and equivocal hope is a central preoccupation of ancient Greek thought about the human good...It was evident to all the thinkers with whom we shall be concerned that the good life for a human being must to some extent, and in some ways, be self-sufficient, immune to the incursions of luck, (pp. 2-3).

Nussbaum (1986) does not limit these ideas to Socrates, but rather claims that all thinkers (who she addresses in her book), including Aristotle held these views. Whether it is translated as 'reason' or 'rational principle', it is important to recognise that much of ancient Greek thought was preoccupied with arguing for the merits of a life that was not burdened by fortune. If this is the case, then the emphasis on external goods as a necessary component of *eudaimonia* is not simply overstated, it is fallacious and ultimately misses a fundamental point of Aristotle's work in the *Ethics*: that a virtuous life entails that a person need not be a slave to ever-changing fortune.

In a later work, Nussbaum rightly articulates what she identifies as Aristotle's grievance with what society often teaches. She says, 'People often value too many of these external things, or value them too highly, or not enough. Thus they have too much emotion in connection with money, possessions, and reputation, sometimes not enough in connection with the things that are truly worthwhile,' (Nussbaum, 1994, p. 96). White (2007a) might argue that these things that Nussbaum has referred to are in fact worthwhile, but Aristotle would probably say that things which are within our control (our own virtuous behaviour) are actually worthwhile.

As Nussbaum's (1986, 1994) works indicate, questions relating to human flourishing and luck are not merely a concern for those interested in ancient Greek scholarship. Nor is it simply a question of what *was* or *is* considered to be important to human flourishing; it is more importantly a question of what *ought* to be a necessity of human flourishing. What *ought* society place value on and why? Educators in liberal-democratic societies should most certainly be concerned with this question. Is luck something that a person can get beyond, and is this message something that educators should have a role in conveying? Should we praise those who (through no effort of their own) are lucky, or should we praise those individuals who have character? Are the two incompatible? I am not trying to suggest that a person who has character may be lucky or unlucky, but I claim that such a person flourishes independently of luck.

This chapter has evaluated the credibility of wellbeing as an aim of education, and has found it wanting. I have suggested that the development of character can influence whether or not an activity is pursued wholeheartedly, and for this reason I claim that the development of character positively contributes to an individual's wellbeing. If schools are determined to promote the wellbeing of their pupils, they should focus on developing their (the students') character. In this way, the development of character should be a central aim of school education.

Conclusion

A few months ago I spotted a sign outside a school which read 'Character trait of the month: honesty'. This was followed by another school, and a few days later, another. I slowly let out a sigh of annoyance, for even as I write this thesis there are numerous schools (and perhaps, even more educators) that think that the development of character has to do primarily with the mastery over certain character traits. This thesis has endeavoured to show that this is not the case, and why I think this is so. The overall aim of this research has been to show why character ought to be a central aim of school education; the two underlying premises of this thesis were (a) that character should not merely be understood as moral character, and that (b) the development of character is inextricably linked to human flourishing.

In order to substantiate these assertions this thesis has taken various steps. I began by examining contemporary conceptions of character, and specifically, how the notion is understood by advocates (and opponents) of character education. This led to the observation that character is often used interchangeably with moral character, and that character education is often interpreted as the development of character traits or instilling particular behaviours. This examination into contemporary characterisations of character moved on to looking specifically at contemporary philosophical perspectives on character. Character was demarcated into Peters' (1981) three categories of (a) types of character, (b) non-committal use and (c) having character. Though the first and second usage seemed to be the most frequent, I claimed that these were narrow conceptions of character, and that it is the third, (c) having character, which would be of maximum value to school educators in a liberal democratic society. However, even this chapter reinforced observations made in the first chapter, that character is often considered to be defined by the presence of particular character traits. Various thinkers in chapters 1 and 2 often allude to the influence of the ancient Greeks on modern conceptions of character (and character education for that matter). And so, the next step this thesis

undertook was to look at the ancient conceptions of human flourishing which supposedly underpin contemporary conceptions of character.

Chapters 3 and 4 looked closely at both Plato and Aristotle's writings on human flourishing. Both offer different routes to *eudaimonia* (wellbeing), Plato emphasises *dikaiosunē* whereas Aristotle, *aretē*. However, close examination of their work revealed that there are elements within both thinkers' philosophies which unite them in significant ways. Specifically, they both emphasise the *psychē* as an element which is essential to *eudaimonia*. This is a significant point as it reveals that there is an important facet to human flourishing that is *within* each person, and not only external to them; though the significance of this revelation is elucidated later. Chapter 4 put forward plausible characterisations of character, based on Aristotle and Plato's conceptions of human flourishing. What I show is that while character is not a straightforward concept, neither thinker appears to conceive of character as interchangeable with moral character (which is reflective of a morality in the narrow sense). This is an important challenge to those who do.

The thesis then took on the task of exploring ancient Indian philosophical thought, as doing so, I contended would be an asset to understanding human flourishing. What this chapter uncovered was the striking similarities between ancient Greek and Indian philosophies, thus rejecting the claim that they are poles apart. More importantly though, this chapter revealed that though there may be many paths to a flourishing life, and consequently varying lifestyles, human flourishing is a product of the type of person we are. This observation seems to set the ancient Indian and Greek thinkers apart: that human flourishing is first and foremost determined by the type of person one is, and not just by the type of life one leads.

These chapters comprise the first part, which endeavoured to consider various perspectives of character and human flourishing. After considering these various perspectives, the sixth chapter puts forth an account of character. Characterising character as unity of thought, word and action, I argued was a comprehensive view, in that it addresses the shortcomings of other perspectives of character, while taking into account ancient and contemporary perspectives of character. From the outset, I

claimed that a broader characterisation would be more suitable for promotion in school education, and so the final two chapters of the thesis consider the relevance of the development of character in school education.

The final two chapters assess whether the development of character is a viable contender as an educational aim, in comparison to two other prominent aims of education: autonomy and wellbeing. Though the very notions of autonomy and wellbeing as educational aims are not without their own problems, I show that the development of character is compatible with both these aims. Whereas I argue that the development of strong character could enhance the development of autonomy, I contend that character is *fundamental to* wellbeing. What's more, I argue that the contemporary notion of wellbeing, which seems to look favourably upon luck, is unlike ancient conceptions of human flourishing, and that if one's wellbeing is influenced by luck then there is little that schools can do to promote it. Ultimately, the significant contribution of this final chapter is to argue that if school educators are concerned with the wellbeing of the pupils, then they ought to place character development as a central aim of school education.

Though these arguments have been smoothly outlined above, that is not to say that this thesis is seamless. Every thesis has a focus, inevitably branching out into various directions, with each turn supporting and contributing to the original focus. So too, this work has moved in certain directions, consciously choosing particular paths and, unsurprisingly, excluding others. Thus, such substantial work is not without its own limitations and restrictions. Such limitations and possible questions are outlined below.

For one, the inferences that derive from studying the ancient Greek texts, and the subsequent explanations that follow, are my own. I have outlined the ideas in a simplified manner, which reflects perhaps a small amount of the substantial body of work in the field, of which I do not profess to have mastery over. The ideas that are presented in those chapters are basic and necessary to my own examination of character, and hence, aren't necessarily representative of *all* ancient Greek texts on the subject. I have only chosen to look at two particular ancient Greek texts.

Of course most thinkers who examine works of these great thinkers, often consult a plethora of resources. Though admittedly, such an examination might have *added* to the thesis, it seems unnecessary for the scope of this work. If this was a thesis entirely on, say, ancient Greek conceptions of Human Flourishing and Character then it would have most certainly been necessary to study a range of texts. However, ancient Greek thinking on notions of human flourishing and character was only one perspective I sought, and that too was at my own discretion, as there is not precisely a single conception of character. Thus, what has been presented is a valid use of the literature, albeit an interpretation (which any excursion into the works of such thinkers becomes, when differences of language, time, culture, and so forth come into play). I consulted the *Ethics* and *Republic* mainly as they are arguably the sources of essential and substantial discussions of Aristotle and Plato on human flourishing, and they amply implicate a broader conception of character.

One may wonder why there is an exclusion of other ancient Greek thinkers, such as the Stoics? Though their contributions would perhaps complement this work, I chose to look specifically at the work of Aristotle and Plato, as those two thinkers are explicitly cited by contemporary thinkers (with regards to character) in the field of character education and philosophy of education.

These are a few concerns that might be raised in response to this thesis. Yet in spite of these concerns, this thesis makes important strides both in the field of philosophy of education, and arguably in the field of comparative philosophy as well. For one, I have shown that having character is intrinsic to a flourishing life. Of importance, I have illustrated that character is broader than merely moral character, and that this broader notion of character is something that is compatible with ancient philosophical thought. What this means is that the education of *character* involves strengthening the unity between thought, word and action, and *not* the inculcation of particular rules of behaviour or a set of character traits.[253] What's more, this thesis reveals that strong character contributes to, and is in some ways essential to the development of personal autonomy and wellbeing. Therefore, this thesis,

[253] This will be further discussed below.

through its 8 chapters, shows why the development of character ought to be a central aim of school education.

In chapter one, significant time was spent looking at the arguments of Hunter (2000) on the 'death of character'. One specific point he makes is that it might be easier to develop character in a homogenous society. This is due to the idea that character consists of particular character traits, hence part of the difficulty in developing character (he feels), in a multicultural, liberal democratic society, is that it's difficult for character educators to provide a rationale for different character traits; this might be only possible in a homogenous society, he suggests.[254] So the significance of this work is that I'm identifying a conception of character that need not be situated in a homogenous society.

Another important contribution of this work is that it has demonstrated that there is much similarity between ancient Indian and Greek philosophy which is relevant to contemporary philosophy of education (as well as philosophical thought more generally). However, this thesis has only scratched the surface, and in this way, it has only really opened up an important avenue for discussion. And so, there is much room for further work in this area. For example, perhaps further examination into ancient Indian philosophy could shed light on ancient Greek concepts that are otherwise difficult to explain (such as the concept of *logos*).

In fact this thesis points to many areas of further research. There are of course a number of empirical as well as philosophical questions which could be explored. How can we educate for character? Does the development of character influence the study of academic subjects? Is the development of character in schools effective? Is the development of character something universal? To what extent could 'having character' be understood as a universal concept? The possibilities are limitless. Of personal interest is an exploration of the relationship between the development of character and values education. Though I have argued that having character does not mean that one has a specific set of values or virtues, that is not to say that the development of strong character should *necessarily* exclude the development of

[254] For more on Hunter's (2000) arguments, refer to chapter 1.

particular values or virtues. The development of character in schools could benefit from values education. As chapter 6 implied, an aim of values education and moral education programmes seems to be the unity of thought, word and action. For this reason the development of character is an asset to, though distinct from these endeavours.

It is important to distinguish the process of strengthening of character from the process of instilling beliefs, values, or qualities. For one, common schools in liberal democratic societies face many challenges in the area of moral and values education; complexities such as, which beliefs should be conveyed, is there a 'right' and 'wrong' that can be taught in schools, and who is to decide? Though I will not address these questions, it is important to convey the point that there are complexities to teaching and encouraging specific beliefs in students. Nonetheless, it is plausible for schools in liberal democratic societies to teach people to develop unity of thought, word and action. That is to say, it seems more acceptable that a school encourage pupils to identify and commit to their own thoughts and beliefs, than teach them to be committed to any specific set of beliefs. To advocate for unity of thought, word and action is to teach a pupil to have dedication *not* to another's beliefs, but to one's own; it is to encourage an individual to have confidence in their own thoughts.

In this way the education of character can be distinguished from values education and moral education, but it seems there is an obvious relationship between these endeavours. As I have claimed earlier, the development of character is an asset to these practices. Arguably, a difficulty that moral and values educators face, is not that pupils are unable to distinguish between what seems right and wrong in a given situation; it is that, when faced with the situation, the pupil is unable to *act*. There is a disparity between what one *should* do and what one does. In this way, it is better to have strong character than to have weak. But it is not merely important that one does the 'right' thing. Moral educators would perhaps argue that a person should also *want* to do the right thing, and not be forced into it. Aristotle would have argued that even if a person does the 'right' thing, if they are unhappy with their course of action, then such action is not virtuous. Practically speaking, more often than not, if a person is not happy with their decision (to behave a certain way) then

it is unlikely they will repeat such an action (regardless of whether it is right or wrong). The development of character is significant here, because the stronger a person's character is, the more likely he is to act on his own accord.

From a practical point of view, the education of character should involve a lot of opportunity for discussion and self-appraisal. If we think about moral approaches to education with young people, they often involve narrating 'expectations' of good and bad behaviour, through stories, films, games and activities. However, the education of character could possibly involve engaging with young minds in a different way. With younger children the development of character is perhaps more about learning how to understand the relationship between actions and corresponding feelings; a chance to learn to discriminate between actions and words that make one feel good, and those that don't. Depending on the age, one could probe further and ask the pupil why they think they felt like this: in this way, connecting thoughts to corresponding action. Activities with younger students could be as simple as asking them to practice doing what they think is the 'right' and giving them the opportunity to share how they felt in a given situation.

Older students need to be given many opportunities to self-assess and discuss their experiences of having unity of thought, word and action. Questions should not be limited to 'what is important to me' or 'what do I value', but should expand to 'Am I able to behave according to my beliefs', 'when is it easier to behave in certain ways', 'what stops me from acting in line with my values', and so forth. Moral educators are often looking for ways to inspire young adults, and often use stories and speakers to motivate them. Valuable as these methods might be, older students should not only have a sense of what *others* believe to be right, they should have many opportunities to experience (i.e. 'put into practice one thing that the speaker spoke about today') and discuss what *they* believe is right. For example, instead of listening to a motivational speaker and writing an essay about it, students should be challenged to put into practice just one thing the speaker spoke about, and then asked (a few days later) whether they enjoyed doing it and whether or not it was easy to do. In this way, students should learn the merit of having character through their own experience, and not through someone else's experience.

And so, there are significant ways in which the development of character corresponds to formal education, and interesting lines of exploration for further study.

Another area worth exploring is the notion of 'transformation' in education. I am curious to examine the extent to which one could refer to the development of character as transformational. Barrow (1981) writes:

> There is a popular phrase to the effect that education is of the whole man. I am not sure what precisely this is supposed to mean, but if it suggests that being educated has something to do with some transformation of all aspects of the individual...then it seems plainly false, (p. 38).

Perhaps Barrow is playing it safe in his claim above. For, to say that education transforms *all* aspects of a person is a bold claim; even the suggestion that education has an *impact* on *all* aspects is daring. Empirical complexities aside[255], let us consider what this statement implies. For one, it assumes that there are various facets that constitute a person, and that education, may or may not target those aspects. Questions related to what such various facets consist in are likely to be raised. This is definitely something worth exploring, and it most certainly relates to the development of character.

Barrow's (1981) statement implies that education is not concerned with the transformation of the individual, but is this a correct assumption? Arguably, the development of character (from weak to strong) could indicate transformation of the person if transformation implies a change in condition or nature. Though Barrow's (1981) remarks may not be incorrect, the implications of it (that education does not have to do with the transformation of the person) surely are. At least, the remarks are misleading. More work could certainly be done to examine and elaborate on this point.

And so, this thesis has opened up wide-ranging areas for further research in a variety of fields. It has also produced a reasonable portrayal of the concept of

[255] Such complexities such as 'how does one measure transformation?' or 'how can we assess whether *every* aspect of a person is impacted?'...

character and its valuable significance for school education. Character has, for a long time, been broadcasted to be of educational significance. Yet, even with a large number of advocates, the concept remained indistinct: until now. This thesis provides a thorough characterisation of character, and provides a rationale for why it ought to be a central aim of schools. The contributions it makes to the fields of both philosophy and education are valuable.

Perhaps one day, those same schools that have listed 'character traits of the month', will change their slogan to 'unity of thought, word and action: having character all year round'. This thesis has, at least, provided a rationale for such a change to occur. Until then, there is always work to be done.

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