PROHIBITION, ACCOMMODATION OR TRANSFORMATION?
A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE MORAL PERMISSIBILITY OF FAITH SCHOOLS IN LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the ethics of faith schooling. More precisely, it asks whether faith schools constitute legitimate (that is, morally permissible) institutions for liberal democratic societies. I begin by examining five senses in which the term 'faith school' might be used and the possible objections that each of these might motivate. Since, as traditionally conceived, faith schools teach for religious belief, I pay particular attention to the criticism that such institutions are indoctrinatory. Via an examination of recent work in the philosophy of psychiatry, I illuminate the concept of indoctrination and propose two reasons why it is morally unacceptable: first, it results in a mind-set where, like delusion, beliefs are held separate from reason and, second, it involves a violation of autonomy.

Drawing on a conception of autonomy proposed by Ben Colburn (2010), I go on to argue that, because the development of autonomy is a fundamental aim of the educational enterprise, this gives us strong grounds to avoid both indoctrination *and* other autonomy-violating practices (particularly "Comprehensive Enrolment" (Clayton, 2006). However, while traditional accounts of the legitimacy of faith schooling have correctly identified that confessional faith schools are indoctrinatory, much less has been said about religiously distinctive pedagogies which fall short of indoctrination. For this reason, the final part of the thesis addresses these 'priming pedagogies' and suggests ways in which they may be adapted to provide a morally permissible form of liberal faith-based schooling.

For Hannah and Evie

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns the ethics of faith schooling. More precisely, it addresses the question of whether faith schools constitute legitimate (that is, morally permissible) institutions of education in liberal democratic societies.[1] It would be disingenuous to claim that this is an "under researched area" or that the overall issue represents "a significant gap in the literature". Indeed, to say the literature on the topic is voluminous would be an understatement.[2] And yet, as I hope to show, there is still a great deal left to say about the matter. Indeed, in some respects, the need for additional work is more pressing than ever.

There are a number of reasons to make this claim. First, the increased (and increasing) diversity of liberal polities necessitates a clear account of the normative boundaries of tolerance; we must understand which forms of religious practice and institution the liberal society ought to accommodate and which, because of the harms they represent to individuals or the wider society, must be prohibited. While, as I understand it, liberalism is predicated on an ideal of individual autonomy — of personal freedom— this freedom cannot be unlimited. And, since children are human beings who are initially dependent but must eventually (if we are to have treated them justly) become responsible, independent persons, it is in the restriction of adult (especially parent) interactions with children where checks on this freedom are likely to be felt most keenly. An account of the role faith schooling may (or may not) be able to play with respect to the development of autonomy

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[1] Since this study assumes a liberal framework, I largely disregard literature which seeks to justify the liberal position *tout court*. For this reason, my arguments (particularly those in Chapter VI) may be rather less persuasive to a reader who fails to share my starting point than one who is more inclined to be liberally-minded in the first instance.

[2] Indeed, a search for the term 'faith school' in the Journal of Philosophy of Education currently returns over 340 articles (see Wareham, 2017).

and rationality only represents one way of looking at this hugely complex issue, but it nevertheless cuts to the heart of the matter.

A second reason rests on the empirical realities of modern education policy-making. As in many other countries, competition for school places in the UK is often fierce.[3] In order to accommodate growth in the numbers of school-age children, successive British governments have looked for ways in which to increase the number of state-funded schools.[4] And, in recent years, this mission has been coupled with an avowed aim to maximise parental choice through the diversification of provision (Clements, 2010, pp. 954-957). But, while religious organisations have a long history of providing education,[5] their suitability for this endeavour is not uncontested, and there is considerable public controversy about whether religion should have a place in schools at all (see Clements, 2010; Patrikios & Curtice, 2014).

Of course, much of the public debate on faith schooling pertains to questions which are, at least in principle, empirically verifiable; questions such as whether a faith-based education is academically superior or more able to produce well-disciplined, work-ready young adults. Although the answers to such questions will certainly have a bearing on whether faith schooling is, all things considered, a worthwhile enterprise, my concern is rather more philosophical. I am interested in whether faith schools are *morally* justifiable; in whether they harm their pupils in ways about which the liberal ought to be concerned *even if* those same institutions are demonstrably able to provide other kinds of good. This

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[3] Between 2015 and 2016 there was a 2.8% increase in applications for secondary school places and, in London, as many as 31.2% of pupils failed to secure a place at their first preference school (DFE, 2016)
[4] Current projections indicate there will be a 20% increase in the number of secondary age pupils in England by 2024 this means the UK Government will need to provide more than 16,000 additional school places just to avoid a shortfall. (DFE, 2015).
[5] See §1.3

highlights a final reason why the current study is timely. To date, philosophical accounts of faith schooling have largely revolved around the issue of indoctrination; they have generally sought to address the question of whether or not faith schools are indoctrinatory and the question of moral permissibility has been determined on the basis of the answer to that question. But, while the indoctrination debate *is* fundamental to the matter at hand (indeed, this thesis is also built on an analysis of the concept of indoctrination), this narrow focus has led theorists to neglect some of the other ways in which faith schooling might harm pupils. What's more, the emphasis on teaching for belief which is responsible for engendering the focus on indoctrination may also explain why the idea of an alternative, morally permissible model of faith schooling has, until now, been rather elusive.

In what follows, I will argue that (as traditionally conceived) faith schools are indoctrinatory and should, therefore, be prohibited. However, I go on to maintain that, once suitably adapted to ensure they avoid both indoctrination and other forms of illegitimate influence (including attempts at "comprehensive enrolment" (Clayton, 2006)), a number of newer models of faith-*based* education— models I call 'priming pedagogies'— may be able to provide a religiously distinctive form of liberally defensible education.

The thesis is split into six chapters and proceeds as follows:

To orientate the discussion, I begin Chapter I by exploring five possible senses in which the term 'faith school' might be deployed as well as the significant philosophical objections each of these definitions might motivate. This leads me to suggest that faith schools are best understood as *schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith via the transmission of religious beliefs, values and/or practices.*

Since, as already noted, one of the strongest philosophical objections against schools which teach for religious belief is that they are indoctrinatory, Chapter II focuses on the concept of indoctrination. Here I bracket the question of whether indoctrination is morally permissible and merely consider the necessary and sufficient conditions for the practice. I endorse an outcome conception of indoctrination and conclude that indoctrination is *a teaching process, pertaining to the transmission of beliefs, which directly results in the construction of an illegitimate barrier between the beliefs a pupil holds and the reasons/evidence she has for holding them; a barrier which causes her to be closed-minded.*

Chapter III is concerned with the question of whether, given the characteristics highlighted in Chapter II, there is good reason to think that indoctrination is morally wrong. I do this via a close analysis of the similarities between the indoctrinated and delusional states of mind. Using recent work in the philosophy of psychiatry, I discuss the possibility that some indoctrinated beliefs may exhibit a quality called "epistemic innocence" (Bortolotti, 2015, §3) and the practice may be justified on this basis. However, on the grounds that the only form of belief transmission which could legitimately meet the criteria for epistemic innocence — the transmission of what I call 'rationality facilitating beliefs'— is not a form of indoctrination according to the conception I endorse, I ultimately reject this possibility. At the end of the chapter I argue that indoctrination is wrong for two reasons: first, it circumvents or "bypasses" the rationality of the indoctrinated person and second, it violates her autonomy.

While the harm indoctrination causes to the rationality of pupils would be sufficient to motivate a prohibition on schools which indoctrinate, I argue that the violation of autonomy it represents is considerably more important than some (notably Michael Hand

(2006)) have been apt to realise. Since this will have considerable relevance to my later discussion of the permissibility of 'priming pedagogies', Chapter IV is dedicated to a detailed analysis of the concept of autonomy and its value as an educational aim. I conclude, with Ben Colburn, that autonomy is best understood as an ideal of global self-determination according to which one "[decides for oneself] what is a valuable life" and lives "in accordance with that decision" (Colburn, 2010, p.19). I argue that the value of this "independence" inheres in the fact it enables individuals to be substantively responsible for the direction their lives take and that this is part of what it means to be a moral agent and a human being. When an individual's autonomy is violated— when her will is bypassed — she is treated as less than she is and this is an insult to her dignity. Since the capacity for autonomy is of intrinsic worth and requires skills which are teachable, it is a desirable, indeed necessary, aim of the educational endeavour.

In Chapter V, I return to the question of whether faith schools are guilty of indoctrinating their pupils and show that, when they teach for religious beliefs, this is indeed the case. Finally, in Chapter VI, paying particular attention to the work of Matthew Clayton and the Colburn-style conception of autonomy I endorse, I assess whether a number of recent attempts to propose religiously distinctive, non-indoctrinatory models of faith education ('priming pedagogies') constitute a legitimate alternative to the traditional model.

I conclude that, while some of these theories can successfully avoid the charge of indoctrination, they may still be problematic for autonomy if their primary aim is to enrol pupils into comprehensive ways of life. But, by further adapting Michael Hand's most recent proposal for a faith-*based* curriculum (Hand, 2012), I go on to suggest that religious educators can avoid both indoctrination *and* comprehensive enrolment by selecting a religiously distinctive *configuration* of curricular activities. As long as the activities on that

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curriculum are initially drawn from a set which admits only activities which are justifiable by appeal to public reason, religiously-minded educators may choose between those activities on the grounds of their favoured conception of human flourishing. I contend that this transformational model represents the most promising way for liberal states to accommodate morally permissible, religious schools which adequately respect the rationality and autonomy of their pupils.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS A FAITH SCHOOL?

§1. 1 Introduction

According to the UK's Department for Education (DFE)[6], 'faith schools' are "schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a *religious character*" (DFE, 2012; DFE 2014 my italics). However, the precise nature of this 'religious character' varies considerably from school to school, and the primary definition on the Department's website has recently been updated to:

> Faith schools have to follow the national curriculum[7], but they can choose what they teach in religious studies.
>
> Faith schools may have different admissions criteria and staffing policies to state[8] schools, although anyone can apply for a place. (DFE, 2017a)

There are faith schools where the religious ethos is infused into every aspect of daily life and others where, aside from the reference to a saint in the school's name or the presence of a crucifix in the hall, it would be difficult to pinpoint practices or behaviours which

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[6] The substantive philosophical issues with which this thesis is concerned are of relevance to questions about religious schooling in a wide range of national contexts. However, many of the examples I use will be drawn from the English school system as my professional background dictates that this is the one with which I am most familiar.

[7] In fact, this is only the case for established schools with religious character. Faith schools with Academy or Free School status are not obliged to follow the National Curriculum (DFE, 2017b). This is discussed in more detail in Chapter VI, §6.6.1

[8] The reference to "state schools" is misleading as the faith schools this paragraph refers to are also part of the state system.

distinguish the establishment from a non-denominational[9] school. This problem of identification is exacerbated by the fact that some proponents of religious schools are themselves resistant to the term 'faith school'. Indeed, the position of the Church of England (C of E) is that its schools are "not faith schools for the faithful," but "Church schools for the community" (Church of England News, 2016).[10]

The C of E's opposition to the 'faith school' label appears to stem from the idea that, in order to be a 'faith school', an institution must select all or most of its pupils on the grounds of religion. In a radio interview, the former Chief Education Officer for the Church, Jan Ainsworth, rejected the term and claimed that the purpose of C of E schools "has always been to serve both the communities in which they find themselves *and* the Christian community" and that, to meet this dual purpose "[the Church's] most recent advice on admissions has made it very clear that [they] expect every Church school to balance those [factors]." She concluded by pointing out that "well over half [of Church schools] are controlled schools and have no faith-based admissions." (Sunday, 2012)

Was Ainsworth deliberately misunderstanding a commonly used term in order to suit a particular agenda or obfuscate the C of E's role in education? While this is not an entirely implausible interpretation, let us make the more charitable assumption that, just as there are a variety of plausible uses and interpretations of the terms 'education' and 'school', there are similarly diverse senses in which 'faith school' might be deployed. This thesis

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[9] I use the term 'non-denominational' rather than 'secular' to denote schools without religious character. In the English context, these schools are still legally required to carry out a daily act of collective worship which—unless the school has received an "exemption" from the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) because the faith community it serves is not predominantly Christian— "must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" (DFE, 1994; SSFA, 1998). Since secularism implies a degree of neutrality with respect to religious practices (see Cliteur, 2010, p.3), these (purportedly) non-religious schools are not (fully) secular.

[10] A claim which is ostensibly based on a broader educational vision which involves "serving the common good" (See Church of England Education Office (2016)).

seeks to determine whether faith schools constitute legitimate educational institutions in liberal democratic societies. But, to examine this question adequately, it is first essential to determine what is meant by the term 'faith school'. This task is especially important given the apparent diversity of institutions which may, in many cases appropriately, be considered to fall into this category. If our terminology lacks precision, we risk talking at cross purposes and drawing erroneous conclusions. It is therefore regrettable that imprecision has been an obvious feature of public discourse about faith schooling for quite some time. To address this situation and ensure clarity from the outset, in this chapter I explore a variety of possible uses of the term 'faith school' and highlight some of the philosophical problems and criticisms each engenders. I will go on to explain what I mean when I use the term in the context of this thesis.

§1.2 What is a Faith School?

Sense 1 (S1): Schools which are run, partly or fully, by religious organisations

In the UK, Christian organisations were pivotal in the development of the state school system and continue to exert a degree of power over educational institutions in a range of different respects.[11] This is also the case in many other liberal democracies (e.g. Canada,[12] Belgium and the Netherlands[13]). Indeed, even in those liberal societies where the separation between church and state is itself a fiercely guarded article of faith —such as France or the USA — religious organisations have often played a role in the establishment and management of schools.[14] While religious schools will differ according to the political context in which they operate, one conceivable way of defining a 'faith school' would be

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[11] For a potted history of faith schools and colleges of education in England and Wales, see Gates (2005)
[12] See McDonough, Memon & Mintz (2013)
[13] See Merry (2010), pp. 14-17.
[14] Although, at present, these institutions are generally private, some are even (partially) funded by the state.

to claim that such institutions are, in some sense or other, governed by religious organisations. In other words, that a faith school is a school which is run (partially or fully) by a faith group or religious organisation.

Sense 2 (S2). Schools which may (and/or do) restrict admissions on the basis of faith

As we have seen, Jan Ainsworth's refusal to accept 'faith school' as an accurate description of C of E schools is based on the belief that genuine faith schools administer religiously selective admissions policies; that these policies constitute a necessary condition for a faith school.

According to the Schools Admissions Code for England, while **all** schools —including those classified as having religious character — must offer any free places they have to pupils irrespective of faith, when over-subscribed:

> Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character (commonly known as faith schools) may use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith. (DFE, 2014, §1.36)

It is, therefore, possible to assert that, at least in some political contexts, 'faith schools' are institutions with the power to exercise such admissions criteria if they so wish.[15]

Sense 3 (S3). Schools which are wholly or mainly attended by pupils from a particular faith background

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[15] Clearly, Ainsworth wished to restrict use of the term to schools which *exercise* this capacity. But, as it is necessary for a school to have a religious character in order for it to be granted the power to select on a religious basis in the first place, I would argue that the mere possession of the capacity is sufficient for appropriate use in S2.

Often, the fact that the majority of a school's pupils have similar cultural or religious backgrounds is not determined by an admissions policy *designed* to facilitate such homogeneity. Rather, it is a by-product of the school's location. For example, in certain areas of large UK cities like London and Birmingham, there are schools where the overwhelming majority of pupils come from Muslim backgrounds.[16] Similarly, elsewhere in England (particularly in rural communities), there are non-denominational schools where most (if not all) children are of white-British origin and whose parents consider themselves Christian.[17] While these schools are not commonly referred to as 'faith schools', there is a sense in which, owing to the homogenous nature of the pupil intake, they do have a particular kind of 'religious character' and so constitute examples of *de facto* faith-schools.

Sense 4 (S4). Schools which teach for belief in religious propositions

In a paper entitled, 'A Philosophical Objection to Faith Schools', Michael Hand argues that "faith schools are *by definition* concerned with passing on religious beliefs" (Hand, 2003, p.90). While faith schools share a number of educational aims with non-denominational schools — both seek to provide a good general education—the former are distinctive because those aims are underpinned by the intention to inculcate religious beliefs. In this sense, the term 'faith school' is used to describe a school which partakes in some form of *confessional religious education*.[18]

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[16] This was certainly true of the schools implicated in the notorious 'Trojan Horse' scandal in Birmingham in 2014 (see Arthur, 2015, p.318).

[17] Indeed, in 2014 a report in the Telegraph claimed that schools in England were being systematically downgraded by the school inspection body OFSTED because they were "too white" (Paton, 2014).

[18] Note that I will use the terms 'confessional religious education', 'confessionalism' and 'religious nurture' interchangeably.

Sense 5 (S5). Schools whose curricula are "drawn from religious beliefs"

In his more recent work — marking an interesting (if incomplete) departure from his previously staunch anti-faith schools position —Hand points out that the "dual role" of faith based education has generally led to "a two-fold conception of the curriculum" in faith schools. For example:

> Church [of England] schools have understood themselves as offering both a general education, delivered through a conventional set of academic subjects, and a confessional Christian education, delivered through Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. And they have commonly taken the confessional element of the curriculum to be what distinguishes them from schools of other kinds. (Hand, 2012, p.550)

However, this is not the only kind of education religious organisations *could* offer. Hand maintains that religious groups in England should consider taking advantage of the opportunities afforded to them by the expansion of the UK Government's Academy and Free School programme in order to establish faith-*based* schools. These schools would abandon the project of traditional confessional education—which, because it is designed to inculcate a particular faith is, in Hand's view, necessarily indoctrinatory— in favour of a curriculum drawn from (or based upon) the tenets of the faith with which the school is allied:

> What distinguishes a faith-based curriculum need not be the addition of confessional RE and collective worship to a conventional roster of academic subjects; it can be something both less objectionable and more radical than this. Religious organisations can ask afresh, and from their own theological perspectives, fundamental questions about the aims of education and the worthwhile activities into which children should be initiated, and build distinctive school curricula on their answers to these questions. Unconstrained by either

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the requirements of the National Curriculum or the ideological commitments that underpin it, they are in a position to offer curricula informed by their specific conceptions of human flourishing. (Hand, 2012, p.551)

Of course, some faith adherents might claim that the kind of school Hand proposes is not a faith school at all. The subtle shift from 'faith school' to 'faith-based' school, masks a significant difference in purpose. For the time being, however, all we need acknowledge is that Hand describes institutions that *might* feasibly be picked out by the term.

There is a sense in which no definition of faith schooling can be definitive. Although one religious school might exhibit more than one of the characteristics outlined above, it seems appropriate to call an institution a faith school if it matches just one of these descriptions. Like 'game' or 'religion', 'faith school' is a *family resemblance* concept (Wittgenstein, 2001). As Hand puts it: "the logical criteria of faith schools are like the overlapping fibres of a thread" (Hand, 2003, p.91) and often cannot simply be reduced to one salient factor. If so, perhaps the best way to approach the question of what makes an institution a faith school will be to consider the philosophical ramifications of the aforementioned characterisations. In §1.3-§1.7 I discuss a variety of objections to faith schools in each of the five senses outlined above with a view to determining the most appropriate sense(s) to use in the context of this thesis. By considering the reasons which might count for or against faith schools in these senses, I will be in a better position to identify the philosophically interesting questions they raise and, therefore, better able to determine the direction in which a philosophical assessment of the legitimacy of these schools ought to proceed.

§1.3 (S1) Schools Run by Religious Organisations

Reasons for objecting to faith schools in this sense fall into three main categories: 1) objections to private organisations *of any kind* running state schools; 2) objections particular to religious organisations running state schools; 3) objections to religious organisations running *any* school. The first category pertains to the notion of education as a public good; that is, a good which should be provided by the state and managed (at least at the highest level) by democratically elected representatives. Arguably, in the UK, the balance of public opinion is tipped in favour of democratically elected bodies assuming overall responsibility for the provision of education. For example, 62% of respondents in a survey commissioned by the NASUWT[19] said that local councils or authorities were the most appropriate organisations to run state-funded schools, and 51% believed that governments were best placed "to ensure that all schools deliver the best for every child in the country" (NASUWT, 2010). The same survey found that 35% of respondents were of the belief that religious organisations should not have any involvement in the oversight of schools, 34% felt the same way about private companies and 32% about groups of parents. This indicates that opposition to the idea of a faith school in (S1) could be grounded in wider concerns about the privatisation of public institutions. But, while the question of who ought to run schools in this more general sense is both interesting and contentious, an examination of this topic is, by definition, tangential to the specific issue of what (if anything) is wrong with *faith* schooling. For this reason, I shall set it aside and focus instead on those reasons specific to faith groups; reasons which purportedly make these groups unsuitable to govern schools and which don't apply to other kinds of organisation.

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[19] A British teaching union.

The first thing to note about the latter two categories of objection to faith schools in (S1) is that they tend to be motivated by views about the characteristics exhibited by faith schools in other senses of the term (particularly (S2) and (S4)). In other words, when opposition to the prospect of religious organisations managing schools is raised, it generally originates from the thought that faith groups participate (or will expect their pupils to participate) in activities which make them ill-suited to provide education. For example, in a 2006 policy briefing, The British Humanist Association (BHA)[20] voices concern over the proliferation of "schools run by diverse religious groups" (BHA, 2006). However, every one of the reasons provided against the purported explosion of these institutions refers to features outlined in (S2), (S3) and (S4). For instance, the document questions the ability of "distinctively Christian" schools with the explicit mission to "Nourish those of the faith; Encourage those of other faiths; Challenge those who have no faith" to provide an education which serves the whole community. It also challenges faith school admissions policies on the basis that they represent "covert selection".

What's more, even when criticisms of faith schooling are strictly limited to reservations about public funding,[21] they will still be attributable to what religious organisations *do* when they manage schools. Here, the objection is not so much that religious schools seek to transmit controversial religious doctrines to children and young people, but that this mission is not something the state should be expected to support.[22] Nevertheless, it

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[20] Now known as Humanists UK.

[21] The question of state funding for religious schools is addressed by numerous commentators, but for a summary of some of the issues see Jackson (2006) and Merry (2007).

[22] The BHA document certainly reflects this sort of objection, but the fact it also refers to Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989)— according to which children have a right to freedom of expression—suggests a concern about the involvement of religious organisations in any capacity, even in private institutions.

necessarily rests on an idea about other characteristics of the school; characteristics such as its overall aims and what happens inside the classroom.

Of course, it seems *possible* that suitably open-minded faith organisations could run non-denominational or entirely secular schools.[23] I am not, at this stage, in a position to assess whether such institutions would constitute a legitimate form of faith-based education, but for current purposes it is sufficient to note that, in general, objections to faith schools conceived as schools run by faith organisations either amount to wider objections about private organisations running public institutions or will, in most cases, involve objections about faith schools in one of the other senses. For this reason, (S1) is a peripheral rather than core definition of such institutions.

§1.4 (S2) Schools with Religiously Selective Admissions

As previously mentioned, a key difference between non-denominational schools and religious schools in much of the UK[24] is that, when oversubscribed, the latter may use faith-based admissions criteria. Critics object to this practice for two main reasons. First, they argue it is discriminatory; it involves the selection of pupils on morally objectionable grounds. Second, it is divisive and may lead to a range of other issues including a lack of social cohesion or, at the level of individual pupils, a failure to develop valuable skills and dispositions.[25] I begin with the latter type of criticism.

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[23] Of course, opponents of faith schools might treat this possibility with a degree of residual suspicion. They might suspect religious organisations of ulterior motives or attempts to smuggle religion into schooling by the back door. The labelling of 'faith-ethos' schools — English schools which are run by religiously affiliated organisations but are not permitted to indulge in confessional religious education or worship — as "faith schools by stealth" (Mansell, 2017) definitely suggests this is likely.

[24] Faith-based admissions policies are used extensively in England, Wales and Northern Ireland but only some councils in Scotland select on religious grounds (Fair Admissions, 2017)

[25] Others object to the use of public money to fund a form of schooling from which many are excluded, but since this criticism is a subspecies of the first, I will (briefly) consider it in concert with that objection.

Divisiveness-type objections take a number of different forms, but all share the basic assumption that separate (faith) schools encourage pupils to associate solely (or predominantly) with people who share the same identity and/or belief system and, therefore, "reinforce religious or ethnic identities such that children who attend [these schools] develop a preference for associating with members of their own group" (Short, 2002, p.560) While such preferences may not be problematic in and of themselves,[26] critics of separate schools maintain that by limiting contact with 'outsiders' segregated environments reinforce negative or intolerant attitudes in pupils and are therefore more likely to contribute to inter-communal conflict and hostility than so-called 'common schools' (see Dawkins, 2001; Judge, 2001; Pring, 2008).

Divisiveness-type[27] objections may look as if they focus solely on the harms separate schools are (purportedly) likely to inflict on society as a whole— opponents might suggest that such schools will have difficulty promoting the attitudes conducive to good citizenship (Kymlicka, 2001), or are less likely to "have a distinctive ethos which makes them open to the pluralism of the wider society" (Callan, 2004, p. 164) for example. However, they are often motivated by an explicit concern for individual development. Many liberal theorists of education worry that separate schools threaten the attitudes and/or aptitudes necessary to live well and function in religiously and ethnically diverse liberal societies. For example, Levinson (1999, pp. 34-35) worries that a lack of exposure to a "plurality of values" will hinder the development of autonomy. This sentiment is echoed by Callan who

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[26] As Halstead and McLaughlin (2005) point out, there is a difference between the choice to group myself with others with whom I share an aspect of my identity, characteristics and/or interests and the "divisiveness" that leads to "negative and harmful social phenomena" such as ghettoisation, intolerance and radicalisation.

[27] While the charge of 'divisiveness' is one which proponents of faith schools are keen to defend themselves against (See Short (2002), Halstead & McLaughlin (2005), Grace (2003; 2012)), the term is rather more prevalent in the popular media than it is in the academic literature on separate schooling. A view supported by Short's reference to a debate "conducted largely through newspaper columns" (Short, 2002, p.559).

maintains that, if children are to receive an education which "eschews ethical servility" and adequately respects their interest in "sovereignty", they will need to attend schools which, "provide not only exposure to ethical diversity but [take] some active measures to enable independent critical reflection on that diversity" (Callan, 2004, p.190).

Unlike divisiveness-type objections, which may locate the harms caused by separate faith schools in their effects on both insiders *and* outsiders,[28] discrimination objections to religious selection focus almost entirely on the effects these policies have on those who are not part of the school community (particularly, although not exclusively, those who wish to join that community).[29] One reason parents give for selecting faith schools (and policy-makers give for supporting and retaining them) is that they are, in some sense, "better" than other types of school.[30] Here, better is often used as a proxy for performance in examinations, but may nevertheless be accompanied by, *inter alia*, claims to more successful discipline, more virtuous or moral pupils, or the development of a distinctive type of community ethos. Discrimination objections arise from the idea that, by favouring coreligionists in the competition for these goods, religiously selective policies illegitimately disadvantage those from backgrounds of other or no faith (Shorten, unpublished). And, while private schools (both non-denominational or otherwise) may also disadvantage outsiders (see Swift, 2003), some critics of the English system's support for

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[28] By 'outsiders' I mean those who are, for one reason or another, deemed to be outside of a school community; this could be pupils wishing to attend the school, the parents of those pupils, pupils from other schools with no desire to attend the school in question, and the wider society as a whole. By 'insiders' I mean the pupils, parents and teachers who are recognised as forming a legitimate part of the school community.

[29] Of course, admissions are not the only area where faith schools have been accused of discriminatory behaviour. Mason (2005) notes that examples of discrimination identified in the faith school system as part of a Home Office study into (illegal) religious discrimination included "aspects of the National Curriculum, collective worship, inflexibility over dress, holidays and examination time-tables, school outings and marginalisation" (Mason, 2005, p.75). Here, the parties affected are usually members of the school community but who identify with a different religious community.

[30] E.g. Sidwell (2016); Arthur, J (2005); Schagen & Schagen (2005); Cairns, J (2011).

religiously selective schools[31] see the fact that these institutions are publicly funded as particular cause for consternation (NSS, 2017).

Of late, the question of religiously selective admissions has become increasingly central to public debates about faith schooling in England.[32] But, while the issue raises a number of substantive philosophical problems, I am inclined to argue that (S2) is, at most, a peripheral definition of the term. To demonstrate why, I will briefly examine two real-life cases in which religiously selective admissions policies have been contested.

Case One

In March 2011, the Bishop of Oxford, the Right Reverend John Pritchard, announced that Church of England schools ought to limit the number of places reserved for children from Christian backgrounds to 10%. The proposal sparked considerable controversy, with some critics "[suggesting] that allowing 'just anybody' into Church schools would 'dilute' them and remove their Christian identity." (Ekklesia, 2011)

Case Two

In December 2009, the UK Supreme Court ruled in the case of the JFS versus E. The JFS,[33] is a state funded, over-subscribed Jewish school in London. E brought a legal case against the school when it refused to admit his son (M) on the grounds the boy's mother, a convert to Judaism, was not Jewish according to religious

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[31] Britain is one of just 4 OECD countries who sanction religious selection in state schools. The others are Ireland, Israel and Estonia. (Musset, 2012, p. 15)

[32] The issue was reignited in 2016 when Prime Minister, Theresa May, announced her government's intention to drop the 50% cap on religious admissions for new Free Schools and Academies (May, 2016; for commentary, see also Cantle, 2016; Wareham, 2016).

[33] Formerly known as The Jewish Free School.

orthodoxy. The boy's father was Jewish by birth, but his mother was born to an Irish Roman Catholic family and underwent conversion at a traditionalist[34] synagogue.

At the time of M's application, the school's over-subscription policy:

> [gave] precedence in admission to those children recognised as Jewish by the Office of the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Commonwealth ("the OCR").

But:

> The OCR only recognises a person as Jewish if: (i) that person is descended in the matrilineal line from a woman whom the OCR would recognise as Jewish; or (ii) he or she has undertaken a qualifying course of Orthodox conversion. (UKSC, 2009a)

The court set out to determine whether, by taking the policy to its logical conclusion, the school had "directly discriminated against [the boy] on the grounds of his ethnic origins." It concluded (by a majority of five to four) that this was indeed the case.

Although both these cases challenge current policy with respect to religious selection, they address the issue in different ways. Pritchard's statement suggests that overly restrictive admissions will act as a barrier to the ability of Church schools to realise a distinctive form of educational justice for local people. While these institutions ought to reserve "a proportion of places for church youngsters... that number ought to be minimised because [the church's] primary function… is to serve the wider community" (Pritchard cited in Marley, 2011). In other words, Church schools provide educational goods which ought to be available to everyone regardless of background. Irrespective of whether, unlike

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[34] Masorti.

Ainsworth (see §1.1), Prichard thinks a Church school is the *same thing* as a faith school, his position implies that he considers religiously selective admissions policies irrelevant to the ability of a Church school to deliver a faith education.[35] Were he inclined towards the understanding of faith schools posited in (S2), it seems certain he would not identify Church schools as such institutions. But if he does not regard 'faith school' to be a narrow, pejorative term reserved for identifying schools with restrictive admissions policies, then he is necessarily committed to an understanding as outlined in one of the other senses. Either way, the selection of (S2) as a core definition would, at least to the extent these institutions avoid religious selection, involve excluding Church schools from any further discussion of the legitimacy of faith schooling. This prospect would make for a less than comprehensive analysis of the overall topic. Not only do laypeople continue to call Church schools 'faith schools' in spite of the best efforts of the C of E to eschew the term, but some of the more substantive features of these institutions (especially their additional aims (see §1.6)) seem to suggest this nomenclature is more than a mere misnomer.

In contrast to Church schools, the "primary function" of the JFS, at least as the governing body saw it, was "to preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of orthodox Judaism," and "serve its [own] community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Jewish belief and practice." (UKSC, 2009b, para 163) Nevertheless, while the conduct of the JFS's representatives suggests a belief in the importance of religiously selective admissions for maintaining a distinctive religious ethos, it is by no means obvious that even they would think the definition outlined in (S2)

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[35] Indeed, the stipulation that a mere 10% of places should be reserved for children with Churchgoing backgrounds is so minimal as to be tokenistic. One certainly wonders if there is a specific reason for the figure. Is there an evidence-based rationale or did Prichard merely think it was the lowest number that could be specified without abandoning religious admissions entirely?

adequately captures the most significant feature of a faith school. Indeed, it seems unlikely that any proponent of faith-based education would think that a religiously restrictive admissions policy could be a sufficient condition for appropriate use of the term. To understand why, one need only consider the details of the legal case against the JFS. M's family were motivated to bring the case because they believed the school was offering a good (a Jewish education) which they were denied on the basis of a feature of their identity they believed was irrelevant (their child's ethnic background). Since the family sought to overturn the admissions policy, from their perspective, it could not, in itself, define the school. Of course, here it might be objected there is no reason to think the family must have opposed the *religiously* selective aspect of the policy, they merely took umbrage with the manner in which it had been applied to their own faith claims. M's family could consistently believe the school made a mistake with respect to the specifics of the policy whilst fully endorsing a (different) policy designed to ensure the school was only open to Jewish pupils.

However, the latter argument still signifies the insufficiency of (S2). This is because it demonstrates that, to avoid a form of the discrimination objection, religiously selective admissions policies must be justified on the grounds that the goods faith schools offer are of distinctive value to pupils from religious backgrounds; a value that warrants prioritising worshipping families in the competition for places. Wrongful discrimination occurs when an individual is disfavoured on the basis of some or other irrelevant feature of her identity (Flew, 1990). But, while in M's case the JFS fell foul of the law, they had at least intended to award places to applicants who, because of their religious identity, were best suited to or

could make best use of the goods on offer. [36] In other words, the admissions policy was designed (perhaps unsuccessfully) to ensure the fair distribution of a Jewish education as well as protect access to that form of education for generations to come. [37]

Whether or not it is true that pupils from faith backgrounds are (more) entitled to be educated in faith schools than those of no faith, or even that the maintenance of a distinctive religious ethos requires a "critical mass" of pupils who share a school's "mission" (Brighouse, 2009, p. 90),[38] it makes little sense to say that religiously selective admissions could adequately define the character of those schools; the education faith schools seek to offer will drive the requirement for religiously selective admissions policies, not the other way around. At most (S2) only partially explains what it is for an institution to be a faith school. Parents who seek out a faith-based education believe there something distinctive about it, and this is likely to be something more than the fact it groups their child with others from families with whom they share a world-view. This is not to say that parents will never seek out separate schools because they think there is something beneficial about separation, simply that, in most cases, the choice to separate

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[36] It was only because, for the Orthodox Jewish community, religious identity is constituted by ethnic identity that a case could be brought at all. Indeed, although Lady Hale ruled against the school, she did not argue that schools ought not to select on religious grounds and even wondered if "discrimination law should modify its rigid adherence to formal symmetry and recognise a greater range of justified departures than it does at present" (UKSC, 2009b, para. 69).

[37] I explore this topic in more detail elsewhere (Clayton, Mason, Swift & Wareham, unpublished).

[38] Although Brighouse maintains that religious selection is discriminatory, he is nevertheless persuaded that, in cases where the number of religious pupils falls below a minimal level, faith schools will be unable to retain their distinctive character. He therefore recommends that they be allowed to reserve 30% of places for children from faith backgrounds and that the remainder of places should be allocated via a "weighted lottery" (Brighouse, 2009, p.90)

will serve a more fundamental aim; this could be to inculcate religious beliefs or simply to limit exposure to rival beliefs and the kinds of people who hold them.[39] [40]

All this suggests that what really matters to an adequate analysis of the legitimacy of faith schools is a definition (or range of definitions) predicated upon the fundamental aims of faith education. We can only really determine how seriously we ought to take concerns about divisiveness and discrimination through close consideration of the goods faith schools are supposed to offer — do they constitute goods at all? And, if so are selective admissions policies necessary to facilitate their transmission or distribution? Perhaps it is true that separate faith schools fail to develop autonomy or make worse citizens than those educated in common schools. But, we can only establish whether this is a problem if we are unable to show they offer something else of worth, or that the goods they offer carry insufficient weight in comparison to the harms they are thought to engender. The upshot is that pronouncements on both the justifiability of selective admissions policies and the legitimacy of the wider project of faith schooling cannot be made in the absence of an understanding of what happens inside such schools. Since, "a major determinant (and perhaps *the* major determinant) of the effects [faith schools have] on students and the

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[39] This needn't mean exposure to people of other faith. Parents from non-Christian religious groups often express a preference for sending their children to Christian schools rather than non-denominational ones "because [Christian schools] recognise the importance of faith." (see Halstead, 2009, p.54)

[40] Of course, parents *could* seek out separate faith-schools for all kinds of reasons which have very little to do with faith. The claim that faith-schools provide a superior academic education has inspired many parents of no faith to adopt the dictum, "on your knees, avoid the fees" and feign belief to ensure their child's admission into a good faith-school (Fraser, 2010). However, just as parents helping their children to cheat in the entrance examinations to academically selective schools will tell us very little about the legitimacy of academic selection, it seems clear that, beyond highlighting the fact that these schools offer desirable educational goods, parents who pretend to have faith will be similarly unenlightening to any discussion of the legitimacy of faith schooling.

community is the faith school curriculum," (Short, 2002, p.564) this must include the curricula these schools advance; what they teach and how they teach it.[41]

§1.5 (S3) Schools with Pupils from One Faith Background

(S3) is the most eccentric of the five senses outlined in §1.2. Indeed, one would be unlikely to hear the phrase '*de-facto* faith school' outside of an academic discussion. What primarily differentiates (S3) from the other senses of the term is intention. In the other senses, faith schools are created deliberately — the demographic make-up of a local area may well influence the decision to open a faith school, but the school's character will be more than a product of a co-incidence like proximity to a particular religious community. In contrast, *de facto* faith schools are religiously homogenous, but not by design.[42]

If it can be shown that, as per some of the divisiveness-type objections considered in the last section, culturally or religiously homogenous schools are bad for pupils in cases where those schools actively pursue that homogeneity, it seems plausible to think that at least some of the harms of segregation will also be produced by schools which are

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[41] Of course, one might argue that when faith schools enact selective admissions policies, the 'hidden curriculum' (A set of (hidden) influences which function at the level of organisational structure and culture) teaches something quite different from what the "manifest curriculum" (Gordon, 1982) *claims* is being taught. The position that schools should *model* desirable behaviour and attitudes is somewhat endorsed by advocates of common schools who maintain that we cannot teach political virtues such as civility "just by telling pupils to be nice" to people from a diverse range of backgrounds, instead we must draw out this virtue by creating the kinds of social environments which cultivate it. Kymlicka says something similar about public reasonableness:

> Common schools teach public reasonableness not only by *telling* students that there are a plurality of religious views in the world, and that reasonable people disagree on the merits of these views. They also create the social circumstances whereby students can see the reasonableness of these disagreements. It is not enough to simply tell students that the majority of the people of the world do not share their religion. So long as one is surrounded by people who share one's faith, one may still succumb to the temptation to think that everyone who rejects one's religion is somehow illogical or depraved (Kymlicka, 2001, p.304).

[42] It is entirely possible that pupils of one religion will predominate in religious schools *without* selective admissions policies, but, since (as in S2) this homogeneity will almost certainly be the product of familial affinity with the *aims* of the school, I will reserve (S3) for non-denominational schools which happen to have homogenous pupil demographics.

unintentionally homogenous.[43] Indeed, the issue of segregated non-denominational schools is often raised by proponents of faith-based education who wish to demonstrate that faith schools (in a more standard sense) do not constitute the sole locus of problems like ghettoisation and discrimination. Nevertheless, the critic of faith schools needn't commit herself to the view that faith schools are the *only* schools which face problems of segregation and discrimination, or indulge in practices which will act as a barrier to the development of autonomy in order to oppose them. As Ron Best puts it, even if non-denominational schools are no better at promoting the development of "autonomous and democratically competent persons" than faith schools:

> This would have no more force than an argument for supporting schools which beat children with a stick because the alternative schools beat them at least as hard with a belt! Neither makes beating okay, and neither is a good school. (Best, 2011, p.6)[44]

While intention may be irrelevant to the threat segregated schools pose to pupils, it *is* relevant to the question of what should and shouldn't fall within the remit of a thesis which seeks to establish whether faith schools constitute legitimate institutions in liberal democratic societies. The action necessary to prevent the harms caused by ghettoisation and segregation (if indeed these are harms) in *de facto* faith schools will be quite different (and, in all likelihood, more difficult) from that required to eliminate the same issues in other types of faith school. In the main, the former type of school exists as a result of a

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[43]This is arguably evidenced by the aforementioned 'Trojan Horse' case in Birmingham (see §1.2). See also the Cantle Report which was commissioned following the race riots in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001 (Cantle, 2001).

[44] Although, if it were possible to make a case that non-denominational schools are *necessarily* subject to the same difficulties or objections as faith schools (defined in any sense), this would certainly be more problematic.

range of political policies; primarily housing, but also welfare, employment, immigration and so on. This is not something which can (or should) be of primary concern to an analysis of the rights and wrongs of religious schooling because, while philosophically interesting, it simply cannot be addressed without engaging with issues which extend far beyond the idea of what makes a good education.

If *de-facto* faith schools are undesirable, the key objections against them are likely to originate from a similarity between these institutions and those outlined in (S2). However, if, as I maintained in §1.4, what is actually of concern to opponents (and proponents) of faith-schools is what happens *inside* those schools (and, in this regard, *de-facto* faith schools are identical or very similar to other non-denominational schools[45]) then *de-facto* faith-schools can serve as little more than a useful case study for those who wish to demonstrate that religious homogeneity is detrimental to the social cohesion or the development of the kinds of capacities highlighted by Kymlicka and Callan. For this reason, discussion of (S3) will henceforth remain minimal.

§1.6 (S4) Schools which Teach for Belief in Religious Propositions

While there may be various reasons for selecting a school with religious character,[46] the choice usually signifies the intention to inculcate a particular set of religious beliefs, initiate[47] a child into a faith or make it more likely that she will adopt certain convictions.

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[45] Although there is a possibility that 'communal worship' will function differently in institutions where there is a community faith.

[46] There is evidence to suggest that, even in cases where families share the faith of the school to which they are applying, religious character is unlikely to be the most important factor in school choice— academic standards, location and discipline have been shown to play a far greater role (YouGov, 2013).

[47] Here the term 'initiate' is used in the sense of introducing a child to a (faith-based) cultural "conversation" rather than a form of religious (initiation) ceremony or rite of passage. The latter use is well-established in the philosophy of education and originates from Oakeshott (2001). It was later adopted by RS Peters as central part of his liberal theory of education (1963 &1966) and is also evident in Eammon Callan's description of Terence McLaughlin's 'initiation thesis' (discussed in more depth later in this chapter) (Callan, 1985).

Indeed, it is rather difficult to understand what having a 'religious character' might mean in the absence of one of these aims. The features which defined faith schools in (S1) and (S2)— schools managed by religious organisations and those with faith-based admissions criteria— are conceptually distinct from the intention to pass on a faith, but they do tend to be connected to it in practice. While some religious organisations view the commitment to provide (general) education as an altruistic service to society[48] and others design their educational offerings to meet the specific needs of their own communities,[49] they appear to share a commitment to the aim of religious nurture.[50] Similarly, while some faith schools use faith-based admissions criteria and others don't, it seems reasonable to think that, where these policies do exist, they are designed to support the mission of faith cultivation.[51]

Of course, there may be a difference between the aim to *initiate* a child into a faith and the aim to inculcate (or even indoctrinate) that faith. In the context of religious schooling, the term *initiate* is generally used to describe the *introduction* of a child to a faith and, therefore, is supposed to signify something lighter and less oppressive than *inculcate* (which has its etymological roots in the Latin verb *inculcare* meaning to "force upon, stamp in… or tread down" (Harper, 2017)). The latter indicates a far more robust (and possibly less defensible) aim than the former and it is plausible to think of them as

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[48] See Church of England Education Office (2016).

[49] This is the position of the Catholic Church in England (see Cooling et al., 2016, p.18)

[50] Of course, what precisely 'nurture' involves will vary between (and even within) religious groups. The C of E claims to offer an education which is to open to all but is still "committed to offering [pupils] an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way which enhances their lives" (Church of England Education Office (2016, p.13). On the other hand, the aim of a Catholic education is often assumed to be the production of young people who *practice* their faith (although this is contested, see Whittle, 2015, pp. 22-23).

[51] Perhaps this is why, when parents wish to send their children to selective faith schools for reasons completely unrelated to religious initiation, there seems to be something intuitively problematic about the choice; a sense in which such people are not abiding by the rules of the game, or, at any rate, the spirit of those rules.

representing points on a continuum or, perhaps more accurately, a spectrum, where features are related but vary in terms of degree and expression. Initiation, inculcation and the practice of sheltering children from alternative beliefs and influences (be it through selective admissions policies or something else) are intended to make it more likely that certain world-views are adopted in favour of others. But the extent to which these practices are permissible could depend upon an array of factors including (but not limited to): the content of the beliefs being inculcated or introduced; the manner in which they are introduced; the age and developmental level of the children to whom they are introduced; and the nature of the alternative beliefs from which parents, teachers or communities seek to shelter their children. Clearly, the discussion of such matters ought to form a significant part of any philosophical analysis of faith schools as defined in (S4) and the fact this definition draws us closer to the questions which have preoccupied researchers in the field suggests that this characterisation ought to form a central plank of any wider investigation into the legitimacy of faith schools in liberal democratic societies.

The idea that faith schools are predominantly defined by the aim to inculcate religious beliefs is highly prevalent in the literature on these institutions[52] and, although authors differ over the extent to which they consider this aim to be philosophically problematic, there does appear to be a consensus that there is a *prima facie* level tension between liberal education and religious nurture which requires explanation; that some forms of religious inculcation are beyond the pale and permissible cases must be justified.

As we saw in §1.2, one version of the view that we ought to define faith schools according to their confessional aims is Michael Hand's claim that faith schools "teach for the belief

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[52] See Thiessen (1993); Dwyer (2001); Hand (2003; 2004) Siegel (2004); McMullen (2007).

in religious propositions." (Hand, 2003) It is to the possible philosophical ramifications of this position that we now turn.

According to Hand, all faith schools share "the fundamental aim of passing on religious beliefs." (Hand, 2003, p.91) It is nevertheless worth emphasising that all that matters here is the *aim* of passing on religious beliefs. A school need not achieve this aim in order to be accurately described as a faith school. As Hand puts it:

> To admit that faith schools teach for belief in religious propositions is to admit that faith schools make deliberate attempts to pass on religious beliefs to at least some pupils. It is *not* to claim that these attempts are (1) successful, (2) undertaken by all members of staff or (3) directed at all pupils. (Hand, 2003, p.91)

For Hand, the aim of teaching for belief in religious propositions is morally dubious because it requires teaching for belief in propositions which are, by their very nature, "not known to be true". We should accept the premise that no religious proposition is known to be true because "the truth or falsity of religious propositions is a matter of disagreement among reasonable people" and "religious belief… is a matter of *faith* rather than knowledge." (Hand, 2003, p.93.) The successful transmission of beliefs which are not known to be true "bypasses the reason" of pupils and is, therefore, indoctrinatory.[53]

Of course, the claim that religion fails to constitute a form of knowledge is disputed, as is the view that indoctrination is a necessarily negative term. While Callan and Arena point out that "a pejorative meaning is now firmly attached to the word indoctrination," they note that this is only because "a much older use of the word as a synonym for instruction was gradually overtaken by another that now clearly connotes moral wrongdoing." (Callan

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[53] This argument is considered in detail in Chapter V.

and Arena, 2009, p.104) Nonetheless, some still argue that because "children have to learn to follow rules before they understand the rationale for them… it is necessary for them to begin by taking on trust things which at a later stage will merit re-thinking as and when they become capable of doing so." (Shone, 1973, p.7) These theorists maintain that "taking on trust" amounts to a weaker, largely positive form of indoctrination which, "is a general and unavoidable educational necessity." (Shone, 1973, p.7)

The existence of these controversies suggests that, if I am to proceed with an examination of the moral legitimacy of faith schools as described in (S4), I will need to establish whether Hand is accurate to maintain that all attempts to transmit religious propositions via teaching are indoctrinatory. However, to accomplish this task, it will also be necessary both to provide an account of indoctrination and explain why (or under what circumstances) the practice is wrong. In Hand's view, the answer lies in the fact that indoctrination violates rationality. However, this may not be the only reason to avoid indoctrinatory teaching. Harvey Siegel (2004) broadly agrees with Hand's position on faith schools and indoctrination,[54] but his account of why teaching for belief in religious propositions is morally problematic also introduces the idea that such instruction is wrong because it constitutes an affront to the *autonomy* of pupils. This idea is common amongst opponents of faith education. Indeed, Hand is somewhat of an outlier in terms of this debate because he sees no reason to adopt autonomy as an educational aim and argues that, at least when defined as "a disposition to determine one's own actions," there is "no incompatibility between this disposition and the indoctrinated state of mind." (Hand, 2004a, p.353) Nevertheless, as Hand acknowledges in a paper intended to reject the

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[54] Although there are subtle differences which will be discussed in Chapter V.

viability of autonomy as an educational aim, this "dispositional" account is not the only one available:

> Arguing against autonomy is like trying to slay the Hydra: as soon as one shows the inadequacy of one account, two more spring up in its place. (Hand, 2006, p.536)

Regardless of whether this proliferation of conceptions signifies anything more than the idea of autonomy requires a degree of fine tuning, it is abundantly clear that any engagement with the subject of the legitimacy of faith schools defined in terms of an aim to inculcate religious beliefs must involve a considerable degree of engagement with the interplay between the concepts of indoctrination, rationality and autonomy. Indeed, this is further evidenced by the fact that many liberal theorists who support faith schools appeal to the idea that religious initiation supports rather than stymies autonomy.[55] It is for this reason that Brian Warnick calls the view that autonomy is a primary aim of education "the dominant position" in liberal educational theory.

According to the dominant position, autonomy is a fundamental aim of education because "it enables people to *choose* a life that is personally congenial and meaningful" (Warnick, 2012, p.414) rather than being "prisoners of [their] convictions" (Siegel, 2004, p.80). Proponents of this position generally claim that "the development of autonomy demands that students be exposed to different beliefs and traditions" (Warnick, 2012, p.414), and we have seen that one objection to faith schools in (S2) arises from the suggestion that they fail to adequately expose their pupils to such difference. However, genuine 'exposure' to different beliefs and traditions will usually involve more than simply allowing pupils to mix with those from differing backgrounds; children must also be able to see that some of

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[55] See McLaughlin (1984); Thiessen (1993); MacMullen (2007).

these differing ways of life are open to them if they so wish. And this is where the objections raised to (S2) and those which are raised to (S4) become entangled. It could be argued that schools which teach for belief in the tenets of a particular faith close down the possibility that other kinds of life are available; that by advancing a particular, comprehensive picture of the good life, they shut down a child's opportunity to select an alternative conception on her own behalf or violate her "right to an open future" (Feinberg, 1980, p.112).

As we saw in §1.4, some advocates maintain that, as long as some sort of critical mass of believers is preserved, faith schools can do without fully selective admissions policies and admit those of other and no faith. This could enable such institutions to avoid the charge that they stymie the development of autonomy by segregating pupils. However, as Siegel's indoctrination argument illustrates, there are other reasons for claiming that schools which attempt to inculcate, transmit or otherwise introduce pupils to a set of religious beliefs might be accused of hindering the development of autonomy. If a pupil is taught that she is a Christian, that Christians hold particular beliefs, and, therefore, she *must* hold these beliefs,[56] the process of putting her together with individuals who believe different things while continuing to subject her to a confessional religious education seems rather unlikely to enable her to engage imaginatively with the ideas and beliefs of those individuals. Certain conditions must prevail to ensure that contact doesn't simply compound stereotypes or solidify in group/out group attitudes.

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[56] Indeed, even if she is aware that other people make choices about their religious views but is conditioned or habituated in such a way that this is never a genuine option for her.

Interestingly, Geoffrey Short says something similar in *defence* of separate schooling.

Following empirical research on the *contact hypothesis*,[57] he maintains that there are five

conditions which must be met "if contact is to be effective in reducing prejudice" these

include, "the potential for real acquaintance" that "the social norms of the contact situation

[favour] group equality and inter-group association" and that "those involved must not

reinforce stereotypical perceptions." (Short, 2002, p.568) While Short is dismissive of the

possibility that "pluralist schools" will be able to adequately meet even these conditions,[58]

my inclination is that, to ensure they are fully able to foster autonomy, schools may need

to add a further condition pertaining to some kind of imaginative or reflective engagement

with the views of others.[59]

Of course, and as Warnick points out, the dominant position is not uncontested. Those who

posit that autonomy is not a valuable educational aim (or not valuable full stop) may be

unmoved by the argument that children should be exposed to differing beliefs and

traditions even if exposure will enhance the possibility of *choosing* a life which is

"personally congenial and meaningful." They may think it is far more important that

children are introduced to a (or possibly *the*) conception of the good life which is

(objectively) *valuable*. There will, nevertheless, be a limit on the extent to which such

views can be accommodated in a *liberal* theory of the legitimacy of faith education and

thus my engagement with them will be similarly limited. Perhaps more interesting from a

liberal perspective are those theorists who both endorse faith schooling (or what Warnick

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[57] See Allport (1954), Amir (1969) and Cook (1978).
[58] He calls the assumption that they will a "counsel of perfection" (Short, 2002, p. 568). Nevertheless, there is recent empirical evidence to suggest that Short is wrong about this matter and that pluralist schools really can contribute to social cohesion, tolerance and trust between diverse groups (see Hewstone et al., 2017).
[59] Whether the requisite kind of engagement precludes a confessional mission will depend on some of the issues discussed in the latter half of the thesis.

calls 'comprehensive education'[60] [61] (henceforth, CE)) and liberal ideals like autonomy,
viewing the former as a means to achieve the development of the latter. Two such theorists
are Shelley Burtt (2003) and Terence McLaughlin (1984).

For Burtt, CE can facilitate autonomy in a variety of ways: through enabling pupils to
engage with "hard cases" where "the right thing to do is not clear, even with the guidance
of the tradition" (Burtt, 2003 cited in Warnick, 2012, p.415), by helping pupils raised in
minority religious cultures or who "live apart from the cultural mainstream" to develop the
"moral courage" necessary to keep their traditions in the face of opposition, and by
subjecting pupils to a diversity of beliefs and understandings *within* cultural or religious
traditions. For McLaughlin (1984),[62] following Ackerman (1980), some forms of CE may
provide children with a coherent 'primary culture' which, as long as they avoid
indoctrination and "[accept] the eventual exposure of [a] child to other influences which
might help him to form his life ideals," (McLaughlin, 1984, p.82) will help rather than
hinder the development of autonomy. This is what Callan (1985, 2009) calls the 'initiation
thesis': the idea that "the initiation of children into religious practice [may] secure an
understanding of religion unavailable, or at least less readily available, in the absence of
initiation, and that the relevant understanding [enables] or [enhances] in some way

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[60] By which he means "a type of education with the primary purpose of instilling in students a particular set of fundamental beliefs and cultural allegiances" (Warnick, 2012, p.412) rather than a "comprehensive school" in the sense in which the term is commonly used in the UK to describe a non-selective state school.
[61] While, Warnick stresses that 'comprehensive education' need not be regarded as "synonymous with religious schooling" (Warnick, 2012, p.412) it is apparent that the primary examples that we will have of schools who promulgate comprehensive ideals will be schools which adhere to our description of faith-schools in (S4) of the term.
[62] It should be noted that in this paper, McLaughlin discusses religious upbringing and the rights of parents rather than schooling, however, as he notes, "the implication of the discussion for parental rights over formal education and schooling… will be apparent" (McLaughlin, 1984, p.75)

autonomous choice regarding religion." (Callan, 2009, p.11) In this way, religious

schooling could be looked at as a way of facilitating rather than obstructing autonomy.

Of course, and as mentioned above, there are a myriad of different ways of understanding

autonomy. Burtt eschews the identification of autonomy with *choice* about religious or

cultural affiliation, preferring instead to focus on *independence* of thought and action (see

Warnick, 2012, p.414). While McLaughlin's assertion that a religious upbringing can,

when adequately (and age appropriately) paired with meaningful opportunities for contact

with alternative views, enhance the possibility of forming one's own "life ideals" suggests

his conception involves a form of conscious decision-making with respect to those ideals.[63]

In contrast, Siegel's conception of (critical) autonomy doesn't particularly focus on

understandings of the good life at all— it certainly pays less attention to non-cognitive

states (e.g. desires, urges and habits) than we might expect. Instead, he seems more

concerned with the ability of each individual to subject her deeply held *beliefs* to "critical

scrutiny." (Siegel, 2004, p.80) One reason for this difference in emphasis stems from

Siegel's adoption of Hand's (rather narrow) definition of faith schools as institutions

which teach for *belief in religious propositions*. But while it is largely true that faith

schools are (or have traditionally been) committed to this mission,[64] there appears to be

more to the transmission of faith than the mere inculcation of belief. Indeed, in many

cases, religious organisations explicitly stipulate that the education they offer is designed

to "educate the whole person" (Southall, 2017) or to nurture "life in all its fullness"

(Church of England Education Office, 2016, p.2)[65] signifying that their purpose extends

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[63] Even if they cannot be chosen to begin with.
[64] The question of whether faith schools must commit themselves to the project of belief transmission is discussed in Chapters V and VI.
[65] Similar ideas can be found in Islamic education where, although the acquisition of 'knowledge' (including 'revealed' knowledge) is fundamental, a basic aim is to enable children to grow into "good adults" who,

beyond the cognitive and involves the cultivation of certain attitudes, values, behaviours, habits and practices. Whether these non-cognitive outcomes are designed to support the transmission of belief or *vice versa*,[66] (S4) does not even fully capture their existence let alone their importance to faith or faith educators. For this reason, I suggest (S4) be modified to:

> *Sense 4a (S4a) Schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith via the transmission of religious beliefs, values and/or practices.*

This definition will allow us to fully address many of the most philosophically interesting problems raised by our cursory consideration of the other senses, but nevertheless retains a close resemblance to common sense use(s) of the term. For the remainder of the thesis, unless explicitly stated otherwise, the reader should take the term 'faith school' to mean an institution defined in (S4a).

§1.7 A Note on (S5) - Schools with Curricula "drawn from religious beliefs"

As previously noted, (S5) marks a subtle shift from traditional 'faith-education' (that is, confessional religious education paired with a standard curriculum) towards 'faith-based education' where religious values infuse the curriculum but are not cashed out in terms of the direct inculcation of religious beliefs.

I am broadly sympathetic with Hand's view that, in England at least, the current policy climate dictates that religious organisations will continue to play a role in state education

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amongst other things, will have a "balanced… integrated personality, made up of the heart, the spirit, the intellect, the feelings and the bodily senses" (Halstead, 2004, p.523).

[66] One way of understanding the institution of religion is as a means of social control, so it is not beyond the realms of comprehension that, in some cases, religious beliefs are used to secure certain types of behaviour rather than the other way around (see Stark & Bainbridge, 1997).

for quite some time. For this reason, Hand's proposal for "a new dawn" in "faith-based education" (Hand, 2012) can be seen as a practical way for those with concerns about indoctrination to come to a compromise with the religiously-minded on the subject of faith schooling.

However, because Hand's proposal constitutes a possible *solution* to the charges so often levelled at (traditional) faith schools, it does not seem wise to adopt (S5) as a fundamental definition of the term. This does not mean that (S5) does not deserve in depth consideration; an analysis of faith schools of this type will form a substantial part of the final chapter of this thesis.[67] Nevertheless, as a new and, as yet, relatively un-discussed area of the literature, the idea of an education based on faith which does not seek to impart religious belief is just one response to the problem of schools with "the fundamental aim of passing on religious beliefs" (Hand, 2003, p.91) and, as such, can only really supplant (S4a) as a normative proposal not a working definition.

§1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I considered five legitimate senses in which the phrase 'faith school' could be used and briefly discussed some of the philosophical problems each sense might engender. Henceforth, when I use the term 'faith school' I will be referring to (S4a): Schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith or inculcate particular religious beliefs, values and/or practices (unless explicitly stated otherwise). Since a fundamental criticism of faith schools of this type is that they are (perhaps necessarily) indoctrinatory, over the course of the next two chapters I will investigate and flesh out the concept of indoctrination in considerable depth. In Chapter II, I will establish precisely

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[67] See Chapter VI, §6.6.1 onwards.

what indoctrination means before, in Chapter III, explaining why the practice is morally

reprehensible.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS INDOCTRINATION?

§2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I noted that one of the most prevalent criticisms levelled against faith schools is that they are indoctrinatory. The extent to which this objection ought to motivate liberals to prohibit such institutions will depend on two factors: first, whether indoctrination is a practice which educators have a duty to avoid — whether it is wrong— and, second, whether faith schools have specific characteristics which mean they are necessarily indoctrinatory or, at the very least, more likely to indoctrinate their pupils than other types of school. However, neither of these questions can be answered in the absence of a thorough understanding of what indoctrination actually is. In this chapter, I analyse four criteria that are often proposed to provide necessary and/or sufficient conditions for indoctrination: method, content, intention and outcome. I conclude that the practice is best described as any teaching process which directly results in the inculcation of beliefs the believer holds separately from the evidence or reasons supporting them. The question of whether we should consider this state of mind (and the teaching which leads to it) harmful will be tackled in Chapter III and I will refrain from fully addressing the claim that teaching for religious belief is necessarily indoctrinatory until Chapter V. But, owing to the fact that, alongside certain political cases (e.g. education in Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany), 'hard-line' or fundamentalist confessionalism is generally taken to constitute a paradigm case of indoctrination, I will enter into some preliminary discussion of religious cases prior to

considering whether more moderate forms of religious instruction can avoid the accusation that they are similarly indoctrinatory.

As much of the literature makes clear, the turn towards the use of indoctrination as a term of moral condemnation is fairly recent. In a review of the concept's evolution, Richard H. Gatchel maintains that the advent of World War I marked a sea change with respect to pejorative use of the term. The Great War "acted as a catalyst in precipitating American[68] consciousness of the difference between democratic and absolutistic processes." (Gatchel, 1972, p.12) But while educators gradually began to "view indoctrination as the antithesis of education for life in a democracy," (Gatchel, 1972, p.14) the idea that non-rational educative processes may still be necessary in our dealings with very young children or to reproduce aspects of the existing social order — E.g. to cultivate morality or cultural norms— remained. What *does* appear to have changed is the desire to call any of these processes 'indoctrination'. Instead, the post war years saw an explosion of terms (socialisation, conditioning, enculturation, initiation, etc.) used to demarcate teaching[69]which may, perhaps legitimately, override, if not the basic need for "wittingness" and "voluntariness" on the part of the learner (Peters, 1966, p.42),[70] at the very least her (inchoate) rationality.

To discover whether this bracketing of 'acceptable' non-rational teaching practices from indoctrination is legitimate or necessary, we must first establish the boundaries of the conceptual territory occupied by 'indoctrination' as opposed to these other terms. To begin with, this task will be descriptive and I will try to set aside definitions which directly appeal

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[68] And, by extension, that of others in the developed West.

[69] Or training.

[70] In Peters' view, a process of learning may only be classed as 'education' if it satisfies, *inter alia*, the requirements of "wittingness" and "voluntariness". Essentially, this means that pupils must "understand what is expected of them" and must have some degree of awareness that there is something that they ought to grasp, learn or understand (Peters, 1966, p.41). For this reason, Peters argues that indoctrination cannot be claimed to violate this particular criterion of education in the same way that something like brainwashing or conditioning might (although it might still be problematic on the basis of one of Peters' other criteria of education).

to the (perceived) normative status of the practice; if indoctrination is a term that ought to be used pejoratively, it must have characteristics which set it apart from more acceptable forms of teaching, but the fact that it is generally used to mark disapproval cannot itself be such a characteristic.

§2.2 Indoctrination, Beliefs and Teaching

A primary feature of indoctrination is that it involves the transmission of beliefs rather than behaviours, habits or pro-attitudes. It is this which separates the concept from conditioning. As Thomas F Green puts it, although both indoctrination and conditioning fall outside "*the region of intelligence*" — both appear to bypass rational, cognitive processes—"we may indoctrinate people to *believe* certain things, but we condition them to *do*[71] certain things." (Green, 1972, p.25)

The notion that indoctrination is necessarily linked to the transmission of belief is echoed by John Wilson (1972, p.17) who also maintains that what distinguishes conditioning from indoctrination is the fact that the indoctrinated individual subscribes to a particular belief, whereas a conditioned individual will behave in a particular manner without (necessarily) subscribing to a related belief. It is for this reason the conditioned individual could plausibly claim to "have an irresistible feeling of repulsion about doing X" whilst simultaneously asserting that she knows "it is perfectly all right to do it." (Wilson, 1972, p. 17-18)[72]

But, while there is a link between indoctrination and the transmission of belief, it is clearly not the case that *all* belief transmission constitutes indoctrination. If one takes indoctrination

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[71] Or, perhaps, *feel* certain things.

[72] This view is somewhat complicated by the fact that it is perfectly possible for a conditioned individual to come to hold beliefs which endorse her compulsive feelings to behave in a particular way. For example, if a person was conditioned to feel revulsion in the presence of homosexuals, she might attempt to make up for the cognitive dissonance caused by these feelings by claiming that there was something morally wrong about being homosexual and ultimately come to endorse this belief.

to be a necessarily pejorative term, it is reasonably straightforward to explain why this should be the case. For if all belief transmission constituted indoctrination, it would be impossible to distinguish between indoctrination and the other kinds of teaching we not only expect to see in schools but that we commend rather than condemn. Recall, however, that at this stage we must try to avoid prejudicing the discussion against indoctrination in moral terms. The task is to get clear about the descriptive elements of the concept before examining its normative elements. So, if one wishes to withhold judgement on the claim that indoctrination *always* constitutes a miseducative process, is there something else which separates indoctrination from other sorts of teaching activities?

In order to clarify the distinction, Green provides a schematic representation – 'The Teaching Continuum' – to illustrate the relationships between a range of teaching activities including conditioning, training, instruction and indoctrination (Green, 1972, p.26). An expanded version also illustrates activities which are less controversially deemed morally unacceptable including intimidation and physical threat (on the side of the continuum concerned with behaviour and conduct) and propagandizing and lying (on the side which deals with knowledge and beliefs) (Green, 1972, p.28). [73] But, for Green, it is not a sliding scale of morality that determines where each practice sits on the continuum. What matters is the extent to which using each practice will necessitate that a teacher operates outside of the *region of intelligence*; the area of her mind that involves conscious, rational thought.

It has been argued that activities situated outside of Green's *region of intelligence* do not constitute teaching at all. Green's assertion that practices such as lying, propaganda and physical threat are located at the outer reaches of the continuum because any attempt to

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[73] See Appendix 1 for the Teaching Continuum and Appendix 2 for the Teaching Continuum Expanded (p.302).

include them in the concept of teaching "would require an extension and distortion of [that concept]" (Green, 1972, p.28) certainly supports this view.

 As Israel Scheffler puts it:

> What distinguishes teaching is its special connection with rational explanation and critical dialogue: with the enterprise of giving honest reasons and welcoming radical questions. The person engaged in teaching does not merely want to bring about belief, but to bring it about through the exercise of free rational judgment by the student. (Scheffler, 1965, p.11)

In other words, insofar as a person carrying out the more peripheral activities on the Teaching Continuum fails to engage with the rationality of her pupils, she fails to teach them at all.

Nevertheless, for present purposes, this claim seems to set the parameters on what may and may not be called a teaching activity far too narrowly. Our concern is to define what is meant by the term indoctrination with a view to establishing whether the process is morally acceptable. With this in mind, very little is gained by asserting that indoctrination simply fails to constitute a process which falls within the scope of the multifarious activities associated with teaching before we have established why the sort of teaching which engages rational processes is morally superior to those activities which don't, or, indeed, if indoctrination is one such process.

Furthermore, even if Scheffler is correct to assume that bad or miseducative teaching is a misnomer, in the present context, what matters most is that indoctrination involves the transmission of beliefs through learning;[74] in this respect, indoctrination *is* a teaching activity.

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[74] As opposed to some kind of artificial process such as a belief transmission machine or wonder drug.

As Paul Hirst points out:

> Teaching activities form a very broad category indeed, one which is in no sense restricted to those activities we think it appropriate for schools to undertake… In so far then as indoctrination and other activities involve the intention to bring about learning of some kind, they involve teaching, and in so far as they are themselves processes for bringing about learning of certain kinds, they are themselves forms of teaching. (Hirst, 1971, p.16)

In his discussion of the Teaching Continuum, Green notes that this representation of the conceptual territory covered by the term 'teaching' should not lead us to the erroneous belief that the divisions are clear cut. Indeed, the function of the continuum is to present us with a general idea of what is central to the concept of teaching rather than provide us with a fool proof way of defining every teaching activity with respect to strict criteria. What Green's continuum helps us to understand is that instances of indoctrination fall somewhere within the "molecular" concept of teaching and that they involve the transmission of belief. Green's later, more contentious claim: that indoctrinated beliefs are those held in a manner which keeps them "quite apart from their truth." (Green, 1972, p.25) – a modified version of which I will eventually defend— will require substantially more work to establish.

§2.3 Criteria of Indoctrination

In addition to the transmission of belief via teaching, philosophers have traditionally identified four supplementary criteria of indoctrination – method, content, intention and outcome.[75] [76]

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[75] Also known as 'consequence'.

[76] Note that while these criteria have been separated out for the purpose of discussion, the arguments they highlight are often subtly intertwined and lead in to one another.

In what follows, I will discuss each of the aforementioned criteria before concluding that, although each can guide our thinking about indoctrination and the pedagogical problems with which it is associated, only the outcome criterion is necessary for the practice to have occurred. Intention, method and content may act as premonitory signals to the practice or even ensure that it is more successful, but the concept is fundamentally defined by its effects on the learner.

§2.4 Method

In §2.2 I established that indoctrination is an activity (or process) which falls within the scope of a wider range of activities designated by the term 'teaching'. In this sense, indoctrination appears to be a method of teaching; it indicates one way in which the polymorphous activity of teaching can manifest itself. This may be one reason the assumption that indoctrination is best characterised by the methods a teacher uses to impart beliefs is intuitively plausible.

Nevertheless, while indoctrination is itself an identifiable sub-species of teaching, this should not lead us to conclude that particular methods are necessary (or even sufficient) for it to have occurred. This becomes clear when we consider what it might mean to single out a certain way of teaching as being necessarily indoctrinatory. Say one maintains that indoctrination is coextensive with authoritarian teaching practices like demanding obedience and acceptance of what the teacher has said, or with the prohibition of student questions. If this were so, then other ways of inculcating belief which currently fit into the set of activities many would call indoctrination, are ruled out as genuine cases of the phenomenon. The example of a charismatic persuader (such as a cult leader) who encourages questions but emotionally manipulates her followers springs to min, as does that of the teacher who does not feel the need to impose her authority heavy-handedly but frequently uses unreflective practices (such

as rote learning or memorisation) to pass on complicated or controversial explanations of doctrine.

Of course, one might argue that a common thread connecting the teaching methods used to indoctrinate is the fact that they "bypass reason", operate outside of the *region of intelligence,* or are non-rational in some regard. But from what follows we will see that these sorts of concern about methodology focus on the consequence or outcome of indoctrinatory teaching, not the specific methods used to achieve that outcome. If one endorses a method criterion of indoctrination, one is bound to the claim that specifiable teaching techniques – e.g. rote learning, drilling, etc. – constitute indoctrination. This is plainly not the same thing as asserting that *any* teaching method used to secure belief absent evidence and/or reason is indoctrinatory.

The foregoing discussion suggests that, like teaching, indoctrination is a polymorphous activity; it can be manifested through a wide variety of methods. If this claim is suitably persuasive, we have good reason to reject the method criterion. However, this is not the only plausible reason to abandon the notion that specific teaching techniques constitute just what it is for a practice to be indoctrinatory. A further reason for rejecting the method criterion arises from the fact that many of the non-rational or authoritarian teaching techniques which might be thought indicative of indoctrination have a credible role in less controversial practices. After all, if we assume that indoctrination entails learning through unreflective drilling, then we must face the (perhaps unpalatable) conclusion that a teacher who uses this method to ensure her pupils remember their times tables or French verbs has, in some sense, done something illegitimate. Of course, given that claims about separating the morally defensible from the morally reprehensible will not do if we are to stay true to the aim of sketching a descriptive view of the concept of indoctrination, the latter argument cannot be permitted to carry much weight at this stage of the enquiry. But, even without the claim that indoctrination

is morally reprehensible, adoption of (at least one form of) the method criterion still leads to intuitively implausible conclusion that the teacher in the aforementioned example has indoctrinated her pupils in their times tables and French verbs, a view which doesn't fit easily with ordinary use of the term.

In an attempt to avoid the criticism that definitions of indoctrination which specify teaching methods are bound to classify non-indoctrinatory teaching practices as indoctrination, David Cooper claims we ought to stipulate that a non-rational method (such as drilling) may only be classed as indoctrination if it is used "despite the availability of other rational methods." (Cooper, 1973, p.54) the implication being that times tables might legitimately be taught through a process of drilling because no other method could be used. Irrespective of whether one takes this to be an argument supporting the notion of 'good' indoctrination[77]or one designed to re-position indoctrination in terms of its pedagogical (rather than moral) appropriateness, it is patently false. As Callan and Arena point out:

> Non-rational methods are often used without any justified reproach, merely for convenience: it would be possible, though tedious, to teach the multiplication tables solely by appeal to multiplicative reasoning instead of memorisation. (Callan & Arena, 2009, p.107)

Furthermore, Cooper's assertion that the availability of rational methods has some bearing on whether indoctrination has occurred is peculiar when one considers that, for some critics of confessional religious education,[78] it is precisely this lack which ensures that teaching for religious belief is necessarily indoctrinatory.

The rejection of Cooper's argument suggests a further reason for discarding the method criterion as the sole or primary constituent of indoctrination, namely that it is impossible to

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[77] A matter discussed in Chapter V, §5.3.2-§5.3.3
[78] E.g. Hand (2003).

assess whether a teaching method is indoctrinatory in isolation from what is being taught; to separate the appropriateness of method from the content. Snook puts it thus:

> If the [head teacher] is told that the children in room 47 are reciting, he does not automatically stride down to censure their teacher. If he is interested at all, he asks what they are reciting. If he is told they are chanting 'E-N-O-U-G-H spells *enough'* he settles back to his desk content that all is well in room 47. If he finds that the children are reciting 'The Prime Minister is a scoundrel' or 'Long live the revolution' he may begin to worry. (Snook, 1972, p.23-24)

The head teacher's anxiety appears to arise from the idea that the phrases being recited have specific features which entail that they are inappropriate to the method of memorisation. But, while in this case there could be an underlying moral concern about the pairing of a certain method with content which is inappropriate to it,[79] it is possible to re-describe the scenario eschewing the moral/ political elements. What if the pupils were chanting Shakespeare or passages of a novel? It seems possible the head teacher's concerns about the *pedagogical* appropriateness of this activity might remain, but they would nevertheless be fundamentally motivated by the *content* of the learning rather than the method itself.

§2.5 Content

As the contrasting examples of pupils reciting spelling and those reciting political slogans clearly illustrate, certain methods of teaching (drilling, recitation and the like) are generally thought to constitute indoctrination only when paired with specific kinds of subject matter. This suggests that content might mark the difference between indoctrination and other forms of teaching.

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[79] The basic worry is that since political slogans are a matter of controversy, they ought not to be transmitted in the same manner as propositions which are known to be true. This view will be explored in §2.5, in a considerable degree of detail in Chapter III and with specific reference to religious propositions in Chapter V.

Some who stipulate content as a condition of indoctrination claim that certain clusters of belief simply lend themselves more readily to the practice, others[80] that these are the *only* sorts of beliefs which can be indoctrinated. Another name for the content they call attention to is 'doctrines'.

Etymologically speaking, there is a clear link between 'doctrine' and 'indoctrination', both of which evolved from the Latin *doctrina* meaning 'instruction' or 'teaching'. Perhaps this is one reason why Antony Flew's pithy remark, "no doctrines, no indoctrination" (Flew, 1972, p.114) is so intuitively persuasive. Nevertheless, we need something more than a historical link to a common Latin root to prove that content is a necessary condition for indoctrination. To lend support to their case, proponents of the content criterion often point out that paradigm cases of the phenomenon usually involve the inculcation of doctrine.[81] These cases include "Communist systems of 'political education' or, perhaps, the teaching of Religion in Roman Catholic schools" (White cited in Gregory & Woods, 1970, p.80). [82] Nevertheless, this might prompt us to ask two questions. First, if it is indeed true that *all* paradigm cases "involve doctrines" and second, whether there is "anything distinctive about the doctrinal beliefs involved that marks them off from other sorts of beliefs" (Gregory & Woods, 1970, p.81).

Gregory and Woods contend that the paradigm cases of indoctrination do, in fact, involve doctrines. Initially, they defend this view via an appeal to common use. The phrases

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[80] Such as Tsasos Kazepides (1991).

[81] Indeed, even when the term is used in a manner which seems somewhat eccentric, the aim is usually to highlight that a particular way of thinking is ideological or doctrinaire. Examples include the 2011 film IndoctriNation which bemoans the lack of faith instruction in public schools and the recent trend for calling the increasing awareness and acceptance of transgender people, particularly in schools, a form of indoctrination (see Phillips (2017); Starnes (2015)).

[82] Given that the question of whether Catholic schools (a sub-set of faith schools) are necessarily indoctrinatory is the one of the fundamental questions this thesis seeks to address, I will not predetermine the outcome by (question beggingly) assuming that it equates to indoctrination. However, since it seems unlikely that, at least as it played out in Russia and China in the 20th Century, Communist political education could be deemed non-indoctrinatory, I am inclined to argue that it is acceptable to use it as a key example of a paradigm case for current purposes.

'Communist doctrine', 'Marxist doctrine' and 'Catholic doctrine' are unremarkable and correspond to ordinary, everyday language. Gregory and Woods acknowledge this does not settle the matter; after all, it is entirely possible that this "simple-minded" use is erroneous (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.81). However, to bolster the assertion that 'doctrine' properly applies to paradigm cases, they note that the claim about ordinary use extends to those who, by rights, ought to have a more technical understanding. For example, it is not just non-Catholics who call the aggregated beliefs of Roman Catholicism doctrine; this is a term that Catholics will use to describe the tenets of their own faith.[83] But, although Gregory and Woods's assessment seems accurate, our ability to determine whether 'doctrine' applies to all paradigm cases is limited in the absence of any reference to the specific features of doctrinal beliefs; to the extent that we lack an understanding of what is distinctive about them.[84]

In an attempt to assess the view that indoctrination is necessarily limited to cases in which teachers transmit doctrine, Elmer John Thiessen (1993) reviews a number of accounts which, to a greater or lesser extent, endorse the content criterion (either as the sole criterion for indoctrination or as one which forms part of a pair or group of other criteria).[85] From these accounts, Thiessen highlights three key areas in which doctrinal beliefs are considered to differ from other forms of belief:

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[83] This is true even if (as seems likely) those same Catholics would resist the assertion that the teaching of such doctrine amounts to indoctrination.

[84] The matter is further complicated by the fact that, as Gregory and Woods point out, there are uses of 'doctrine' which don't fit quite so easily with colloquial understandings. For example, in military and foreign policy, the word is used to describe "fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives" (AAP-06, 2014). It is also thought reasonable to call certain philosophical theories — such as "Berkeley's metaphysical doctrine to the effect that *esse est percipi*" (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.82) — 'doctrine'.

[85] These include Kazepides (1987;1991); Spiecker (1987); Wilson (1964, 1972) and Flew (1972).

1) *Logical Status*

Doctrinal beliefs are often thought to have a problematic logical status (particularly from an epistemological perspective). They are "false beliefs" (Thiessen, 1993, p.62), "irrational" beliefs (Wilson cited in Thiessen, p.62) or beliefs which are "not-known-to-be-true" (Thiessen,1993, p.62).[86] [87]

2) *Scope*

Doctrinal beliefs form part of a wider system of beliefs. To quote Gregory and Woods, doctrinal beliefs "have a scope and generality that others do not" (Gregory and Woods cited in Thiessen,1993, p.66). One "not-known-to-be-true" belief does not make a doctrine; rather, it must form a cluster of other (mutually supporting beliefs). Furthermore, doctrine is generally related to ideology, a (complete) way of looking at the world. As such, doctrines tend to comprise beliefs which form part of a '*Weltanschauung*' or 'world-view'.

3) *Momentous Character*

Doctrinal beliefs are not simply broad in their scope; they are beliefs which relate to areas of high importance or significance in the life of the believer. As Thiessen puts it, "we would not call unimportant details "doctrines"" (Thiessen, 1993, p.66). The "momentous character" of doctrinal beliefs leads Gregory and Woods to maintain that there is a fundamental connection between doctrinal beliefs and action. Belief in doctrine entails an impetus to act which is not as fully embedded in other sorts of

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[86] See also Hand (2003)

[87] Thiessen takes particular issue with the phrase "not-known-to-be-true" belief which he argues is "both vague and ambiguous". This is because it *could* mean "beliefs with insufficient or no evidence" or, "beliefs with ambiguous evidence" or, "unfalsifiable beliefs" (Thiessen, 1993, p.62-63). Indeed, he notes it may even be applied to "beliefs held obstinately" or "beliefs lacking in public agreement". (Thiessen, 1993, p.63-64)

belief (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.82). It is this connection which some argue makes proselytisation and the establishment of doctrine-supporting groups and institutions more likely (see Thiessen, 1993 p.67).

From this, it seems clear that the paradigm cases suggested by White *do* pertain to the transmission of doctrine.[88] However, Thiessen's overview draws out a number of concerns anyone wishing to endorse the content criterion of indoctrination must address. For Thiessen, one of the most pressing issues stems from the fact that many of those who posit content as a necessary condition for indoctrination also maintain that doctrine is limited to the fields of religion, politics and morality (Thiessen, 1993, p.59). For these theorists,[89] there is a clear distinction between the (epistemologically problematic) realms of religion, politics and morality and another system of belief — science. On this understanding, scientific beliefs cannot be indoctrinated because the subject matter of science is not doctrinal in nature.

Thiessen, whose overall aim is to defend a broadly liberal education which leaves room for Christian nurture (or confessional Christian education), rejects the view that science and religion (and, presumably, politics and morality) are "strongly contrasting enterprises which have essentially nothing to do with each other." (Barbour, 1971, p.1) He argues, "the contrast between doctrinal and non-doctrinal areas of belief rests on a caricature of religion and an illegitimate idealization of science, together with misconceptions of each" (Thiessen, p.81). In Thiessen's view, all of the key features of doctrinal belief – problematic logical (and epistemological) status, breadth of scope, and momentous character – also characterise the first principles of science.[90] And, for this reason, we cannot exclude the possibility that pupils could be indoctrinated into believing scientific propositions, or limit our concerns about

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[88] It is less clear whether they fit particularly well with the peripheral uses highlighted in fn. 81 but this need not concern us too much.
[89] See, for example, Kazepides (1987; 1991) or Gregory and Woods (1970; 1972).
[90] What Kazepides (following Wittgenstein) calls, "river-bed propositions" (Kazepides, 1987; 1991).

indoctrination to schools which attempt to transmit religious or political beliefs. In other words, even if it is correct to think that paradigm cases of indoctrination involve doctrine, our assumptions about what this means for education are fundamentally wrong-headed.

As Thiessen puts it:

> The presence or absence of doctrines can be used neither to distinguish what is or what is not a form of knowledge nor to distinguish what should or should not belong to a liberal education (Thiessen, 1993, p.78)

Given that the purpose of this section is to explicate the content criterion of indoctrination not determine whether religious schools are necessarily indoctrinatory, I will defer any attempt to assess Thiessen's claim that science education is just as vulnerable[91] to the practice of indoctrination as confessional religious education until later.[92] Nevertheless, anyone endorsing a content criterion of indoctrination will need to address the question of whether science and other forms of 'general' education involve the transmission of doctrinal beliefs and, if so, whether this sort of teaching is *always* indoctrinatory.

Interestingly, both Thiessen and Gregory & Woods separate the presence of doctrine in education from the inevitability of indoctrination. Thiessen maintains that indoctrination is *more* likely to occur with doctrines[93] (Thiessen, 1993, p.79) and Gregory and Woods view the presence of doctrine as a warning signal rather than a guarantee of indoctrinatory practice. This separates both positions from that of Kazepides who claims that because doctrines "do not belong within our rational tradition… they should have no place in our educational institutions" (Kazepides, 1991, p.12). In Kazepides's view, the mere presence of doctrines

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[91] Indeed, Thiessen claims that science education may be *more* vulnerable to indoctrinatory practices than religious education because of our (in his view) erroneous assumption that such areas of learning are "immune to [the charge of indoctrination]" (Thiessen, 1993, p.80)

[92] See Chapter V, §5.3.6.

[93] Which he defines as, "non-falsifiable, first-order principles and presuppositions of broad scope and importance" (Thiessen, 1993, p.79)

will lead to indoctrination. But what does it mean for doctrines to be 'present' in education? After all, it seems reasonable to assert that religious content is as present in a lesson about the five pillars of Islam in a non-denominational school as it is in a madrassa. What differs is not so much the subject matter, but the *intention* of the teacher. In the non-denominational case, the teacher intends that her pupils come to hold a set of beliefs *about* the beliefs and practices of Muslims; it is of no consequence whether they adhere to the pillars themselves. In the madrassa, the teacher expects her pupils to believe in Islamic principles and endorse them *as* Muslims. This observation raises the possibility that, even if the transmission of doctrine is a key feature of the most obvious forms of indoctrination, intention may play a fundamental role in distinguishing the practice from other forms of teaching.

§2.6 Intention

In §2.2, it was noted that indoctrination is a teaching activity. An activity or practice counts as an incidence of teaching when it involves "the intention to bring about learning" (Hirst, 1971, p. 9) and this is the case irrespective of whether the practice is normatively commendable. Given the central role intention plays in teaching, it is little wonder that the intention criterion is often viewed as necessary to the closely related concept of indoctrination. John White argues that because indoctrination is an activity and "we normally distinguish one activity from another in terms of the agent's intention." (White, 1967, p.182) the practice "is definable *solely* in terms of intention" (White, 1967, p.181. My italics). Gregory and Woods also maintain that intention constitutes more than a contingent feature of indoctrination and argue it is "logically necessary to the concept" (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.84).

But what sort of intention must a teacher have in order to be an indoctrinator? Does the claim that intention is a necessary condition of indoctrination amount to the rather trivial assertion

that indoctrination is a teaching activity? — that all indoctrinators must intend that their pupils learn something— Or is it an attempt to maintain that an indoctrinator must have a more specific (and perhaps more sinister) goal in mind?

As Gregory and Woods are quick to point out "intention is a very difficult, elusive concept" (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.84) and, as such can be manifested in a number of ways. White notes four intentions that a teacher might have in the course of her work:

(i)   The child should learn words or phrases that he is able to repeat by rote.

(ii)   The child should believe that proposition 'p' is true. This is different from (i) in that in (ii) the child must *understand* what 'p' means. The child in (i) may learn to repeat the words 'I ought not to steal' without understanding what stealing is. (This is not, of course, to deny that rote learning sometimes [involves] understanding, but merely to affirm that it does not *require* it). But the child in (ii) cannot believe 'p' if he does not know what it means.

(iii)   The child should believe that 'p' is true, in such a way that nothing will shake this belief.

(iv)   The child should believe that 'p' is true, if and only if he has come to see that there are good grounds for believing it. This implies the intention that the child reject 'p' if he comes to see that there are no good grounds for believing it. (White, 1967, p.179)

Now, clearly not all of these intentions signify anything like an intention to indoctrinate, but, in White's view, many philosophical "controversies" about the nature of indoctrination originate from the fact that theorists fail to recognise where their views of intention diverge.

For example, the question of whether the so-called 'paradox of indoctrination'[94]really

constitutes a paradox turns on whether one thinks an indoctrinator must aim for her pupils to

believe unshakably (intention (iii)) or, as might be necessary with pre-rational children,

intend they merely believe something in the (initial) absence of reasons (intention ii).[95]

Recent work in mainstream educational literature also exploits an ambiguity in our

understanding of the intention to indoctrinate. In *7 Myths about Education*, Daisy

Christodoulou argues against the 'myth' (supposedly prevalent in current educational

thinking) that "teaching *knowledge* is indoctrination" (Christodoulou, 2013. My italics). But,

by focusing on the idea that *any* teaching which aims at belief transmission constitutes

indoctrination, Christodoulou's arguments can, at most, damage what White calls "child-

centred theorists who hold that all attempts to get a child to learn anything (as distinct from

letting him 'discover' things) are forms of indoctrination" (White, 1967, p.180).[96] This

position uses the term 'indoctrination' in a way which is "broad enough to cover all four

intentions" (p.180) but appears to set the parameters of the concept far too widely. When we

worry about the intention to indoctrinate, if indeed this is something we worry about, the

concern does not usually arise from a more generalised anxiety about the intention to transmit

beliefs *per se* (particularly if those beliefs are widely regarded as constituting knowledge).

Moreover, even if it was to arise, this would constitute a worry about the fundamental

concept of teaching rather than one about indoctrination.

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[94] The claim that indoctrination (of some kind) is inevitable because, even if one wishes to transmit beliefs in such a way that children come to hold them in a critical-rational manner, one will necessarily need to inculcate "an inarticulated and inarticulable collection of instincts, habits and beliefs" (Garrison, 1986, p.262) in order to enable the project to get off the ground. In other words, children will be unable to think in a rational manner unless they are 'indoctrinated' into the norms of rational thinking; of a rational world-picture (See Wittgenstein, cited in Garrison, 1986, p.262).
[95]As we shall see, some theorists claim that indoctrination has taken place even if the teacher's ultimate intention is best described as a combination of ii and iv (Chapter III, §3.4).
[96] Although Christodoulou appears to caricature *anyone* who disputes the traditionalist views she endorses (originating primarily from the work of E.D Hirsch) or raises the idea that we might question exactly what constitutes knowledge as advancing this kind of radical child-centred view.

For White, only intention (iii) is indicative of indoctrination. What matters is not the intention to inculcate belief, but the intention that the belief should be held unshakeably (White, 1967, p.180). On the face of it, this seems plausible. Teachers generally want their pupils to believe what they are taught and for them to hold those beliefs with a degree of robustness, but indoctrinators appear to want something altogether more persistent. Take the belief that Queen Elizabeth II is the head of the Church of England. It seems reasonable to assume that a teacher who taught her pupils to believe in the truth of this proposition would nevertheless expect them to revise their position in the event that Elizabeth ceased to occupy the role.[97]

On White's formulation, if the teacher in the example teaches pupils to believe that Elizabeth is the Head of the Church of England with the intention that they revise this belief in the event of Elizabeth's death or replacement, nothing akin to indoctrination has taken place. If, on the other hand, the teacher intends that her pupils take this belief to their graves (irrespective of who is actually leading the Church), this is an instance of indoctrination. The teacher in the latter case intends that there will be no possible circumstance under which her pupils revise their belief, whereas the one in the former wants her pupils' beliefs to "track truth" (Nozick, 1981).

Nevertheless, Callan and Arena, who themselves endorse a thoroughly pejorative view of indoctrination, maintain that White's formulation is problematic because it doesn't enable us to distinguish between the morally deplorable (in their view) practice of indoctrination and other, perfectly legitimate, forms of teaching:

> Consider the teacher who tries to get her students to believe that 2 is the only even prime number using analysis of the definitions of the concepts *even* and *prime number* along with careful reasoning about divisibility. Suppose the consequence of her efforts is that nothing

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[97] Because she had died, abdicated or otherwise been replaced, or because some other structural change had occurred in the Church and/or state.

will shake their belief. White's formulation would entail that this teacher is indoctrinating, which is clearly wrong. (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.109)

My decision to postpone discussion of the moral status of indoctrination means that this criticism cannot, as yet, be allowed to stand. However, Callan and Arena's resistance to the idea that the teacher highlighted in the example is guilty of indoctrination may not be solely motivated by moral concerns. We are inclined to think the teacher in this example is not indoctrinating because her pupils have been taught a proposition with the dual properties of being true *and* appropriately related to an argument which supports that truth; it is unshakable but for the correct reasons. This looks like it gives us sufficient grounds to reject the idea that she is indoctrinating. White's formulation is misleading because it emphasises the steadfastness of belief when what really matters is whether a pupil "will disregard evidence [or argument] that may bear on the truth or falsity of p" (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.109). For this reason, if we are predisposed to favour an intention account of indoctrination, it may be better to adopt an alternative version such as the one proposed by IA Snook; namely, that the indoctrinator, "teaches with the intention that the pupil or pupils believe regardless of the evidence" (Snook, 1972, p.47).

Of course, White could simply dismiss the claim that his formulation leads inevitably to the conclusion that the teacher cited in Callan and Arena's example is an indoctrinator. Since she is clearly in the business of providing her pupils with rational grounds for accepting what she tells them, it seems clear that she has intention (iv) rather than intention (iii)– she *intends* that pupils "should believe that 'p' is true, if and only if [they have] come to see that there are good grounds for believing it… [and will] reject 'p' if [they come] to see that there are no good grounds for believing it." (White, 1967, p.179). If this is the case, the ultimate consequence (that the pupils believe what they have been taught in an unshakable manner because the grounds are similarly unshakable) is neither here nor there; we can separate what

the teacher intended from what actually occurred, and the example does not constitute one of indoctrination.

But while it seems very likely that the teacher in Callan and Arena's example consciously intends her pupils believe the mathematical truths she teaches because they identify "good grounds for believing them," it is nevertheless *possible* that she is motivated to transmit such propositions simply because she thinks it important that her pupils believe they are true. She may be fairly unreflective and never have considered the matter of how precisely the children she teaches ought to apportion their beliefs to reasons, she may simply have a knack for rational explanation. It would nevertheless be peculiar to call an educator whose teaching directly and regularly[98] resulted in pupils holding well-grounded beliefs an indoctrinator. For this reason, Callan and Arena's objection seems plausible even when separated from arguments about moral appropriateness.

A further argument against intention as a necessary condition of indoctrination is the possibility of unintentional indoctrination. The claim that indoctrination must be defined in terms of intention (that the practice involves acting with intent) amounts to the assertion that, to be an indoctrinator, one must have a particular goal in mind. This means that those who endorse the intention criterion are also bound to a less attractive corollary; specifically, that an indoctrinator must be *aware* of the aim to transmit beliefs designed to be held unshakeably, "regardless of the evidence" (Snook, 1972, p.47) and so on. However, there is good reason to think that this simply isn't the case.

True, it is possible to point to numerous examples of indoctrination in which the indoctrinator's intention to build a mental wall between pupils' beliefs and all countermanding evidence is obvious. For instance, when school children in Fascist Italy were

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[98] It does seem necessary to rule out the possibility of fluke outcomes in this respect.

taught[99] to believe that Mussolini was the only leader capable of taking the country back to glory, or when young people in Germany in the 1930's and 40's were taught the ideology of Nazism. Here it seems likely that teachers both possessed and were acutely aware of an aim to ensure their pupils robustly adopted the beliefs they were taught. But, even in these cases, it doesn't seem accurate to say that all (or even most) of the indoctrinators were motivated by a desire to ensure their pupils believed what they were taught unshakeably or regardless of evidence. Rather, they hoped to ensure that pupils believed in the principles of Nazism or Fascism *because* the teachers themselves believed that those principles were supported by all the *relevant* evidence. To put it another way, in cases where indoctrinators are sincere in the beliefs they wish to inculcate, it doesn't look as if their avowed and conscious purpose will be to inculcate beliefs which are unresponsive to evidence or counterargument; from the sincere believer's perspective, the only reason the beliefs she seeks to transmit remain unshakeable in the face of counter-evidence is that it isn't really counter-evidence at all.

White comes close to discussing this argument when he considers the possibility of indoctrinators who (erroneously) claim to be motivated by intention (iv) rather than intention (iii):

> Many indoctrinators – e.g. of Marxism or of Roman Catholicism – have themselves been indoctrinated. They believe that the doctrines that they hold cannot but be true. Therefore many of them are fully prepared to accept rational discussion of these doctrines in their teaching, for they do not believe that such discussion could ever undermine them. If asked to describe what their intentions are in teaching, they say that they are trying to get their charges to think for themselves and deny that they are trying to rivet unquestionable beliefs into the mind. (White, 1967, p.182)

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[99] Through schools and youth groups such as 'Sons of the She-Wolf'.

Despite the absence of a (conscious) aim to inculcate unshakeable beliefs, indoctrination may still occur in these cases because, "however what [these teachers] are doing might be described from *within* the religious or political system in which they are working, if viewed from *outside* the system, they would rightly be called indoctrinators." (White, 1967, p.182. My italics). The appeals these indoctrinators make to evidence and rational argument are artificially limited by the parameters of their (narrowed) world-view.

White rejects this position because "it assumes the teacher's avowed intention is his real intention" (White, 1967, 182). But while he is perfectly right to think that this won't *always* be the case —indoctrinators may well lie about their real intentions— this does not give us good enough grounds to accept the claim that an indoctrinator's intention to transmit beliefs in a manner which does not seek to occlude or distort the evidence will *never* be genuine. In White's view, if a teacher is sincere in her desire to ensure her pupils believe in a rational manner she "will not fob [them] off with specious argument or use non-rational techniques to get [them] to believe [a] proposition, but will try to explore… whether there are any good grounds for it" (White, 1967, p.183). A teacher who does this, cannot be an indoctrinator.

But this position fails to take account of the possibility a teacher may simply *fail* in her mission to adequately provide her pupils with evidence which does not correspond with her established belief framework. This could be due to her own upbringing, or because she lacks a thorough understanding of rational argument and/or good evidential standards. Indeed, blinded by her own beliefs, she may ask her pupils to consider alternative positions in such a skewed or unbalanced way that she unwittingly closes off the possibility of pupils being able to evaluate them for themselves. In other words, she may be genuine and sincere but

nevertheless unaware of her susceptibility to confirmation bias.[100] It nevertheless appears that, at least to the extent the beliefs her pupils develop will be resistant to evidence and counter-argument in a manner which mirrors her the way she holds her own, something sufficiently close to what we call indoctrination has taken place. The intention criterion appears to demand an indoctrinator's motivation is transparent to her; that she is conscious of it. But it just isn't necessary to be aware that one is inculcating rationally problematic beliefs for indoctrination to be taking place.

 An additional question which anyone wishing to endorse the intention criterion will need to address is whether the transmission of evidence-resisting or unshakeable belief needs to be the *direct* or *primary* aim of the indoctrinator. Gregory and Woods present the following case:

> Consider the man who claims that with respect to, say, religious issues, he has no opinions and does not care one way or the other whether other people take sides or not. Such a man may find himself, if he is a teacher, furtively concealing his real beliefs and passing on a set of beliefs — Christian doctrine— to which he does not subscribe, or he may find himself conducting a daily act of worship in the form of a school assembly although he concedes no real meaning to the act of prayer. Here there seems to be no intention to do anything other than hold on to a job. (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.85)

The teacher in this case has no real interest in whether the children he teaches really believe what he is telling them, let alone whether they do so in spite of counter-evidence or unshakeably.[101] As such, if the intention that his pupils believe particular things is present at all, it is only present in the service of an intention to remain in gainful employment; it is, at

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[100] The term confirmation bias is taken from psychology and is defined as "the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand." (Nickerson, 1998, p175)

[101] Although it might be worth ensuring they are able to *look* as if they believe in Christian doctrine if he is to appear successful in his role as a teacher.

most, an indirect intention. Should this lead us to conclude that this is not an instance of indoctrination even if, as a direct result of the teacher's actions, some of his pupils do in fact come to hold the beliefs he presented to them in a dogmatic fashion?

On White's (and possibly Snook's) account of intention, it looks as though we might be bound to concede that the teacher in this example is not an indoctrinator. Gregory and Woods maintain it is possible to resist this capitulation by drawing a distinction between "the general point of an activity and the particular purposes of individuals engaged in it." (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.85) If a teacher is employed by an *institution* which aims to inculcate Christian doctrine, then the "system within which he operates endows his actions with a sense of purpose which he, as an individual, may be quite unaware." (Gregory and Woods, 1970, p.85) Thus there is intention at work but it is simply not the intention of an individual and, therefore, needn't be transparent to him.

One problem with relocating intention to institutional (or perhaps even societal) level is that, while it may initially seem easier to determine the aims of an institution,[102] when these are not explicit, it could become quite difficult to identify a) when the intention is present[103] or, b) to assign moral culpability for its existence.[104] [105]Moreover, although it seems perfectly possible for an institution to have an indoctrinatory mission, it is conceivable that the question of transparency will still plague the assessment of intention at an institutional level. Must the indoctrinatory institution intend to inculcate beliefs which are unshakeable or

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[102] Most institutions, particularly schools, have a clear, publicly available mission statement. The same cannot be said for individual teachers.

[103] Must the leaders/managers of the institution have (and be aware of) the intention? Does institutional indoctrination require a critical mass of educators to be "in on the plan"? And does the fact that an institution is part of a broader network of institutions have any bearing on the matter (for example, faith schools are generally part of a broader 'ecosystem' of religious organisations)?

[104] Given that the aims of an institution may be inherited (from the past or further up an institutional hierarchy), they may be held and executed to different degrees by different actors in the institution, and these actors will possess varying levels of power to influence change.

[105] These issues are discussed in some depth by Rebecca M Taylor who argues that the tendency of theorists to focus on the "the dyadic relationship between indoctrinator and indoctrinated person" leads to a conception of indoctrination which is overly narrow (Taylor, 2016, p.38).

impervious to counter-evidence? And how likely is any institution to admit this or, more importantly, recognise that this is what it is doing?

In the sense that indoctrination is a form of teaching, it is entirely true to say it will always involve the intention to pass on belief. However, the notion that the intention which distinguishes indoctrination from other kinds of teaching is the intention to pass on beliefs which are unshakeable is vulnerable to the criticism that some beliefs are appropriately unshakeable. To label those who intend their pupils hold such beliefs robustly 'indoctrinators' is clearly a mistake. However, the claim that the criterion makes better sense when, as in Snook's formulation, the indoctrinator's intention is to build a mental wall between belief and evidence falls foul of the argument that many teachers will sincerely believe they are doing no such thing. This is the most persuasive objection to the intention criterion, and the reason it cannot be regarded as a necessary condition for indoctrination (both at an individual and institutional level); it cannot account for unintentional indoctrination.

According to the intention criterion, the indoctrinator must always be conscious that she is participating in the practice but, if a teacher has herself been indoctrinated or is subject to confirmation bias, she may fail to equip her pupils with the ability to assess evidence and argument even-handedly. That is, she may indoctrinate without the intention to do so. This suggests that, while the aims of her teaching may not matter, the outcome does.

§2.7 Outcome or Consequence

The final criterion of indoctrination I will discuss is somewhat different from the first three. This is because it focuses on how the practice affects the pupil rather than "features internal to the activity of teaching." (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.109) According to those who endorse this criterion, a person who has been indoctrinated will think and behave in a certain way;

they will hold their beliefs in a characteristic manner. Of course, theorists differ over precisely what characterises the indoctrinated mind. But, the common theme is an "illicit breach between conviction on the one hand, and the assessment of evidence on the other." (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.110).

One positive feature of the outcome criterion is that it goes some way towards explaining the modern turn towards considering indoctrination to be morally reprehensible. If the practice results in a severance of the link between what is believed and the evidence which signifies the truth of what is believed, then it seems likely that indoctrinated individuals will find it more difficult to navigate a world in which being properly responsive to good reasons is, amongst other things, necessary if one is to make good decisions and to avoid being taken advantage of. If education is preparation for life, then it looks as if indoctrination threatens to negate the process entirely.

A further point in favour of the outcome criterion of indoctrination —one which will be more persuasive given that our current project involves bracketing off the concept's descriptive features from moral assessment— is that it leaves room for unintended forms of indoctrination. A teacher may bring about an outcome (in this case a certain sort of mind-set) without intending to do so. As we have seen, this is more plausible than intention accounts which seem bound to insist that a teacher (who may have been indoctrinated herself) will be accurate or necessarily insincere if she claims not to be indoctrinating.

As an upshot of endorsing the outcome criterion as a necessary and sufficient condition of indoctrination, we do lose the ability to call *unsuccessful* attempts to bring about the ways of thinking symptomatic of the indoctrinated mind 'indoctrination'. If, as the intention criterion would have it, indoctrination is not contingent upon the successful transmission of beliefs,[106]

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[106] Or, more accurately, certain ways of thinking *about* those beliefs.

it is possible to call a teaching practice indoctrinatory regardless of whether the practitioner (owing to incompetence on her part, strength of mind on the part of her pupils or just brute luck) manages to achieve this aim or not. Not so for the outcome criterion. However, there is no reason to think this must, in itself, be damaging to the account. One can acknowledge that 'to indoctrinate' functions not as a task verb (where one must merely carry out an activity in order to be accurately described as doing it) but as an achievement verb (one which has success built in). This doesn't prevent us from identifying methods of teaching, types of intention or subject matter which appear more likely to result in pupils being indoctrinated and it does not stop us from calling them 'indoctrinatory' in *that* sense.

A further concern about equating indoctrination with the consequences of teaching relates to what we should say about instances of indoctrination which are initially successful (in the sense that the pupil believes what she is told in the characteristic way) but are eventually reversed; instances where the pupil is (perhaps over a long period of time) able to rid herself of the beliefs which were indoctrinated. Does adherence to some sort of outcome criterion entail a commitment to the claim that genuine indoctrination is permanent?

Some outcome accounts are more vulnerable to the idea that indoctrination must be irreversible than others. For example, while John White argues for an intention criterion, we can reformulate his view that indoctrination involves the *intention* to inculcate unshakeable beliefs so that it turns on the idea that unshakeable beliefs are a characteristic consequence of the indoctrination process. Nonetheless, while this move solves the problem of unintended indoctrination, it swiftly creates another. This is because the view that indoctrination is best defined as teaching which results in unshakeable belief leads to the absurd claim that "its effects could never be undone." (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.110)

Although concern about indoctrination may well be motivated by the worry that pupils who are indoctrinated *could* remain that way forever, it does not appear to diminish in proportion to the amount of time the indoctrinated individual remains (or is likely to remain) in her state of indoctrination. Lives may be just as affected by indoctrination which is subsequently reversed as they are in those cases where indoctrination is permanent— particularly as the transition from an indoctrinated state of mind to a non-indoctrinated one involves the necessary realisation that those who one trusted (and perhaps even loved) have been complicit in the practice.[107] Moreover, it is simply incorrect to claim that individuals who have been indoctrinated for a relatively short period of time have not been indoctrinated at all. When an individual is able to rid herself of her indoctrinated beliefs, we merely acknowledge that she *was* indoctrinated but no longer holds the beliefs she once did.[108]

In order to preserve the idea that indoctrination is necessarily characterised by outcome without denying such outcomes may be reversed, we could try adopting an account similar to that espoused by Snook. Recall that, for Snook, "Someone indoctrinates P (a proposition or set of propositions) if she teaches with the intention that the learner believes P *regardless of evidence*." (Snook, 1972, p.47) This formulation focuses on the relationship between the belief(s) and the believer's reasons for holding them rather than the nature of the beliefs themselves. For this reason, it goes some way towards helping us to account for situations where indoctrination is reversed. But, although Snook's formulation is more promising, it

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[107] For example, in an autobiographical memoir of her childhood in the Christian cult, The Children of God (now known as The Family International), Natacha Tormey (2014) tells of the extreme suffering that leaving 'The Family' has engendered for second generation apostates. Much of this arose from the sense of betrayal cult leavers felt towards parents, teachers and the other adults involved in their upbringing. Of course, the example of the Children of God is rather extreme. Second generation absconders have testified to widespread physical and sexual abuse of children. Nevertheless, since indoctrination and brainwashing were some of the main tools the cult leaders used to maintain the existence of the organisation, the case is still relevant.

[108] Tormey explicitly calls the systematic manner in which the cult shaped her worldview 'indoctrination' in spite of the fact she left at the relatively young age of 18, I do not think that this would strike many as an unreasonable use of the term.

may initially appear too strong and should not be interpreted as meaning that indoctrinated individuals "[give] *no* regard to evidence". Those who have been indoctrinated (and who indoctrinate) may well cherry-pick facts (evidence) to suit their purposes or "devote themselves to winning converts and exposing the errors of all who disagree with them," (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.110 my italics) this simply cannot be done without reference to evidence of some kind.

There is a further reason to proceed with caution. By shifting the emphasis from the *intention* to inculcate beliefs so they are held regardless of evidence to the *outcome* of holding beliefs in that way, it might appear we are in danger of widening the scope of indoctrination to include all kinds of beliefs which are held in this (broadly irrational) way. That is, unless we bear in mind some of the features of indoctrination discussed earlier in this chapter.

To illustrate, in the television series 'Orange is the New Black'(2013), Lorna Morello is imprisoned for stalking a man who, in spite of the fact he only took her on one date, she maintains is her fiancé. Although Morello seems somewhat aware that the stories she tells her fellow prisoners about her forthcoming wedding are untrue, she is obviously sincere in her belief that the object of her affections is, contrary to all the available evidence,[109] madly in love with her. Morello is obviously in possession of a belief which is irrationally resistant to evidence, but we are unlikely to conclude she has been indoctrinated. Although the outcome criterion focuses on the consequences of indoctrination for the individual who is subjected to it, it must be emphasised that this outcome must be the direct result of teaching. This will prevent us from erroneously classing cases where someone comes to hold an evidence resistant belief due to mental illness or intellectual deficiency as instances of indoctrination.

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[109] Aside from having only met her on a few occasions, he explicitly tells her he has no feelings for her, already has a fiancée and testifies against her in court.

At this point, it might be objected that a delusion or similar mental impairment could plausibly arise out of (or be closely connected to) a teaching event or something that happened during a lesson or in a classroom. Indeed, given that the experiences of children tend to revolve around the fairly limited spheres of home and school life, it is to be expected that children who do experience persistent delusions (as the result of child onset schizophrenia or a related condition) will often develop delusional beliefs which are linked to their everyday experiences.[110] For example, a child or adolescent could become convinced she is infested with parasites (delusional parasitosis) following a lesson about similar sorts of organisms in Science, or about personal hygiene in PSHE.[111] Although there is a relatively established scientific consensus that delusions are fundamentally biological in origin (see Bortolotti, 2010, p.25), it still seems necessary to illustrate why such a case (what I call 'teaching-related delusion') does not prove threatening to an account of indoctrination which places its emphasis solely on the outcome of a teaching process.

One way to approach the problem of teaching-related delusion could be to argue that, while delusions are often taken to have belief-like qualities, it is erroneous to ascribe them such a status; to maintain that delusions are not beliefs and, therefore, cannot arise out of the practice of indoctrination (which necessarily involves the transmission of beliefs). If this were true then, while teachers would need to be sensitive to the possibility that the pupils who they teach may not react to lessons in fully predictable ways, they needn't be concerned that such outcomes will amount to indoctrination.

However, as Lisa Bortolotti argues convincingly, the claim that delusional states are not belief states "[relies] on an idealization of normal belief states, and [imposes] constraints on

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[110] Although it is important to note that delusions may be bizarre rather than mundane in nature. See Bortolotti (2010).
[111] Personal, Social & Health Education.

delusions that typical beliefs would not meet." (Bortolotti, 2015, §4.2) Unfortunately, this is not a controversy with which I can engage in any detail within the parameters of the current study, so I shall merely assume that non-doxastic accounts of delusion are erroneous and cannot give us adequate grounds to draw a distinction between teaching-related delusion and indoctrination.

Since it is more plausible to assert that delusion constitutes a form of non-rational believing than to defend the claim delusions cannot properly be ascribed belief status, it is necessary to look for something else to separate teaching-related delusions from indoctrination. As we have seen in a previous section, there are good reasons to reject an intention-based conception of indoctrination. However, the notion of intention looks to be able to provide us with the answer required. Recall that when I eschewed intention as a necessary condition for indoctrination, this was because teachers needn't intend that their pupils come to hold their beliefs in a less than rational manner for such a thing to occur as the direct result of teaching. Nevertheless, for *teaching* to have taken place intention of a certain kind —the intention that pupils learn something— does need to be manifest in the mind of the teacher.[112] What's more, for teaching to have been successful as an activity, the pupil will have to have learned something *relevantly similar* to what the teacher intended she learn. Otherwise, she has simply learned an irrelevancy. True, there are circumstances under which the learning of this irrelevancy may be the fault of the teacher,[113] but it isn't true to say that, even if this pupil does come to hold what she *has* learned in an irrational manner (where it is held apart from evidence and/or reason), what she has experienced is anything like indoctrination.

For indoctrination to have taken place, the beliefs held by pupils need to be sufficiently similar to the beliefs the teacher intended to transmit. This goes some way towards solving

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[112] Although it is important to stress that *learning* may still take place without such an intention.
[113] Perhaps her resources are inappropriate or her methods ill-adapted to her learning objective.

the problem of teaching-related delusion because it is difficult to conceive of a teaching-related delusion which could demonstrate the appropriate sort of similarity. Take the earlier example of the pupil who develops delusional parasitosis: in this case, the teacher may have intended the class learn what a parasite is, know something about the lifecycles of particular parasites, or possibly even understand how hygiene practices will enable one to avoid contracting a parasite. It seems highly unlikely that she would intend to implant the belief that one of her pupils is infested with parasites. If she did intend to transmit such a belief, then (insofar as the belief was held apart from justification in the relevant sort of way), we would be warranted in holding her responsible for indoctrination. If she did not, the pupil's irrational belief is merely a quirk of her own psychological make-up. In any event, the disjunction between what the teacher intended to teach and what the pupil actually took on board, seems pivotal.

At this stage, one might wonder whether, in the event someone experiencing delusions attempted to teach the content of those delusions to someone else, the practice might result in a teaching-related delusion which is more problematic for the above analysis. However, this case is not a threat to the outcome conception of indoctrination at all. This is because, in spite of the inclusion of content which originated from a delusion (necessarily irrational belief), it is a straightforward instance of indoctrination. Take the example of a cult leader who comes to believe that he is God's chosen emissary on Earth (a classic grandiose delusion). Following the onset of this belief, he may attempt to persuade others of its truth and construct a network of beliefs which support it. He may begin to proselytise and, as such, become a teacher of the ideas he espouses. To the extent he is successful in inculcating his beliefs in

others in such a way that they are separated from evidence or reason, he is an indoctrinator. This is the case regardless of how his own beliefs originated.[114]

So, one can avoid the teaching-related delusion objection to the outcome criterion of indoctrination by focussing on the necessary link between the intention to teach (in a general sense) and the consequences of this activity. But, while we have attempted to adapt two formulations of the intention criterion to produce an account of the state of mind in which indoctrination might result, neither is able to adequately account for all instances of indoctrination. Callan and Arena's formulation — which seeks to capture the "illicit breach" between conviction and assessment of evidence — is better able to assist in this regard. It turns on the idea that indoctrination is characterised by the closed-mindedness of those who have been subjected to the process:

> To believe proposition P [closed-mindedly][115] is to be unable or unwilling to give due regard to reasons that are available for some belief or beliefs contrary to P because of excessive emotional attachment to the truth of P. (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.111)

By grounding their conception in the "excessive emotional attachment" which generally motivates the inability or unwillingness of the indoctrinated individual to consider reasons, Callan and Arena are able to exclude other kinds of intellectual vice which might also lead to a failure in rationality.[116] They are thus able to distinguish these from failures of reasoning arising out of indoctrination. Close-minded beliefs "become integral to the individual's understanding of who she is and why her life matters so that seriously considering evidence contrary to [those beliefs] is threatening to her very identity" (Callan and Arena, p.111).

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[114] Although it may have ramifications for his moral blameworthiness if it can be established that indoctrination is ethically problematic.
[115] Callan and Arena use the term 'close-minded' but 'closed-minded' strikes me as the more logical spelling of this phrasal adjective.
[116] They suggest laziness or a natural propensity for credulity.

Unlike "unshakeability" or "believing regardless of the evidence," this account of closed-mindedness also explicitly allows for varying degrees of depth and breadth with respect to what the indoctrinated individual believes[117] thus avoiding concerns about irreversibility and the inability to account for the cherry-picking of evidence.

A notable upshot of the outcome based account is that it renders the claim that indoctrination is restricted to the teaching of doctrines untenable. While "excessive emotional attachment" to beliefs which have become constitutive of one's self-understanding may sound largely similar to a description of an attachment to a comprehensive conception of the good life — and another term for such a conception could be 'doctrine'[118]— it seems clear that *any* sort of belief can be indoctrinated. Callan and Arena attempt to illustrate this via an appeal to the fact that even indoctrinators who transmit doctrines will need to draw on beliefs which are (seemingly at least) non-doctrinal in content. They use the example of the belief that the "bacterial flagellum (an appendage that lets bacteria swim) is too complex to have developed through natural selection." (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.112) This proposition is often employed by proponents of intelligent design to defend a form of creationism, but is not, in and of itself, a doctrinal belief. And it does seem reasonable to argue that, in much the same way that a teacher who has taught her pupils to hold closed-minded beliefs about religious doctrine will have indoctrinated them, a teacher whose pupils have been taught to hold similarly closed-minded beliefs about bacterial flagellum will also have been indoctrinated. What is not so clear is that, in this context, the latter belief is non-doctrinal in nature. For the proponent of intelligent design, beliefs about the unlikeliness of bacterial flagellum

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[117] An individual might be intensely closed-minded in a way that dictates she is prone to dismiss all counter-evidence or she might be prepared to consider certain types of evidence and not others (this is what Callan and Arena call "psychological depth"). Similarly, she may have a small network of closed-minded beliefs or her entire conception of the good could be characterised by this belief style (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.111-112).

[118] After all, these conceptions certainly meet Thiessen's three conditions of disputed logical status, broad scope and momentous character (see §2.4).

developing through natural selection are *facilitating* beliefs; they function to preserve (or facilitate) an overarching doctrine. In this respect, and in spite of appearances to the contrary, they are functioning as part of a doctrinal system.

Of course, even if it is often the case that apparently non-doctrinal beliefs are, in fact, indoctrinated because of the role they play in protecting beliefs which more straightforwardly constitute doctrine, this does not mean that we must adopt some version of the content criterion. It is conceivable (if unlikely) that non-doctrinal beliefs could be indoctrinated as stand-alone propositions or as part of wider networks of belief which lack the scope or momentous character of doctrines.[119] And, although it may be more difficult to understand how (or indeed why) a teacher might be inclined to compel her pupils to form the kind of emotional attachment necessary for a belief to be held closed-mindedly absent some wider conception of the good, all that is required to dismiss the necessity of the content criterion is the possibility that she could if she was so inclined.

So, Callan and Arena are correct to contend that indoctrination is signified by the illegitimate separation of evidence from belief and that this is generally motivated by some kind of emotional (non-rational) attachment to the beliefs that the indoctrinated individual holds. Indoctrination occurs when the real, rational or evidentially grounded reasons for believing a proposition have been occluded so that the believer is incapable of accessing them. In these cases, emotional attachment replaces her reasons making it difficult (if not impossible) to revise or relinquish her beliefs in a fully rational manner.

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[119] White suggests the example of a teacher who wishes to get a pupil to believe that Melbourne is the capital of Australia. This might involve inculcating an array of other beliefs (including that the pupils should never consult an atlas or look at a map) but, while this seems like a genuine case of indoctrination, it does not appear to involve doctrine at all. (White, 1967, p.184)

§2.8 Conclusion

 The aim of this chapter was to consider the main criteria thought to characterise indoctrination with a view to establishing a descriptive definition of the term. Although it is clear that indoctrination is (at least in modern use) a thoroughly pejorative label, I have sought, as far as possible, to avoid morally normative claims about the practice in order to get clear about what distinguishes it from other kinds of teaching.

Fundamentally, indoctrination involves the transmission of beliefs and can, therefore, be distinguished from other educational practices which operate outside of "the region of intelligence". Given that indoctrinators seek to ensure that their pupils learn something, indoctrination constitutes a form of teaching. Of the four additional criteria of indoctrination commonly suggested to distinguish the practice, I am happy to dismiss two out of hand. These are intention and method respectively.

As we have seen, although the intention to indoctrinate may well be conscious in the mind of some indoctrinators, many individuals (and institutions) who participate in practices which lead to the characteristic mind-set it involves have no such intention. Unless we wish to assert that indoctrinators who fail to consciously identify with the aim of transmitting beliefs which are unshakeable, closed-minded or unduly resistant to evidence are always either accurate or insincere, we must conclude that intention is neither necessary nor sufficient for indoctrination.

It is problematic to define indoctrination in terms of method for two reasons. First, if we do this at the level of particular kinds of teaching (rote learning or drilling, for example), we risk identifying false positives since there are many non-indoctrinatory ways of using such techniques. Likewise, identifying indoctrination with a narrow sub-set of teaching activities will allow many instances of indoctrination to go unidentified because they appear to involve

techniques like open Socratic discussion. Second, if our understanding of method is broadened to include all those methods which "bypass rationality," then the parameters are set far too widely to tell us anything very informative. Even teaching activities which do this are polymorphous in nature.

The outcome criterion constitutes the backbone of any plausible account of indoctrination. Indoctrination severs the link between evidence, rationality and belief; meaning that the indoctrinated individual is closed-minded, unable to make judgements about the world and her place in it in an appropriate way. She holds her beliefs in an irrational manner (even if it would be possible to hold every belief she holds quite rationally).

But, while it is entirely possible to transmit beliefs in non-doctrinal propositions so that they are held in the closed-minded manner concomitant with indoctrination, and this means that content is neither necessary nor sufficient to the concept, it is worth noting that there is an intimate (though contingent) connection between doctrine and indoctrination. Indeed, this connection is often present in beliefs which, on the face of it, have nothing to do with doctrine because they are 'doctrine facilitating beliefs'. One reason for the strong connection between doctrine and indoctrination arises out of the web-like nature of doctrinal belief systems. It is more difficult (although not impossible) for a single belief held in isolation to resist rational reassessment than it is for a belief which forms part of a wider complex of beliefs to similarly escape evaluation. So, a belief in the Virgin birth is easier to countenance in the context of Christianity than it would be if a rather eccentric indoctrinator had simply decided to teach her pupils 'there was once a virgin who gave birth to a baby' minus any attendant beliefs about the how, why and wherefore of this unusual event.

It is true that the chances such a story would continue to be believed by the individual subjected to this peculiar form of indoctrination would be enhanced by additional supporting

beliefs which we might hesitate to call doctrinal.[120] However, as we have seen, doctrine amounts to more than a coherent web of mutually supporting beliefs. The web of beliefs involved must pertain to something transcendent (in the sense that it is bigger than the individual involved, rather than other-worldly); to use Thiessen's formulation, it must have 'momentous character'. This feature further explains why doctrine is, empirically speaking, more likely to be involved in instances of indoctrination than other kinds of beliefs. Doctrines predominantly relate to what it is to live a good life and, therefore, lend themselves more readily to a person's identity; become constitutive of how the believer thinks of herself. Once embedded, it is this feature (emotional, non-rational attachment) which looks as if it makes doctrines more difficult to assess than other kinds of belief.

From this discussion, it seems clear there is a strong (if contingent rather than logical) link between doctrine and indoctrination. This supports the conclusion that, although the content is neither necessary nor sufficient for indoctrination, it will often signify its presence or the threat it will occur. However, indoctrination itself is best defined as:

> *A teaching process, pertaining to the transmission of beliefs, which directly results in the construction of an illegitimate barrier between the beliefs a pupil holds and reasons she has for holding them; a barrier which causes her to be closed-minded.*

It looks as if it is this characteristic evidence or rationality-resisting belief style which will be able to provide us with the best reason to understand why indoctrination is so roundly condemned in educational settings. In the next chapter, I will examine the moral case against indoctrination before concluding that the pejorative sense which accompanies the term is well-deserved.

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[120] The belief that there are historical records of the birth or biological precedents in non-human species for example.

CHAPTER III

WHAT'S WRONG WITH INDOCTRINATION?

§3.1 Introduction

Having argued that indoctrination is best described as teaching which results in a pupil holding the beliefs she has been taught in a manner which keeps them separate from her evidence and/or reasons for holding them, I am now in a position to assess the claim that this kind of teaching is morally problematic. In this chapter, I will reconsider the case of teaching-related delusion and argue that the explanatory work required to distinguish between such cases and indoctrination provides us with a *prima facie* reason to think there is something normatively worrying about the practice. I will then go on to assess the claim, made by a number of theorists,[121] that indoctrination is necessary, inevitable and (in some circumstances) desirable; that there exists a conceptual division between "good indoctrination" and "bad indoctrination". Finally, I will demonstrate why, under the most plausible conception of indoctrination — the outcome conception — the practice should be regarded as morally reprehensible and avoided by educators.

§3.2 Teaching-Related Delusions and a *Prima Facie* Moral Objection to Indoctrination

In the previous chapter, it was established that the outcome criterion of indoctrination provides us with the only condition which is both necessary and sufficient to supplement the teaching of belief in a viable account of the concept of indoctrination. Nevertheless, the similarities between the way an indoctrinated person holds her beliefs and the manner in

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[121] Notably Green (1972); Macmillan (1983); Garrison (1986).

which a delusional person holds hers (particularly when the catalyst has been some kind of teaching event) looked sufficiently similar to warrant an extended explanation of why, in spite of the obvious similarities, teaching-related delusional beliefs could not be subsumed under the concept of indoctrination. This was because, for indoctrination to have occurred, the beliefs of the pupil must bear an adequate resemblance to the beliefs that the teacher *intended* to transmit (see §2.7).

Given the claim the outcome account is unable to provide us with an adequate distinction between delusion and indoctrination can thus be dismissed, it would be easy to surmise that the former has completed its conceptual task and should now be put aside. However, the mere fact it was necessary to make the original distinction demonstrates something of value to the question at hand; to whether we should regard indoctrination as morally illegitimate. Delusions generally prevent those suffering with them from interacting with and accurately understanding the world around them; from responding to their surroundings as they really are. It is not without reason that people experiencing delusions are described as "suffering" from them. This gives us *prima facie* reason to regard the practice of indoctrination —which is itself characterised by beliefs held apart from supporting evidence and/or reasons — as bringing about a significant harm. If the practice of indoctrination leaves pupils with a mind-set bearing close resemblance to delusion, examining what makes the delusional state of mind undesirable may also help to demonstrate why, whether deliberately or carelessly, bringing about a similar state through teaching is considered morally objectionable.

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V*:

> Delusions are fixed beliefs[122] that are not amenable to change in light of conflicting evidence.
> Their content may include a variety of themes (e.g. persecutory, referential, somatic,

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[122] The reference to "fixed beliefs" marks a departure from DSM IV in which delusions were considered to be necessarily false. Bortolotti (2013) notes that, "the new account narrows the gap between delusions and other

religious, grandiose). […] Delusions are deemed bizarre if they are clearly implausible and not understandable to same-culture peers and do not derive from ordinary life experiences. […] The distinction between a delusion and a strongly held idea is sometimes difficult to make and depends in part on the degree of conviction with which the belief is held despite clear or reasonable contradictory evidence regarding its veracity. (DSMV cited by Bortolotti, 2013)[123]

Delusions are variously described, but there are certain features which manifest in the majority of definitions, and they are primarily characterised "on the basis of their epistemic features, including lack of warrant, fixity, resistance to counterargument, and implausibility." (Bortolotti, 2015, S1). In addition, delusion is typically thought to constitute a pathological condition; delusional beliefs often "jeopardise day-to-day functioning" (McKay et al., 2005, p.315) and, as a result, extensive treatment may be required to rid sufferers of their delusions.

Nevertheless, any account of delusion which leans too heavily on the notion that it involves "suffering" runs the risk of being naïve and over-simplified. In our folk-psychology explanations, we are likely to maintain that people experiencing delusions "suffer" because we assume the content of those delusions is disturbing, distressing or confusing. Of course, this will often be the case[124] [125] but, this is predominantly a concern about the (presumed) content of delusional beliefs, not one about epistemological warrant. We can think of this

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irrational beliefs, suggesting that the epistemic features of delusions are not unique to pathologies of the mind, but characterise many of our everyday beliefs."

[123] It seems reasonable to assume that something like the psychiatric definition of delusion's focus on the notion of conviction in the face of contradictory evidence motivated evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins to christen his anti-theistic polemic, '*The God Delusion'* (2006). However, and as the definition itself makes clear, beliefs may only be deemed delusional according to the psychiatric model if they are "not understandable to same-culture peers," a caveat which was deliberately designed to rule out (ordinary) religious beliefs *in toto*. This said, it is still possible to experience delusions that are religious in nature.

[124] Jaspers (1963) records the case of a patient suffering from thought insertion (where an individual maintains she has thoughts which are not her own) who experienced the delusional belief that a voice was telling him "electrically" to commit murder (Mullins and Spence, 2003).

[125] Although this is not necessarily the case and delusions can be experienced as benign (see Miyazono (2015)).

kind of suffering as *phenomenological suffering*; it relates to the lived experience of holding certain beliefs and how they *feel* to the individual experiencing them.

Delusional beliefs appear particularly likely to cause phenomenological suffering, and it is easy to imagine circumstances under which indoctrinated content is experienced in a similarly worrisome manner — if a child was led to believe she would be punished by God for her sins and misdeeds, for example. However, the claim that delusional and indoctrinated beliefs may share some kind of distress-causing property is not enough to support the assertion that to indoctrinate *just amounts to* causing phenomenological suffering. After all, justified, true beliefs held in an entirely rational manner look more than capable of causing upset and distress.[126] Indeed, some of the facts teachers wish to transmit in schools may be disconcerting or alarming. This is not, in itself, a reason to refrain from teaching them (although it may necessitate a more sensitive teaching style).

Moreover, there are circumstances under which delusional beliefs can be said to *prevent* phenomenological suffering. Take the case of BX, who had beliefs symptomatic of "Reverse Othello Syndrome".[127] Following brain damage caused during a road accident, BX developed:

> a delusional system that revolved around the continuing fidelity of his partner (who had in fact severed all contact with him soon after his accident). The patient became convinced that he and his former partner had recently married, and he was eager to persuade others that he now felt sexually fulfilled. (McKay et al., 2005, p. 313)

Given the nature of his injuries – "The accident left him quadriplegic [and] unable to speak without reliance on an electronic communicator." (McKay et al., 2005, p. 313) – BX's beliefs

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[126] Take Bernard Williams' example of the father who loses his son at sea. The father wishes to believe that his son is alive because the phenomenological suffering caused by the fact (the justified true belief) of his son's death is too painful for him to bear. (Williams,1973, p.179)

[127] Best defined as "a delusional belief in the fidelity of a romantic partner" (Butler, 2000, p.85).

were walled-off from a considerable body of counter-evidence. Butler nevertheless posits that BX's delusional beliefs functioned as "an adaptive attempt to regain intrapsychic coherence and to confer meaning on otherwise catastrophic loss or emptiness." (Butler, 2000, p. 90).

As Bortolotti puts it:

> The delusion kept BX's depression at bay at a very critical time. Acknowledging the end of his romantic relationship might have been disastrous at a time when he was coping with the realisation of his new disability and its effects on his life. (Bortolotti, 2015, §2.1)

This ability to prevent "depressive overwhelm" —or at least facilitate happiness via wishful thinking— may also be apparent in cases of indoctrination. Consider the pupil who is inculcated to believe that her religious sect represents the only one which has been selected by God to ascend to Heaven. This might act as a consolatory belief and enable the individual holding it to stay positive in the face of adversity; such positivity may be particularly important if the group to which the individual is affiliated is routinely discriminated against or poorly treated by the rest of society.

Since the phenomenological consequences of both well and ill-founded beliefs may be negative (or positive), we should not place too much weight on the idea of phenomenological suffering. To draw out the similarities between delusion and indoctrination relevant to the issue of whether indoctrination is morally wrong, we must instead consider the *epistemic* consequences of these states of mind. It might still be possible to draw on the notion of 'suffering' in this respect – perhaps both the practice of indoctrination and the condition of delusion bring about some kind of *epistemic* suffering —but here 'suffering' is better understood as an affliction, a condition which affects an individual rather than an experience; one can be afflicted without being aware of said affliction. Of course, it seems likely that

epistemic suffering could lead to *phenomenological suffering*, but the two senses are distinct and separable.

§3.3 Separating Belief and Reason

Both the indoctrinated and delusional state of mind are characterised by a schism between belief on the one hand, and reason and evidence on the other. This closed-mindedness is problematic because it affects an agent's ability to understand the world properly; it means she is less likely to be able to identify what is true and false and to adapt her beliefs accordingly. Such individuals are susceptible to erroneous, possibly even dangerous beliefs. At a basic level, we require our beliefs about the world to be grounded in truth because this will help to keep us safe from harm. Someone who systematically mistakes poison for food or acid for eye-drops is unlikely to do very well in the survival stakes. This suggests an extremely good reason for raising a moral objection to the practice of indoctrination; it is likely to entail that pupils hold erroneous (possibly harmful) beliefs without being suitably equipped to find their way out of the predicament. Morally acceptable teaching must prepare children to live well and flourish, but this won't be possible if the intellect has been disabled through indoctrination.

Of course, it is possible to conceive of a situation in which a person's non-evidentially held beliefs happen to coincide with the truth. Under such circumstances, is it plausible to maintain that the barrier which exists between belief and reason fails to constitute an impediment to the closed-minded individual? Perhaps, if we lived in a world without change —one in which knowledge could be thought of as fixed and invariable —it is possible that a closed-minded way of thinking (about truths) would prove beneficial to the person exhibiting it. But, given the inevitability of change in the world in which we do live, it seems clear that the ability to adapt on an intellectual level is as important as evolutionary biologists have

shown it to be at a genetic level, for even if the teacher herself has good reasons or evidence for the propositions she seeks to indoctrinate, as Callan and Arena put it:

> If the history of science reveals anything, it surely tells us that scientific progress will expose much that we now take as true to be false, and that being so, teaching what is false as if it were true would seem to be an almost inevitable misfortune. (Callan and Arena, 2009, p.115)

If a belief which is held closed-mindedly (whether as the result of indoctrination or delusion) ceases to be true, the believer will, completely unknowingly, lose any benefits that her (accidental) belief in the truth afforded her. What's more, she will be compelled to keep believing that untruth in spite of the fact it may now be disadvantageous or even harmful. Both the deluded and the indoctrinated are what Siegel calls, "[prisoners] of [their] convictions" (Siegel, 2004, p.80); they are trapped in a "cognitive straitjacket" (Siegel, 1990, p.88).

What's more, even if the belief or beliefs in question happen to stay true, the tendency to hold some beliefs in a non-evidential fashion could increase the risk that the believer fails to engage with reason elsewhere in her system of beliefs, particularly when well-grounded (non-indoctrinated/ non-delusional) beliefs come into conflict with the ones she believes closed-mindedly. Unlike the content theory of indoctrination, outcome-based accounts leave room for the possibility that the scope of indoctrination can vary. This means that one can be indoctrinated in anything from individual beliefs to whole belief systems.[128] However, it seems clear that one of the reasons the literature on indoctrination is replete with examples involving wide-ranging doctrines, stems from the fact that irrational, non-evidential belief has a tendency to infect the wider system; to corrupt our style of believing overall.

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[128] Delusions can be similarly broad or narrow in scope and tend to be "either *monothematic* and *circumscribed*, or *florid* and *polythematic*" (Bortolotti, 2010, p.25).

To summarise, if a closed-minded individual believes something which is true, the truth of her belief is, at most, a happy accident. She is constantly vulnerable to making errors which, by the very nature in which she holds (at least some of) her beliefs, are uncorrectable. This may, in turn, begin to affect her belief system overall. Beliefs which are sealed off from the reasons for holding them are less likely to be true and, when they are, this truth is a mere contingency. But are there any reasons beyond the *pragmatic* value of truth for caring about the truth of our beliefs?

One logical reason is that truth is fundamental to the very concept of belief. As Bernard Williams argues, "beliefs *aim* at truth" (Williams, 1973, p. 136. My italics.); to believe something is akin to thinking that it is true:

> 'I believe that *p*' carries an implied claim to the truth of *p*. (Williams, 1973, p.137)

When individuals holding delusional or indoctrinated beliefs communicate those beliefs, they are making truth claims,[129] and the beliefs themselves constitute an attempt to make sense of the world *as it is*; its truth. So, belief carries an implicit regard for the importance of truth; it simply doesn't make sense to believe something if one doesn't take that thing to be true.

In addition, truth plays an essential role in the concept of knowledge; we cannot know something unless what we claim to know is true. In other words, truth is epistemically valuable. Although propositions can be true independently of our knowledge of that truth, it would be peculiar to maintain I have knowledge whilst simultaneously insisting that it simply doesn't matter (epistemologically speaking) whether what I know is true. A second component of knowledge, justification, similarly requires that my belief is rationally

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[129] Although this is disputed by those who hold non-doxastic accounts of delusion.

grounded in a manner rendered impossible when beliefs float free of relevant reasons and evidence.

To be sure, the notion that knowledge is more valuable than both *false belief* and *mere true belief* (belief which happens to be true as the result of accident or coincidence) is not entirely uncontroversial. Jonathan Kvanvig has argued that, because there is "no decent answer to the question of the value of knowledge…" (Kvanvig, 2003 cited in Greco, 2010, p.93), we should stop contemplating its "nature and extent… and focus instead on the broader question of exemplary cognition…"(Kvanvig, 2008, p.505). But, whether one agrees that Kvanvig is correct to think the *concept* of knowledge doesn't add anything of value to the (seemingly lesser) notion of justified true belief,[130] or adopts the (to my mind more plausible) view of John Greco — that knowledge amounts to "a kind of success from ability[131]" (Greco, 2010, p.99) — it is clear that, whether it occurs because of delusion or indoctrination, the construction of a mental barrier between belief and reason threatens to interfere with an individual's ability to think well and respond appropriately to the features of the world that signify truth.

The fact that indoctrination leads to a closed-minded outlook – one which makes truth and knowledge fundamentally elusive — suggests one of the strongest reasons for regarding it as both morally problematic and antithetical to education. Arguments about what *kinds* of knowledge we ought to transmit[132] to children notwithstanding, education has *something* to do with the acquisition of knowledge. This is the case even if, since habits, propensities and attainments (such as appreciation and understanding) can be taught, "the range of educational

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[130] Even with respect to the Gettier counterexamples.

[131] Meaning that a belief which is true and justified as a result of the intellectual skill(s) of the believer is more valuable than one which has arisen as a result of some kind of coincidence.

[132] Or even how children ought to come by that knowledge — even the position of the "child-centred theorists" invoked by White in §2.6 does not involve the claim that what children should "discover" is not knowledge of the world around them.

concepts… is larger than that of knowing." (Scheffler, 1965, p.21). Teaching in a manner which renders the truth of beliefs accidental therefore represents an illegitimate distortion of the practice; it separates it from one of its fundamental aims.

One might similarly suppose that delusions are problematic (although not morally so) because of their own tendency to stymie knowledge acquisition. Even if the deluded individual does not experience phenomenological suffering (in the sense that she is distressed or upset by the content of her delusions), she suffers on an epistemic level because her delusions prevent her from accessing important truths.

On the basis of these conclusions, it might be tempting to maintain the case against indoctrination has been made. But what if there are forms of both indoctrinated and delusional belief which, far from ensuring that the believer is unable to accrue knowledge, facilitate the acquisition of knowledge which she wouldn't otherwise have been able to access? What if, under certain circumstances, indoctrinated or delusional beliefs are what we might term (following Bortolotti, 2015) "epistemically innocent"?

In the next section I will examine the concept of epistemic innocence (which has primarily been used in recent literature on the philosophy of psychiatry) in an attempt to ascertain whether it can be brought to bear on the *paradox of indoctrination* and the claim that the practice of indoctrination may be, in some sense, necessary to the enterprise of education.

§3.4 Epistemic Innocence?

Through their contingent relationship with truth, both delusions and indoctrinated beliefs appear to impede the believer's ability to gain knowledge and understanding of the world and her place in it. This lack entails that someone holding their beliefs in a manner characteristic of indoctrination or delusion is epistemologically cast adrift; when her beliefs are false, they

bear little or no resemblance to reality, and, when true, they are accidentally and unjustifiably so.

However, according to Lisa Bortolotti, it is possible to maintain that (at least under certain circumstances) delusional beliefs may exhibit a property called "epistemic innocence"; that is, they "[deliver] a significant epistemic benefit, and the benefit could not be attained if the delusion were not adopted." (Bortolotti, 2015, §3). In Bortolotti's view, epistemically innocent beliefs do not exhibit innocence in the sense that they are free from error or "sin". Indeed, she is happy to maintain that, "ideally, agents would have beliefs that are true and that are supported by, and responsive to, the evidence available to them." (Bortolotti, 2015, §3). For Botolotti, epistemic innocence functions in much the same way as innocence on the grounds of self-defence might function in a court of law; as an excuse or justification which redeems an action (or, in the case of delusion, a belief) on the grounds it prevents further harm and that no other course of action was available to the agent (believer).[133]

As we have seen, there are situations in which delusional beliefs confer psychological (phenomenological) benefits upon the patients suffering from them. In the case of BX,[134] unwarranted belief in a successful relationship enabled the patient to resist the emotional ruin which may have ensued had he adopted a belief which reflected his actual circumstances. But Bortolotti is after something more than the idea that false or illegitimately fixed beliefs can be comforting. She argues that, when they are *epistemically* innocent, they actually help to avoid consequences which would be worse on an *epistemological* basis.

If BX had accepted the (justified, true) belief that his partner had left him, it is likely that his subsequent mental breakdown would not just have left him psychologically impaired, it

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[133] For a detailed discussion see Bortolotti (2015, §3).
[134] See §3.2

would have left him *epistemically* worse off. In this broken mental state his "epistemological functioning" would have been impeded. As Bortolotti puts it:

> By having [the delusional] belief, a person will be more likely to engage with her surrounding physical and social environment in a way that is conducive to epistemic achievements. Consequences of stress and anxiety include lack of concentration, irritability, social isolation, and emotional disturbances. These in turn negatively affect socialisation, making interaction with other people less frequent and less conducive to useful feedback on existing beliefs, and to the fruitful exchange of relevant information. Due to reduced socialisation and engagement, the acquisition and retention of knowledge is compromised and intellectual virtues are not exercised. (Bortolotti, 2015, §3.1)

Of course, not all delusional beliefs will exhibit the quality of epistemic innocence. In order to qualify two conditions must obtain:

> *Epistemic Benefit*: The delusional belief confers a significant epistemic benefit to an agent at the time of its adoption.

> *No Alternatives*: Other beliefs that would confer the same benefit are not available to that agent at that time. (Bortolotti, 2015, §3)

But it seems plausible to wonder if, given the similarity between the indoctrinated and delusional state of mind, the possibility of epistemically innocent delusions suggests there may be instances in which indoctrinated beliefs might be deemed similarly innocent. It is to this possibility that we turn next.

§3.5 Epistemic Innocence, Early Belief Transmission and the Paradox of Indoctrination

The primary difference between the delusional and the indoctrinated state of mind is located in how each originates. In the case of indoctrination, this is as a direct result of teaching, whereas, in the case of delusion, beliefs are engendered through some sort of natural (though

abnormal) process.[135] The fact that indoctrination is a kind of teaching entails that it involves what Paul Hirst calls, "a triadic relation":

> A teaching activity is the activity of a person, A (the teacher), the intention of which is to bring about an activity (learning), by a person, B (the pupil), the intention of which is to achieve some end-state (e.g. knowing, appreciating) whose object is X (e.g. a belief, attitude, skill). (Hirst, 1971, p.12)

On the most plausible account of indoctrination, the practice is defined by its end-state. However, because this state is the result of the actions of an agent (the teacher), indoctrination is subject to moral assessment. We don't generally look to attribute moral responsibility for the formation of a delusional belief to an agent and, although there may be conceivable circumstances under which individuals are responsible for creating the kind of environment which is more likely to engender delusional beliefs,[136] delusion is not normally brought about as an act of (an external agent's) will.[137] If it is correct to think that indoctrination results in a harmful mind-set then, one might conjecture, the teacher —who not only has a responsibility to refrain from harming but a positive duty to improve the intellectual capabilities of her pupils —does something worthy of moral disapprobation.

However, the above argument will only succeed if it is indeed the case that indoctrinated beliefs are always harmful or, at the very least, more likely to be harmful than beliefs which don't exhibit the same evidence/reason barring features. The broad similarity between indoctrinated beliefs and delusional beliefs gives the opponent of indoctrination intuitively

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[135] The question of whether delusions "arise as normal responses to anomalous experiences" (the one-factor account), or whether a second factor— "described superficially as a loss of the ability to reject a candidate for belief on the grounds of its implausibility and its inconsistency with everything else that the patient knows" — is also required is a subject of dispute (Davies et al. 2001, p.133).

[136] There is good empirical evidence to suggest that individuals who are subjected to abuse in childhood are more likely to develop psychiatric illness in later life, for example (see Schäfer and Fisher (2011)).

[137] Indeed, as we saw in Chapter II, if this were to happen, we should simply view it as a straightforward case of indoctrination.

good grounds to argue that there is something objectively wrong with the practice; it leaves its victims with beliefs which are held in exactly the same way as those held by the pathologically delusional. But, as we have seen, delusional beliefs are not necessarily psychologically harmful. Furthermore (and perhaps more worryingly for the opponent of indoctrination) it is not even clear that all delusional beliefs are *epistemically* damaging. Could a similar case be made for certain types of indoctrinated beliefs?

The idea that there is such a thing as 'good indoctrination' has a long and venerable history. Green maintains that, "indoctrination may, in many contexts, be both good and necessary" (Green, 1972, p.45) and, following Wittgenstein, Macmillan (1983) and Garrison (1986) argue that the practice is an inevitable consequence of coming to hold a world-view or "*Welt-bilder*". Furthermore, the view that we may be able to justify the transmission of non- (or not fully) evidential beliefs appears to be supported by numerous cases in which educators legitimately seek to inculcate beliefs which pupils are initially, "unable to justify on rational grounds" (Wagner cited in Siegel, 1990, p.82). For example, the attempt to impart basic morals ('don't hit your sister', 'don't steal') or teach the fundamentals of a complex subject such as science ('what goes up, must come down'). When we inculcate beliefs "*sans* rational justification" (Siegel, 1990, p.82), this is usually because young children are not yet capable of the kind of thinking necessary for it to be possible or practical to provide them with fully worked out, rational explanations of the beliefs we seek to transmit. However, for the period of time during which there is a schism between beliefs and the reasons for holding those beliefs, it may look as if the pre-rational child is in a broadly similar predicament to the person in the grip of a delusion. Can this be justified on the basis of epistemic innocence? There is good reason to think that it can, but that it would not, therefore, be accurate to call this a case of indoctrination.

The idea that teaching for belief in early childhood constitutes a form of benign indoctrination is not uncontroversial. Harvey Siegel prefers to call the practice "non-indoctrinative belief-inculcation" (NIBI) and maintains we should be very careful to distinguish it from indoctrination. (Siegel, 1990, p.83) For Siegel, one justification for this distinction lies in the fact that, in most cases, NIBI results in a belief state for which the absence of "justifying reasons" is merely temporary. Indoctrination makes this lack permanent (or extremely difficult to change):

> There is a world of difference between causing Johnny to believe things in such a way that they are now held *sans* rational justification, and in such a way that he comes *never* to see the importance or relevance of inquiring into the rational status of his beliefs; and causing Janie to believe things in such a way that they are now held *sans* rational justification, but with the view that this lack is temporary, and with an eye to imparting to Janie at the earliest possible time a belief in the importance of grounding beliefs with reasons and in developing in her the dispositions to challenge, question and demand reasons and justification for potential beliefs. (Siegel, 1990, p.82)

Siegel's response to this concern mirrors Bortolotti's account of epistemic innocence with respect to delusional beliefs. The acquisition of early beliefs "[confers] a significant epistemic benefit to an agent at the time of [their] adoption" and, because a young child is insufficiently mentally developed to hold these beliefs in a (fully) rational manner (she is pre-rational) there are "no alternatives: other beliefs that would confer the same benefit are not available to that agent at that time." (Bortolotti, 2015, §3) NIBI results in non (or not fully) rational beliefs which, because they "may later be redeemed by reasons," (Green, 1972 cited in Siegel, 1990, p.83) are epistemically innocent.

In order for delusions to be deemed epistemically innocent, they must arise as part of an emergency response to some kind of psychological disturbance or abnormality — this is the

so-called "shear pin"[138] account of delusion. The effectiveness of such a response is limited and, although a delusional belief may initially alleviate stress and anxiety, relief is likely to be short-lived if the belief "is maintained in the face of conflicting evidence and challenges from third-parties" (Bortolotti, 2015, §3.1). These challenges will eventually begin to alienate the delusional individual from those around her and, whilst "the adoption of delusional belief may be beneficial because it prevents the occurrence of disastrous mental breakdown… its benefits are unlikely to outlive the prevention of the breakdown." (Bortolotti, 2015, §3.1)

Similarly, NIBI can only legitimately take place under certain circumstances and is time limited. Here the adoption of beliefs without reason or evidence can be thought of as kind of scaffolding apparatus rather than a shear-pin. Eventually, the pre-rational child will develop and sharpen her ability to think rationally, and her beliefs will gradually become appropriately related to evidence and reasons; at the outset of her intellectual development, however, additional help is required.

It certainly appears that particular forms of early belief inculcation are epistemically innocent.[139] If the inculcation of a belief will eventually "develop in the believer an evidential style of belief" and is to be "redeemed by reasons," (Siegel, 1990, p.84) it will lead to the acquisition of knowledge that would not have been possible without the transmission of the original (non-rational) belief. Nevertheless, this 'innocence' is the self-same feature which makes it possible for such belief transmission to avoid the charge of indoctrination on the

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[138] A mechanical term for "a pin inserted in a machine at a critical point and designed to shear and stop the machine if the load becomes too great." (Collins, 2015)

[139] Indeed, early moral education looks as if it may be particularly justifiable on the basis of epistemic innocence. This is because the ability to navigate the social world (and the beliefs that underpin this capacity) could be regarded as fundamental to acquiring further knowledge of all kinds; if I am unable to conduct myself in a basically moral manner (refraining from hurting others and so on), I am unlikely to be able to interact with others in a way which makes learning possible. Like epistemically innocent delusions, non-rational beliefs in moral propositions will make it more likely that a child "[engages] with her surrounding physical and social environment in a way that is conducive to epistemic achievements." (Bortolotti, 2015, §3)

outcome-based account of the practice; as long as the final consequence of one's teaching is a belief which is held in an evidential manner, indoctrination has not taken place.

The foregoing discussion seems to suggest there is no such thing as 'good indoctrination'. However, when Macmillan and Garrison speak positively about the practice, it is important to note they are not advocating for the paradigmatic cases which are commonly the subject of moral disapproval,[140] or even for early beliefs which can be "redeemed by reasons". Rather, they are concerned to leave space for educators to be able to transmit a range of beliefs which must be held with certainty if the rational project is to get off the ground at all; we might call these sorts of beliefs *rationality facilitating beliefs*. It is the inculcation of *these* beliefs which engenders the paradox of indoctrination.

As Macmillan puts it:

> In a modern democratic society, the desired goal of education is that each student develop a set of beliefs that are rationally grounded and open to change when challenged by better grounded beliefs. In order to develop such students, however, it would seem that they must acquire a belief in rational methods of knowing which ***must itself be beyond challenge***, i.e., must be held in a manner inconsistent with its own content. Thus students must be indoctrinated in order not to be indoctrinated: a pedagogical dilemma or paradox. (Macmillan, 1983 cited in Garrison, 1986, p.264. My italics)

It is, then, a matter of contention whether *rationality facilitating beliefs* can be justified or "redeemed by reason" in the same way as other sorts of early childhood beliefs. Siegel certainly appears to think they can:

> The demand for justification is a legitimate one, if our commitment to rationality is not to be arbitrary. And if that commitment is to be justified, we must produce a non-question begging

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[140] E.g. the Communist education programme of Soviet Russia.

reason for committing ourselves to rationality… I believe the demand can be met – that we can say why we should be rational… we meet the demand by seeing that rationality is *self-justifying*. By this I mean that, in order seriously to question the worth of rationality, one must already be committed to it. For to ask "Why be rational?" is to ask for reasons for and against being rational; to entertain the question seriously is to acknowledge the force of reasons in ascertaining an answer. To recognize that force is straightaway to recognize the answer to the question: we should be rational because (for the reason that) reasons have force. (Siegel, 1990, p.132)

If one is persuaded by the notion that rationality is "self-justifying", it is plausible to maintain that the inculcation of rationality facilitating beliefs in pre-rational children is epistemically innocent: the child who comes to believe in "rational methods of knowing" does so under conditions which meet both the *epistemic benefit* and *no alternatives* criteria, but will only be able to justify her position at a later date. This also entails that the process, insofar as it aims at encouraging the child to consider the rational grounding of her beliefs as soon as she is able, avoids the charge of indoctrination.

However, as Chris Hanks points out, the claim that reason is self-justifying "presumes a skeptic who finds the question "Why be rational?" to be a meaningful one in the first place." (Hanks, 2008, p.195) The child who is brought up to believe in the importance of rationality may well feel the force of reasons, but is this because "reasons have [objective] force" or because, owing to the unavailability of reasons and evidence to underpin rationality itself,[141] she has been taught *sans* reason to believe they do? Perhaps reasons motivate because their power was woven in to the environment in which one was brought up, not because they self-justifyingly extend beyond it. When Siegel implies that, "the self-justifying nature of

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[141] Because they are one class of the "river bed" or "hinge" propositions identified by Wittgenstein and, as such, "belong to the bedrock of our thinking". These include "not only propositions of logic… [but also] pseudo-empirical… methodological propositions [and] empirical propositions about which we 'can hardly be mistaken' (Wittgenstein cited in Kazepides, 1991, p.12).

rationality [is] decisive against the charge of indoctrination… he takes for granted a conception of rationality as universal, overriding any belief or set of beliefs that does not claim a rational foundation." (Hanks, 2008, p.195) But, alternative conceptions of reason do exist[142] and, as Hanks explains, it is their focus on the idea that "rational thought is embedded in natural processes" that appears to motivate the position that the transmission of rationality facilitating beliefs[143] is a form of benign indoctrination (rather than an example of NIBI).[144]

While a fully worked out conception of rationality is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth pausing to consider Hanks' own solution to the paradox in a little more detail. He suggests that, to avoid being caught between the Scylla of insisting that, because of the biologically and socially embedded nature of rationality, "some indoctrination is inevitable" and the (to his mind) equally unappealing Charybdis of adopting a "universal or transcendent view of rationality" (Hanks, 2008, p. 193) which locates it "outside the empirical realm" (p.199), it is necessary to approach the concept from a new direction. This approach, drawn from the work of John McDowell (1994) and Wilfred Sellars (1997; 2007), conceives of rationality as both "natural" (in that it is part of the natural world) and "non-reductive" (it cannot be "reduced to mechanistic principles or relations"). This account has led various theorists[145] to the conclusion that one of the key purposes of education is to open the eyes of pupils to "the space of reasons" (McDowell, 1994, p.82).[146] And, for Hanks, the approach

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[142] For instance, Jim Garrison (1999) articulates an instrumentalist view of the concept.

[143] Sometimes known, following Wittgenstein, as "river-bed propositions" or "hinge propositions" (see Wittgenstein, 1969).

[144] This strong contextualist position may also lead to the extremely unsatisfactory view that there is no such thing as indoctrination because "belief formation and rational judgement must be understood as part and parcel of the process of induction" and, "the forms they take are relative to social context and can only be judged from within the conceptual frame belonging to a given society" (Hanks, 2008, p.202; see also Neiman, 1989).

[145] Including Hanks (2008) and Bakhurst (2011).

[146] The normative space in which conceptual thinking and evaluation takes place. As Sellars puts it with respect to epistemic normativity, "in characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says." (Sellars, 1997, p.76) Both Sellars and McDowell aim to explain the relationship between mind and world — the "manifest image" and the "scientific image"— to demonstrate how

"dissolves" the paradox of indoctrination because it helps to highlight that the difference between indoctrination and legitimate forms of teaching is that the latter "involves stunting or distorting development in the space of reasons" (Hanks, 2008, p. 211).

However, while Hanks explicitly attempts to deal with concerns about early belief inculcation,[147] he is less forthcoming with respect to how the conception of reason he favours addresses the most paradoxical element of the paradox of indoctrination; the worry that, by dint of their nature, river-bed propositions (rationality facilitating beliefs) are unjustifiable. True, the McDowell/Sellars view that reason is "a product or a part of nature"— it has "naturalist metaphysical status" (Siegel, 2012, p.197)— *but* is, nevertheless, "different in kind from the scientific conception of nature" (Hanks, 2008, p.208) suggests that the seemingly problematic logical status of rationality facilitating propositions can be explained by their unique (metaphysical) character. But, as this character "is no indication of epistemic status or quality" (Siegel, 2012, p.197) — of applying these propositions correctly or reasoning well— it is simply not clear that it can supplant the appeal to the transcendental or universal applicability of reason upon which the enlightenment view Siegel espouses is based.[148] Since the alternative is a contextualist position, like that of Burbules (1991) or Garrison (1999), whereby "rationality is *determined* or *constituted* by the actual activities, decisions, and judgements people make," (Siegel cited in Hanks, 2008, p.210) and which not only leaves proponents open to the charge of cultural and moral relativism, but makes it

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"raw perception" interacts with the acquisition of concepts in the space of reasons. And, for McDowell, this relationship is best characterised as "thoroughly interpenetrating" (Hanks, 2008, p.205); the space of reasons is part of the natural world even if it is distinct from it.

[147] Hanks maintains that the Sellars/McDowell view of rationality forces us to recognise that the supposed dichotomy between the rational adult and the "pre-rational" child is false. Rather than adopting Siegel's position that we may initially inculcate beliefs sans reason/evidence if we intend to redeem those beliefs at some point in the future (i.e. through NIBI), the problem of early belief inculcation can be solved by focusing on the extent to which the concepts we seek to transmit aid the process of opening a child's eyes to the space of reasons; to "harnessing and [coordinating the rational] capacities intrinsic to human beings" (Hanks, 2008, p.209).

[148] Indeed, Siegel maintains that while there is no incompatibility between his position and the Sellars/McDowell conception of the space of reasons, it is this "missing ingredient" which renders the theory incomplete as an account of education (Siegel, 2012, p.198).

difficult (if not impossible) to objectively account for how belief transmission can go wrong, this universalist conception of rationality is the most attractive. If our conception of reason is unable to show that, to use Siegel's own example, the "gambler's fallacy is a mistake even in communities that regard it as a valid form of reasoning" (Siegel, 2012, p.196), then it fails to constitute a legitimate conception of reason. While reasoning necessarily occurs within specific societies and contexts, truth and justification must transcend those contexts.

In this section, I have attempted to ascertain whether the possibility of epistemically innocent delusion supports the view that indoctrination may, in the limited sphere of early belief inculcation, have positive application. Nevertheless, while both early beliefs (which will later be "redeemed by reason") and rationality facilitating beliefs (whose unique nature dictates that redemption will be self-justifying) appear to be epistemically innocent, it would be wrong to maintain that their transmission is indoctrination. This is because, when the process of justification actually takes place,[149] this transmission will not result in the characteristic barrier between belief on the one hand and evidence and reason on the other.

§3.6 Autonomy and Indoctrination

When Macmillan outlines the paradox of indoctrination, he argues that it only constitutes a paradox for educators in "modern democratic [societies]" (Macmillan, 1983 cited in Garrison, 1986, p.264). Charlene Tan makes a similar point when she says "the paradox of indoctrination [simply did] not exist" in anti-democratic societies such as Nazi Germany (Tan, 2008, p.13).

The claim those holding authoritarian conceptions of the good will not be moved by the force of the paradox is motivated by the assumption that individuals and/or societies who endorse

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[149] As we saw in the last chapter, it is entirely possible to *intend* to provide reasons and/or evidence for the beliefs one transmits but, owing to one's own close-mindedness, fail to do so.

indoctrination do not (or are not likely to) value rationality as highly as those who endorse more liberal conceptions of what is valuable.[150] But this assumption is not entirely correct. It is possible that many people in authoritarian societies value reason and rationality, but also hold that the best way to be rational[151] is for the whole society to unerringly follow the instructions or teachings of an authority rather than considering matters for themselves. If authoritarian societies like this exist, one will either have to demonstrate the beliefs they hold about the best route to rationality are (generally) mistaken, or posit an additional reason to explain why, even when blind obedience appears more rational, indoctrination is still problematic.

One way around the aforementioned problem might be to claim, in cases where authoritarian societies inculcate beliefs on the basis of the (supposed) expertise of an authority (or authorities), the resulting world-view has not been indoctrinated because the testimony of an authority or expert constitutes a legitimate basis for belief. In other words, when a pupil believes something because it has been told to her by a religious or political leader, she has justifiable grounds for her beliefs. An obvious response is that it is impossible for individuals to be legitimate authorities in areas of human activity where numerous reasonable conceptions of value exist. In a discussion about religious propositions, Hand puts it like this:

> For the time being, the truth or falsity of religious propositions is a matter of disagreement among reasonable people. The evidence available is ambiguous. Some people judge that it points in one direction, others that it points in another. Many feel obliged to withhold judgement until such time as more evidence comes to light. (Hand, 2003, p.93)

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[150] Educators in liberal societies feel the force of the paradox because they are explicitly committed to a conception of the good which values rationality.

[151] Or attain knowledge or discover the truth.

The upshot of this position is not that religious (or other kinds of doctrinal) propositions could *never* be known to be true,[152] merely that such beliefs are currently "a matter of faith rather than knowledge". An additional consequence being that anyone who claims to wield intellectual authority in such areas will have to "manufacture" the conditions required to preserve the perception that what she espouses amounts to anything like knowledge and that this manipulation amounts to indoctrination (Hand, 2003, p.98).

While undoubtedly persuasive to the liberal opponent of indoctrination, Hand's argument, (which will be further analysed in Chapter V) does not fully address why, in a scenario where an authority genuinely possessed knowledge about the propositions she sought to inculcate, she would still be doing something worthy of moral disapprobation if she attempted to do this via indoctrination; particularly if she viewed the practice as a legitimate short-cut for getting children to believe the correct things. We can, of course, point to the argument that (in general) we should be wary of pupils becoming closed-minded and unable to change what they think according to the evidence available,[153] but in the very unlikely event that what the teacher sought to transmit could somehow be established as necessarily true and unchanging, the liberally-minded thinker may still have some residual doubts about the legitimacy of the practice. Why should this be? In my view, the explanation lies in autonomy; the idea that individuals should be free to exert control over what they think and the way in which they live their lives.

The argument that autonomy provides us with an overriding reason to view indoctrination with moral disdain is well worn. In a "friendly response" to Hand's paper on faith schools, Harvey Siegel says that, although Hand is correct to contend that indoctrination should be "considered a serious evil because of the difficulty of shifting beliefs one has come to hold

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[152] Indeed, Hand specifically asserts that such knowledge may be possible[152] (Hand, 2003, p.92-93).
[153] This was my argument in §3.3.

non-rationally" (Hand, 2003, p.95), he simply "does not go far enough" (Siegel, 2004, p.80). This is, Siegel argues, because Hand does not recognise that difficult to shift beliefs often only begin to constitute a problem for the believer when they compromise her *autonomy.* In other words, when they stymie her ability to subject her most deeply held convictions to "critical scrutiny". In earlier work, Siegel says:

> In being indoctrinated, the child is cut off from all but a narrow band of possibilities. Her freedom and dignity are short-circuited, her autonomy denied, her control over her own life and her ability to contribute to community life truncated, her mental life impoverished. This is more apt a description of child abuse than of acceptable education. (Siegel, 1990, p.88)

Although Siegel himself asserts that this description is rather "hyperbolic" (Siegel, 2004, p.82), he is not alone in thinking that it is the denial of autonomy which makes indoctrination tantamount to abuse. John Kleinig calls the practice "an assault on the person," going on to maintain:

> If we can see people as responsible agents – as beings who can be held accountable for what they believe and do – in other words, as autonomous productive beings, then indoctrination constitutes a partial frustration of their realisation. It involves a violation of people's personalities such that the beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. which they hold, either in themselves or because of their association with certain other beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. are not available for appraisal. (Kleinig, 1982, p.65)

While the core of what is wrong about indoctrination lies in the resulting barrier between belief and reason, the process also looks as if it constructs an additional barrier; in this case, between the indoctrinated person and her ability to determine what constitutes a good life for her. This separation will have a detrimental effect on her ability to be (or develop into) herself and means she will be unable to endorse her convictions whole-heartedly. This failure of autonomy appears to restrict her ability to become a fully developed human being.

To put it another way, indoctrination is morally problematic because it restricts the individual's ability to access the truth in a reliable way leaving her epistemically vulnerable, but this is not the only reason the practice should be avoided. For even if it were possible to transmit a belief or set of beliefs which were constant and unchangingly true, we might still look askance at indoctrination because it violates the individual's right to determine what strikes *her* as being the case. Such a violation constitutes an assault upon individual autonomy, a constituent part of human dignity.

One response to the claim that indoctrination is wrong because it violates autonomy is to maintain that the value of autonomy is solely (or predominantly) located in its ability to provide a reliable route to a specific kind of truth and/or knowledge. According to this position, we only need worry about autonomy because, in general, allowing people to decide for themselves which arguments, positions and propositions seem most plausible looks to be the most successful way to establish whether, in situations where the truth is disputed by reasonable people (such as with respect to conceptions of the good life), this is indeed the case. On this view, the importance of autonomy in arguments about indoctrination supervenes upon the value of truth and rationality and cannot, therefore, be separated from them. We might call this the *instrumental argument*.

For someone who is inclined to endorse this version of the instrumental argument,[154] autonomy adds nothing to the question of why indoctrination is morally problematic. Indeed, it only enters the picture insofar as self-determination functions as a route to (self-regarding) truths. To the extent that being autonomous is likely to lead an individual to make the best or most successful decisions about the direction her life ought to take, this position may still give educators a reason to promote (or, at the very least, not stymie) the development of

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[154] There are other instrumentalist arguments for autonomy which appear to be predicated on values other than truth (see e.g. MacMullen, 2007).

autonomy and avoid indoctrination[155]—by failing to develop this capacity, teachers run the risk of putting certain truths out of their pupils' reach. But, in terms of the question at hand – whether the failure to engender autonomy constitutes an *additional* reason to be wary of indoctrinatory teaching— autonomy has no special or intrinsic worth above or independent of rationality.

However, this position is wrong-headed. To explain, let's briefly consider one version of the argument that autonomy is valuable because it functions as a tributary for truth. According to the "argument from the absence of ethical experts" (see Callan, 1988 or White, 1991):

> There are no experts on what the good life should consist in. No one is in a proper position to lay down to others how they should lead their lives. So people should be left to live their own lives, that is, autonomously. (White, 1991, p.85)

This is simply a restatement of the instrumental argument: the truth about human flourishing is controversial and difficult to discern so, in the absence of experts to instruct us, individuals are best placed to determine what flourishing means for them; their autonomy is instrumental to attaining this truth.

A major objection to this position is articulated by Eamon Callan, who argues that, even if ethical experts do not exist, their absence does not, in itself, provide us with an adequate reason to endorse autonomous choice:

> For if ethical expertise is just a Platonic figment, we have no reason to believe that pupils who have become highly autonomous will be better placed to make the right decision than those who unthinkingly follow orders. (Callan, 1988, p41)

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[155] As we shall see in the next chapter, Hand actually contests the idea that autonomy is able to play such a role in the truth-seeking process because it is often the case that individuals are not best placed to make decisions about the direction in which their life ought to go (Hand, 2006).

In other words, autonomous attempts to discern the truth about flourishing are no more likely to be successful than those based on authoritarian diktat, and the call for autonomy is arbitrary.

In his response, White asserts that, since those who live in developed Western democracies[156] will nevertheless be demonstrably more likely to flourish if they develop and exercise their capacity (or disposition) for self-determination,[157] this provides us with a sufficient reason to think that the value of autonomy is not arbitrary in particular (read liberal) political conditions. If we are thinking about the aims of a liberal education system, then autonomy is necessary for flourishing in the society those systems are designed to serve.

But, even within the constraints of a liberal democracy, the claim that autonomy is instrumentally valuable still won't apply to all citizens:

> If we try to justify autonomy instrumentally, we will encounter much the same difficulties which beset Mill's attempt to justify liberty as a means to happiness. The chief point is that although in certain conditions autonomy clearly does contribute to happiness, in very many it does not, and in still more its contribution is unclear… it can be argued that people would be far more contented in communities where traditions left far less room for discretion than they now do, and the development of tradition-directed communities that fit that description does not appear to be an unfeasible aspiration. (Callan, 1988, p.41)

It would appear the value of autonomy must reside elsewhere; that the ideal must have some kind of intrinsic worth.[158] This would certainly help to explain why autonomy is so often

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[156] That is, in liberal societies.

[157] As Joseph Raz (1986) maintains in his *social forms argument*.

[158] Callan finds support for his view that autonomy is intrinsically valuable in the intuition that, even if the problem engendered by Nozick's original "experience machine" dilemma (Nozick, 1974, pp.42-43) could be solved through the creation of a "transformation machine" (capable of transforming individuals into "certain kinds of people") and a "results machine" (able to "produce certain effects in the world"), most people would be wary of plugging themselves in (Callan, 1988, p.44). As Nozick puts it, "Perhaps what we desire is to live (an active verb) ourselves in contact with reality. (And this, machines cannot do *for* us." (Nozick, 1974, p.44-45)

regarded as being fundamentally connected to our dignity and worth as persons and would also threaten the idea that the harm of indoctrination can be solely identified with the affront to rationality it represents. It nevertheless seems obvious that what this intrinsic value consists in— what precisely the ideal of autonomy adds to arguments against the moral permissibility of indoctrination and perhaps, therefore, against faith schools — will very much turn on the conception of autonomy one endorses. This will be the subject of Chapter IV.

§3.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to determine whether indoctrination is morally impermissible. Through an extended discussion of the similarities between indoctrination and delusion, I was able to demonstrate that, when a teacher inculcates beliefs with the characteristic reason-barring features of indoctrination, she does indeed harm her pupils. She does this in two distinct ways: first, by ensuring the beliefs they hold are impervious to truth and justification, she circumvents their rationality. And, second, by removing the possibility they are able to determine their own convictions, she violates their autonomy. Since the latter appears to have value which is not reducible to the former, it is necessary to determine precisely what this consists in. In Chapter IV, I will explore the issue of autonomy and its value with a view to establishing that, like rationality, it is a fundamental aim of the educational endeavour. This will help to set the scene for the final two chapters in which I will directly address the issue of faith schools.

Chapter IV

Autonomy and Education[159]

§4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I argued there are two reasons for thinking that indoctrination— conceived of as teaching which directly results in an illegitimate separation between belief and reason — is morally wrong. First, it is epistemically problematic; the indoctrinated pupil has been taught in a manner which makes her beliefs unjustified, unresponsive to evidence and, therefore, to truth. Second, it represents an affront to her autonomy which is, amongst other things, a key constituent of her dignity as a human being. Indoctrination is not the only practice (educational or otherwise) that can stymie the exercise or development of autonomy, but since liberal theorists of education commonly maintain autonomy is a fundamental aim of the educational endeavour,[160] the conclusion that it constitutes a violation of this value looks as if it will provide us with considerable grounds to avoid both indoctrination and those other practices.

Nevertheless, even among liberals, autonomy is a contested educational ideal. Some argue it is of dubious educational value,[161] and even theorists convinced of its worth have different views about precisely what it means to be autonomous and, therefore, divergent reasons for considering it an important end of education. Previously, I rejected the claim that autonomy (broadly understood) is valuable only insofar as it helps individuals to establish 'the truth' about how they should live; the second of our reasons for regarding indoctrination to be

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[159] Portions of this chapter have been adapted from a previous publication (see Oswald (2013)).

[160] See Gutmann (1987); Callan (2004); Levinson (1999); MacMullen (2004 & 2007); Reich (2002); Winch (2009); Brighouse (2000); Clayton (2006).

[161] See Swaine (2012) or Hand (2006).

morally wrong is not merely derivative of the first and autonomy is not reducible to rationality. Indeed, as I conceive it, autonomy will be violated even in circumstances where, perhaps due to a quirk in an individual's constitution, indoctrination is more likely to result in true beliefs about the route to a flourishing life than a person's own reflective endeavours.

Now, clearly when I argue that autonomy's value is not solely predicated on its ability to facilitate the development of true beliefs about flourishing, I am not arguing that autonomy *never* facilitates the pursuit of truth as it pertains to the Good Life. Rather, I am hoping to highlight that autonomy has value *independently* of this possibility; autonomy is valuable *whether or not* it brings individuals closer to truths about their own flourishing. This is, I argue, because part of autonomy's value inheres in the role it plays in meeting the moral demand to treat individual agents with dignity and respect instead of as a tool for the pursuit of another's ends.

To demonstrate precisely why this should be the case, as well as the ramifications my view will have for education, it is important to clarify what I mean when I use the term autonomy. In this chapter, I critically evaluate a selection of conceptions of autonomy to establish the most plausible. I begin this task via a fairly detailed examination of the work of Michael Hand (2006). Surprisingly for an educational theorist with a rationalistic perspective of education, Hand eschews the idea that autonomy is a value about which educators should be particularly concerned. To the extent autonomy may be deemed a desirable goal, he argues it does not constitute an *educational* aim, but a *political* one. Moreover, conceptions of autonomy which posit a value or quality of character with the "appropriate logical form" to be transmitted to pupils in schools —conceptions which propose something that could be taught and/or learned—do not, he argues, suggest dispositions or character traits which are valuable or worthwhile.

In what follows, I dispute Hand's claim that, "there is no quality of character one could plausibly call autonomy at which it is reasonable for educators to aim" (Hand, 2006, p.536). I argue that this conclusion is drawn from a view of autonomy which identifies the concept with an unnecessarily strong view of independent judgement making and fails to recognise the possibility that autonomy should be conceived of as a "global property" (Colburn, 2010, p.21); that is, a feature of whole lives rather than a property which is primarily attributable to individual choices or actions.[162]

In order to justify the conclusion that autonomy constitutes a legitimate (indeed, necessary) educational aim, I draw heavily on a newer conception of the term expounded by Ben Colburn (2010). I am aware that, in some regards, this leaves me open to the criticism that I am exploiting what Hand calls the 'Hydra-like' quality of definitions of autonomy: "as soon as one shows the inadequacy of one account, two more spring up in its place" (Hand, 2006, p.536). However, in order to militate against this accusation, I embrace Hand's own restriction regarding what constitutes an admissible conception of the ideal; namely that it, "bear some recognisable relation to ordinary usage" (p.536). Based on, but by no means identical to, an account of the term proposed by Joseph Raz (1986), Colburn's conception of autonomy emphasises the value as an ideal of *self-authorship* (Raz, 1986, p.368) or "individuality" (Colburn, 2010, p.12). It, therefore, fits squarely with the common perception of an autonomous individual as one who is capable of *autos* (self) *nomos* (law or rule).

Once I have fully established my reasons for favouring the Colburnian conception of autonomy, I analyse and dismiss a number of possible objections to the position, before going

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[162] Of course, and as we shall see, there is conceptual space for a property of autonomy pertaining to something greater than individual choices but smaller than whole lives (e.g. periods of an individual's life or domains of activity within that life) and the global account should not be interpreted as denying this. The issue of the relationship between the local and the global will be discussed in §4.4.

on to demonstrate why the ideal — understood as global self-determination — is an appropriate end of education.[163]

§4.2 Circumstantial Autonomy – Political and Educational Aims

In order to defend his controversial contention that autonomy is not a defensible educational aim, Michael Hand carefully examines the ways in which the word is commonly used in everyday language. With this in mind, he introduces two "ordinary senses" of the term. The first of these, which he calls "circumstantial autonomy," refers to the *conditions* under which an individual lives:

> A person is said to be autonomous [in this sense] when she is free to determine her own actions. She is said to lack autonomy when she is deprived of this freedom, when she is enslaved, imprisoned or otherwise obliged to submit to the direction of others. The assertion that a person has or lacks autonomy is therefore a political assertion rather than a psychological one; it is a claim about how she stands in relation to others, not a claim about her dispositions or preferences." (Hand, 2006, p.537)

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[163] At this stage, it could be objected that, given the overarching purpose of the thesis, it is simply not necessary to demonstrate that autonomy is an *aim* of education. There are a great many values or ideals which we would not wish to see stymied by our educational practices, but which we would not argue constitute educational goals (childhood innocence, unconditional love or familial loyalty for example). If faith schools can be conclusively shown to be indoctrinatory, and indoctrination violates autonomy, we need only show that autonomy is worth having, not that it is one of the purposes of education itself.

It is true that the success of the weaker claim will be enough to allow the autonomy argument against faith schools to stand. However, despite this, I would be inclined to suggest that one of the key reasons the practice of indoctrination has drawn the ire of so many philosophers of education is not simply because it threatens capacities, skills or personality traits which are valuable, but because it represents a subversion of the very practice of education. When critics of indoctrination maintain it constitutes "a violation of people's personalities," (Kleinig, 1982, p.65) or leaves those subjected to it with their "mental [lives] impoverished," (Siegel, 1990, p.88) the heinous nature of this behaviour is amplified by the fact we consider this to be the precise opposite of what educators are supposed to be doing. Education, at least as it is conceived in liberal societies, is meant to enrich the lives of children by broadening rather than narrowing their horizons. For this reason, acts which seek to foreclose the range of (reasonable) beliefs, values and attitudes an individual may have, or the lives she may adopt will strike us as particularly problematic.

Hand acknowledges that circumstantial autonomy[164] is generally desirable and, therefore, something which governments should aim at producing. But he balks at identifying it as an educational aim:

> What a person lacks when she lacks circumstantial autonomy cannot be imparted by teaching or acquired by learning. The deficiency lies not in her character but in the conditions under which she lives. The aim of increasing circumstantial autonomy by liberating people from restrictive or dictatorial social arrangements is coherent and worthwhile; but it is a political aim, not an educational one. (Hand, 2006, p.537)

Now, it's clear the sense of 'autonomy' Hand is discussing here is not that which is ordinarily invoked when we worry about the harms done by indoctrination.[165] Nevertheless, the notion of circumstantial autonomy (CA) does raise some issues which will be pertinent to our later discussions, so it is worth exploring the concept in a little more detail.

While Hand identifies a strong distinction between political and educational aims (based on a similarly strong distinction he draws between what can and cannot be taught), there is good reason to dispute the strength of this division. When considered as a form of "conscious social reproduction" (Guttman, 1987, p.287), education has an undeniably political dimension[166]. Indeed, as Colin Wringe puts it:

> Insofar as education is the process by which society renews itself and passes on its acquired knowledge and the values that it regards as important, it is necessarily political for the educational experience of the young will affect the future condition of society. (Wringe, 2012, p.34)

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[164] Or, perhaps more appropriately, "negative liberty" (see Berlin, (2002)) (thanks to Randall Curren for this observation).

[165] Although it does seem reasonable to think that restrictive regimes — i.e. those which seek to control the circumstantial autonomy of their citizens— are also the kind of societies which are most likely to make (explicit) use of indoctrination and related methods (such as propaganda, coercion and conditioning).

[166] What's more, institutions often serve several purposes at once so, even if one is minded to accept that CA is a purely political goal, this doesn't appear to preclude one from arguing that it is a goal which could be legitimately promoted by schools.

Although circumstantial autonomy pertains to external (or environmental) conditions —the way the world is organised— it is wrong to think that this has nothing to do with education or its aims. Not only will the fact that one is free to go about one's own business unhindered have very little value if one lacks the skills, knowledge and intellectual wherewithal to navigate the world[167] —skills, knowledge and understanding that must be developed through some kind of educational process.[168] But the conditions signifying a particular political community or society will be unavoidably shaped by the beliefs, skills, capacities and attitudes of the people who compose that society. What's more, those beliefs, capacities and so on are themselves moulded, not solely by explicit teaching processes, but by the norms of the environment in which members are raised and educated.[169]

So, while Hand accurately identifies that CA cannot, itself be taught or learned — one does not (and cannot) teach circumstances— it is both possible and, I would argue, desirable for educators to regard the development of a certain type of political landscape as one of the overarching aims of their efforts. Of course, acknowledging that this is the case still leaves two rather substantial questions. First, which beliefs, capacities and attitudes will best produce (or help to produce) the desired political state of affairs? And, second, once identified, what needs to be done to ensure the requisite beliefs, capacities, attitudes develop in the young? Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to enumerate the full range of competences necessary to produce (and re-produce) a system of "unrestrictive social arrangements", it seems clear that some kind of disposition or capacity to be self-determining

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[167] To elucidate, imagine that an individual has been imprisoned in a prison cell for a number of years. One day, without the knowledge of the prisoner, the cell is unlocked. However, owing to the fact that the prisoner continues to assume that she is locked in her cell, she remains imprisoned. The mere act of unlocking the cell door has failed to improve her circumstances in any discernible way. Similarly, unless one's political circumstances are improved in tandem with one's knowledge and understanding of those circumstances, as well as the capacities necessary to make the best of them, an increase in liberty is of negligible worth.

[168] Here it is worth noting that an educational process needn't involve *schools* or *schooling*, and education can take place in a range of settings both formal and informal.

[169] Indeed, the idea that pupils "learn what they live" (Nolte & Harris, 1998) is part of the reason that terms such as 'ethos' and the 'hidden curriculum' have gained considerable currency in educational policy.

will be among them. It is also likely that this is the kind of disposition or capacity individuals will need to acquire to make adequate use of their liberty (or CA) in such societies. As we shall see in the next section, the value of autonomy (as a disposition) is not limited to an instrumental role in creating political arrangements of a particular kind, but the foregoing discussion serves to show that the line dividing one from the other is not as clear as Hand believes.

§4.3 Dispositional Autonomy & Autonomy as a Global Value

Generally speaking, when theorists argue that indoctrination is detrimental to autonomy, or claim it represents a fundamental aim of education, they will be talking about a quality pertaining to individuals. So, while I am of the view that CA *is* something that schools ought to strive to achieve, it isn't the sort of value which should be our primary concern in the current context.

The second "ordinary sense" of autonomy Hand identifies refers to a "quality of character" and this, he argues, makes it a more credible candidate for an educational aim:

> The quality of character [autonomy] identifies is the inclination[170] to determine one's own actions. To possess this trait is to have a preference on relying on one's own judgement, to be independent-minded, free-spirited, disposed to do thing's one's own way. (Hand, 2006, p.537)

Hand calls this *dispositional autonomy* and wonders whether, given that it is, "a property of the right logical kind" to be taught in schools, we ought to do so.

Given Hand's overall position, it will come as no surprise that he argues we should avoid teaching for dispositional autonomy (DA). He bases his view on the following criterion: we

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[170]The term "inclination" strikes me as somewhat odd (even in an account of ordinary use). Most accounts of autonomy posit a 'capacity' or 'ability' but Hand only addresses these conceptions as part of his treatment of the more "technical" senses of the term (see §4.5.1).

ought to teach something in schools only if it confers some kind of advantage upon pupils. DA "would confer advantage only if it were always or generally the case that actions one has determined for oneself are more effective, appropriate or worthwhile than actions performed under the direction of others." (Hand, 2006, p.538) But, in Hand's view, this is simply not the case:

> Whatever the criteria of effective, appropriate or worthwhile action in a situation in which I find myself, there will very often be people in a better position than me to determine the actions that will satisfy those criteria. Where there are such people, and they are willing and able to direct me, I would be foolish not to submit to their direction. It is difficult to see how I would be advantaged by the possession of a character trait which regularly prompted me to behave foolishly (Hand, 2006, p.538).

In other words, the possession of dispositional autonomy – the inclination to determine my own judgements – will routinely lead to foolish behaviour and, therefore, is not a suitable disposition for educators to instil in pupils.

Hand provides two arguments to defend the claim that, there will be many cases when "other people may be better placed to determine my actions" (p.538). The first of these I will call the *argument from expertise*, the second, *the argument from organisational effectiveness*.

In his *argument from expertise,* Hand draws on the idea that there are numerous situations in which I will need to draw on the expertise of others to determine what is best for me. The most obvious example is taking advice from a doctor. While my life might go fairly well if I am granted the freedom to choose my own profession on the basis of my wider skills and interests,[171] it seems clear that, unless I am myself an oncologist, I ought not to attempt to select a cure for cancer in the same way. As Hand puts it:

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[171] And, perhaps, even this is debatable.

Although we each lack expertise in a great many of the spheres in which we are obliged to

act, in most of those spheres there are experts on hand to guide us if we have the humility and

good sense to let them (Hand, 2006, p.538)

Although related to the *argument from expertise*, according to the *argument from

organisational effectiveness*, it is not the advanced knowledge or understanding of the person

who seeks to direct me that matters, but the role she occupies. As Hand puts it, "the success

of any organisation depends on the willingness of members to abide by decisions taken by

other members on their behalf" (Hand, 2006, p.538). To illustrate:

The teacher… does not determine for herself whether she will take 7B for History on a Friday

afternoon. The decision is made for her by the member of staff responsible for organising the

timetable. The point here is not that the person is better qualified to make timetabling

decisions, but that, for schools to operate effectively, someone must have the authority to

make these decisions and everyone else must be willing to abide by them (Hand, 2006,

p.538).

Nevertheless, one can grant Hand's contention that it will often be prudent to submit oneself

to the decisions, instructions and advice of others *without* abandoning a broader commitment

to self-determination. To see how this is possible, one needs to acknowledge that there is

more than one sense in which an individual can be said to have a disposition to be self-

determining and that Hand's position indicates a fairly narrow view of what this may entail.

In Hand's view, I can only be said to possess DA if I have an inclination to determine my

own actions.[172] He contrasts this with dispositional heteronomy (DH) or "the inclination to

submit oneself to the direction of others." (p.538) But what does determining one's own

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[172] Hand also suggests two more "technical" senses of DA; specifically, the inclination to determine my own
beliefs and the inclination to determine my own desires. However, he argues that —at least in cases where these
formulations correspond with our ordinary use of the term 'autonomy'— both will fall foul of the *argument
from expertise* (Hand, 2006, pp.544-549).

actions involve? Does it, as Hand suggests, involve refusing all advice, guidance and instruction in favour of one's own (often ill-informed) views about what one ought to do? It seems correct to think behaving in this manner would be foolish. But an individual who behaves like this is not necessarily representative of what it is to have a disposition for autonomy. True, she is representative of a person displaying a *certain kind* of autonomous disposition, but it is a disposition for a particularly wrong-headed version of what Ben Colburn calls '*autarchy*'.[173]

Autarchy is a content-specific way of conceiving the value of autonomy; it claims, "there is a particular set of things that one must do in order to be autonomous" (Colburn, 2010, p.54). For example, someone who endorses an autarchic conception of autonomy might maintain that autonomy can only be achieved through a life of Socratic self-questioning, or claim that it necessarily requires the kind of advice ignoring Hand emphasises. Autarchy rests on a stipulation about the *content* of an autonomous life —it outlines precisely what the autonomous life ought to entail— and it does this irrespective of the attitudes, beliefs or preferences of the individual to whom that life belongs.

However, it is simply not necessary to posit a content-specific view of autonomy when defending DA as an educational aim. Instead, one may posit autonomy as a content-neutral, formal or second-order value[174]; a value for which, "some conditions are specified, but there is an ineliminable variable which stands for an individual living the sort of life that [she] deems valuable" (Colburn, 2010, p.54).

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[173] Colburn's use of this term is somewhat idiosyncratic and differs from that of Stanley Benn. Benn uses 'autarchy' to describe a basic disposition or ability to reason, make decisions and act upon them (Benn, 1988). This usage is mirrored in the discussions of autonomy in the work of Meira Levinson (1999) and John White (1991).

[174] For a sophisticated and detailed discussion of autonomy as a second-order value, see Colburn (2010, pp.50-57).

There are a variety of content neutral theories of autonomy[175] but, for current purposes, I will focus on a recent version proposed by Ben Colburn (2010). For Colburn, autonomy is best understood as certain sort of *individuality*. To be sure, the autonomy of *some* individuals will be instantiated through an inclination to act in a "headstrong and self-reliant" manner which makes them "difficult to govern and to work with," (Hand, 2006, p.539) but the value could be equally evident in a person who is happy to follow the advice and instructions of those in a position to guide her. This is because, according to this conception, autonomy is "an ideal of people *deciding for themselves* what makes a valuable life, and living their life in accordance with[those] decision[s]" (Colburn, 2010, p.69 my italics). What's more, for Colburn, autonomy is a *global* ideal: first and foremost, "it is lives" rather than individual decisions "which are autonomous" (p.21).[176] Therefore, DA is characterised by the disposition to live a self-determined *life,* not the disposition to live a life free from all types of external influence including sensible advice and instruction.

The formal position espoused by Colburn clearly avoids the force of the *argument from expertise* —the runner whose life is guided by the goal to be an elite athlete may autonomously submit herself to the authority of her coach, and the student who hopes to be a great scholar may autonomously follow the advice of her supervisors. The conception also eliminates the purported threat posed by *the argument from organisational effectiveness*: abiding by the decisions of a school administrator would not render a teacher whose ultimate concept of the good life entailed being a knowledgeable, talented and effective member of

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[175] E.g. Dworkin (1988); Frankfurt (1971).

[176] Some argue that, while the distinction drawn between the local and global senses of autonomy is useful, the terminology is easily misunderstood. Andrew Sneddon prefers to distinguish between the *autonomy of a person* and the *autonomy of choices*, noting that:
[The term] 'Global' connotes everywhere… but… the relevant sense of autonomy is not autonomy that is found all through someone's life but something more specific. 'Local', as a contrast to this sense of global, can imply something very specific, such as a single decision. The local sense of autonomy can apply to single events, but it need not always. Instead one can be locally autonomous about, for example, a particular *kind* of decision, such that, whenever someone makes it one exercises self-rule. In this case, local autonomy is found everywhere that this kind of decision is found in one's life, but now this sounds like something global. (Sneddon, 2013, p.19)

her profession heteronomous on Colburn's view.[177] And, because this formulation eschews the idea of autonomy as a peculiar tendency to disrupt reasonable organisational structures to make self-defeating, self-authored decisions about the minutiae of everyday life, it demonstrates the possibility of a desirable form of DA.

Attractive as the conception of autonomy as a global property initially appears, some pressing questions nevertheless arise. First, with respect to indoctrination, one might wonder how exactly the inculcation of a single (or limited complex of) evidence resistant belief(s) threatens the development of autonomy conceived in this way; how does indoctrination violate the *global* autonomy of persons? True, when the indoctrinated beliefs a pupil holds constitute a comprehensive doctrine, it is possible to locate a harm to autonomy in the fact that her entire conception of the good life was formed by an external agent in a manner rendering it extremely difficult to consciously evaluate and change. However, we have seen that not all indoctrination involves doctrines. In these cases, is it still accurate to assert that an affront to autonomy has taken place?

 Second, there are questions about how individuals 'decide' what constitutes a valuable life. Even if we set aside the possibility that our early values and commitments are (perhaps necessarily) given rather than chosen,[178] it appears many individuals simply *discover* what they consider to be valuable rather than consciously choosing those values.[179] In circumstances where value is revealed rather than chosen, are we to say autonomy is unachievable? What precisely does it mean to "decide for [myself] what makes a valuable life"? The answers to these questions look especially important for the success of a

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[177] Of course, it would be wrong to think that autonomous people are precluded from acting foolishly, the purpose of this argument is to show that the scope for desirable autonomous judgement and action is broader than Hand suggests, not that autonomy is a failsafe instrument for living the good life (a position which I explicitly reject).

[178] A thought I will explore in more detail in §4.4.3 and §4.4.4

[179] The priest experiences his call to serve God as an imperative, not as a choice.

conception which posits autonomy as a global property because owing to the psychological reality of decision making —decisions (even decisions about the long term) are taken on a moment by moment basis, and our overarching values may only become apparent when we consider the patterns our choices form once aggregated —we seem particularly likely to 'stumble upon' the values that govern our whole lives.

Finally, there is a related question about the relationship between local level choices and autonomy as a global property. Even if we are meaningfully able to choose our conception of the good life, how do we identify the degree to which individual components (decisions) contribute to our overall autonomy? Are there, for example, limits on the number, scope or type of decisions we may autonomously delegate to others and under what circumstances will such delegation render us heteronomous?

The first question is rather more straightforward to answer than the other two. Conceptually speaking, indoctrination *may* involve standalone beliefs, but it isn't unreasonable to assert that it *usually* pertains to doctrines[180]. When it doesn't, we are still able to consider the practice morally illegitimate because it diminishes the pupil's ability to ensure her beliefs are appropriately tethered to her reasons for holding them (our epistemic criterion). It might be *possible* for an indoctrinated belief to be sufficiently isolated from other beliefs to mean that no (meaningful) violation of autonomy had occurred[181] during the process, but since it will be hard to predict which beliefs will go on to take wider significance in a believer's life, it is nevertheless wise to avoid indoctrinating any form of belief (doctrinal or otherwise).

To adequately address the other two issues —whether it is possible for a person to *decide* what makes her life valuable and the link between the local and the global— it is worth

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[180] Certainly, whether or not the transmission of religious beliefs is necessarily indoctrinatory, the beliefs faith schools seek to transmit are doctrinal in nature.
[181] It is quite possible to indoctrinate beliefs which are of little consequence to the life of the indoctrinated person (inaccurate details about historical events or erroneous 'facts' about distant planets, for example).

considering certain aspects of Colburn's position in some detail. The discussion in §4.4 demonstrates both the respects in which an individual may exert control over her own psychology and clarifies the role of local decision-making in autonomy as global self-determination.

§4.4 The Colburnian Conception of Autonomy

According to the global conception, to be autonomous the individual must be the author of her own life when viewed as a whole. As we have seen, the upshot of this position is that an individual can follow instruction, advice or direction in the pursuit of her wider goals and values; something that more substantive accounts of autonomy prohibit. But this account is open to a further challenge; namely that the path taken by a whole life appears even less likely to be under my control or to have arisen out of conscious processes than the individual decisions that comprise it. Does this make autonomy as a global property a more demanding, less achievable ideal than it was to begin with?

To address this question, it must first be acknowledged that when Colburn maintains autonomy is "an ideal of people deciding for themselves what defines a valuable life, and living their lives in accordance with that decision" (Colburn, 2010, p.21) he recognises there is a degree of ineliminable ambiguity in the term 'decide'. True, we may use the term to describe an explicitly willful act like responding to a particular desire [182]or selecting something from a range of options, but:

> We can [also] talk about someone deciding when they make an epistemic judgement, or come to believe something, or do something in relation to the weight of reasons that they face. (Colburn, 2010, p.23-24)

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[182] Colburn refers to "deciding to drink the orange juice" (Colburn, 2010, p.24).

Whilst, phenomenologically speaking, these situations are quite different from one another, they "can sensibly be thought of as a species of decision" (Colburn, 2010, p.24). This is because, albeit to varying degrees, each involves an *element* of conscious control. Hand alludes to just this when he concedes that, while neither beliefs nor desires are "the immediate objects of volitions," there is an "indirect sense" in which we may control them via the attitude we adopt towards them[183](Hand, 2006, p.547).

Different forms of deciding will also be present at the level of whole lives. As Colburn puts it, someone could, "choose to pursue a project and therefore make its fulfilment valuable," but equally, she could "reflect on questions of value and come to the conclusion that [she] ought to spend [her] life doing certain things for reasons nothing to do with any *choice* of [hers]." In the latter case, the decision is (or feels as if it has been) dictated by the world, whereas, in the former, the world (and the decider) is transformed by the decision. Both cases may reasonably be described as involving 'deciding' because this disparate usage reflects the fact that, "not only [do] different people consider different things valuable, but people think about value in different ways" (Colburn, 2010, p.24).

Of course, while this demonstrates that deciding often plays a greater role in our psychological lives than we are apt to recognise, the question of the precise relationship between individual decisions and the autonomy of whole lives remains. If autonomy is a global property, but whole lives are the result of an aggregate of decisions connected by some overall or guiding purpose or purposes,[184] how are we to ascertain the extent to which any

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[183] For belief, this might take the form of a kind of scepticism; a wariness to believe what one is told without subjecting it to an extremely high level of critical scrutiny. For desire, it could necessitate higher-level reflective endorsement — that my desire to achieve a goal is backed up by a second order desire for that first-order desire to persist (the kind of hierarchical account posited by Dworkin (1988) and Frankfurt (1971).

[184] Eamonn Callan suggests that we think of a meaningful (autonomous) life as a poem:

> A poem is not a random assemblage of individually significant words: its significance depends on a purpose (or purposes) which integrates the particular words into a coherent whole. Without this unity, a poem becomes pointless, despite the fact that it might contain some arresting images or phrases. In a similar way, it would appear that a meaningful life must approximate a condition of internal concord for such a life is not a random sequence of

individual is autonomous? What, if any, common features do autonomous decisions share? If we hope to defend autonomy as an end of education, we will need to establish what teachers must do in order to foster it, but this will only be possible if we have an account of how self-determination is engendered in real lives.

Colburn asserts that a person is autonomous to the extent she "decides for herself what is valuable" over the course of her (adult) life.[185]The degree to which this is the case will be determined by whether (and to what extent) two conditions hold:

> **Endorsement.** She has a disposition such that if she reflects (or were to reflect) upon what putative values[186] she ought to pursue in her life, she judges (or would judge) of some such things that they are valuable.

> **Independence.** She is in a state where her reflection is, or would be if it took place, free from factors undermining her independence. (Colburn, 2010, p.25)

However, it is not necessary for all an agent's commitments to satisfy both the Endorsement and Independence Conditions (henceforth EC and IC). As our earlier discussions demonstrated (and Colburn notes), some of our commitments are derivative; we only have them in virtue of other commitments. The individual who takes advice from a doctor on the basis this will enable her to lead a healthy life, or the pianist who submits herself to the scrutiny of a music instructor because she wishes to get an accurate assessment of her ability

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valuable experiences and achievements. Rather, its meaning is located in certain continuities of direction, especially those afforded by our deeper and more enduring interests. (Callan, 1988, p.32)

But, although Callan is circumspect about the need for complete cohesiveness of purpose — "Significant poems, even great ones, may be pretty disorderly, and meaningful lives may be shaped by rather untidy motivational structures." (Callan, 1988, p.32)—even this presupposes a fairly substantive view of what it is to be autonomous. When I use the term 'purpose', I do not intend to pick out a life *plan* but rather one's fundamental beliefs, values and convictions; what I will later (following Colburn) call *non-derivative commitments.*

[185] Even so, this doesn't mean that one can only make an assessment at the end of that life

[186] Colburn uses the terms 'value' and 'conviction' interchangeably and my use mirrors his. However, it should be noted that these terms will also cover those aspects of belief, desire and other pro-attitudes which are susceptible to conscious control.

to play (and thus her desire to become a concert pianist)[187] are illustrative of this. If the underlying commitment (to health or playing the piano) disappeared, so would the derivative commitment. Since derivative commitments are dependent on other commitments, as long as IC is satisfied by the non-derivative commitment upon which they are based, they need only satisfy EC. Non-derivative commitments must meet both conditions.

So, according to the Colburnian account, the extent to which a decision factors in our evaluation of an individual's autonomy will depend on the kind of commitments to which the decision relates (whether these are derivative or non-derivative) and the extent to which those commitments satisfy the EC and IC as required.

§4.4.1 Unpacking the Independence Condition

At this stage, it could be objected that, while Colburn's account of autonomy solves problems like those raised by the arguments from expertise and organisational effectiveness, it runs the risk of raising others which are not quite so easy to tackle. Colburn acknowledges that, although he does not endorse a hierarchical view of autonomy, his position on IC is rather similar to Dworkin's conception of 'procedural independence' (Colburn, 2010, p.27). As such, it could be subject to some of the same difficulties which beleaguer this kind of formal or structural view of the concept.

One such problem arises from the difficulties implicit in providing a general account of independence. Both Dworkin and Colburn maintain that a psychological element is independent (or procedurally independent) if it is "free of a *certain sort* of influence" (Colburn, 2010, p.27).[188] But, as Colburn notes, Dworkin doesn't seek to explain the 'right

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[187] See Hand (2006, p.148)

[188] This is as opposed to the assertion that commitments should be free of *any* sort of external influence; a claim which, apart from being absurd on the basis of even the most rudimentary or folk psychological account of child development, would leave any theory of autonomy based upon it open to the criticism that it constitutes atomism or unrealistic individualism (this is the criticism espoused by Communitarian critics of Liberalism e.g. Michael Sandel (2010)).

kind' of influence, choosing instead to give a brief outline of the types of manipulation which, intuitively speaking, ought to be ruled out: "hypnotic suggestion, manipulative coercive persuasion, subliminal influence, and so forth" (Dworkin, 1988, p.18).[189] Undeterred, Colburn attempts to flesh out a more comprehensive account by considering a range of sufficient conditions which would necessitate that the *wrong* sort of influence had occurred; conditions which would constitute a failure of independence. Let's consider each of these failure scenarios separately.

1) Content insensitivity:

Colburn asserts that many (though not all) threats to independence, "influence the way an individual views their choices (or the range of commitments they might have) by some mechanism of which the agent *cannot be fully aware*" (Colburn, 2010, p.27 my italics). One way failures of independence manifest themselves is via processes which lead to the development of commitments based on judgements about value with nothing (or very little) to do with the nature of the so-called valuable thing:

> Suppose, for example, that someone comes to value what they do as the result of manipulation or brainwashing. We can then explain her decision [about its value] just by referring to the techniques that have been applied to her, and the content of the commitments she arrives at is irrelevant to the explanation. (Colburn, 2010, p.27)

Here, as Colburn anticipates, one might object that our lives are replete with commitments we judge to be valuable on the basis of something other than their content.[190] But this needn't lead us to abandon the idea that content insensitivity will be a sufficient condition for a failure of independence under certain circumstances. As mentioned above, some of our

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[189] It seems plausible to think this list should include indoctrination but Dworkin's account does not provide us with a reason as to why this should be the case.

[190] Indeed, it was a concern about leaving room to make just such commitments (e.g. the commitment to seeking advice from a suitably qualified expert) which motivated my shift towards a global theory of autonomy in the first place.

commitments are derivative and, therefore, able to exhibit content-insensitivity without threatening independence. To illustrate, consider Colburn's example of an individual who has decided (in a content-sensitive manner) to become a monk. This commitment will entail an array of dependent commitments dictating the tiniest details of everyday life and, "those dependent commitments may well be content-insensitive, but so long as the general commitment to the monastic life is content-sensitive, such a life can be autonomous [independent]." (Colburn, 2010, p.28) In other words, content insensitivity is only a problem for independence if it arises with reference to a core or non-derivative commitment or value.

2) Opacity of Reasons:

Linked to (but not identical with) the notion of content-insensitivity is the idea that independence may also be undermined if one's reasons for a commitment or preference are not what we would identify as the 'real' reasons. Colburn clarifies this idea through a discussion of the differences between 1st and 3rd person viewpoints of particular commitments in cases where independence has been undermined. If I am asked to give an account of the reasons my friend has for choosing to marry her current partner (presuming that I know her well and she has told me what she thinks), an observer would expect there to be a considerable degree of overlap between my account and the one given by my friend. Moreover, my (3rd person) account ought to make direct reference to the beliefs, values and attitudes of my friend. For example, I might explain that she and her husband-to-be have shared religious beliefs and moral values and say this is something she believes is fundamental when selecting a life-partner.

However, it is not very difficult to conceive of a situation in which my account and that of my friend do not match; where I could describe my friend's beliefs in a manner which makes it clear that they do not (even if held sincerely) represent her genuine reasons for action or commitment. For example, I might claim that she *thinks* that she values a shared moral and

religious framework, but that, in actual fact, her family and community have controlled and restricted her access to outsiders in such a way that she is only parroting *their* beliefs (although she is unable to see it). Presuming my 3rd person account of my friend's reasons is accurate,[191] her reasons for her commitment are "opaque" to her.

Further examples of this *opacity of reasons* can be found in cases of what is known as "sour grapes reasoning" (See Elster, 1983); that is, reasoning which arises in response to certain (often illegitimate) restrictions of the options available. One example of this sort of reasoning can be found in the form of 'adaptive preferences'. These are, in the words of Jon Elster, "preferences persons form *unconsciously* that downgrade options that are inaccessible to them" (Elster cited in Khader, 2009, p.171. My italics). For Colburn, adaptive preferences undermine independence because they ensure that an agent's judgements are "determined by what options she does not have, rather than by the nature of the possible options themselves. She lacks independence in respect of how she comes to see things the way she does" (Colburn, 2010, p.29).

This is not to say that all changes in commitments which constitute a response relevant to the available options are non-autonomous or lacking in independence. Elster draws a distinction between "sour grapes" style adaptive preferences and what he calls 'character planning'. Although both "begin with a state of tension between what you can do and what you might like to do," (Elster, 1983, p.117) sour grapes adaptive preferences develop "behind the back" of the agent concerned. In contrast, character planning is more akin to the "intentional shaping of desires advocated by the Stoic, Buddhist or Spinozistic philosophies, by psychological theories of self-control or the economic theory of 'egonomics'" (Elster, 1983,

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[191]Of course, this sort of accuracy will be extremely difficult to establish, even when an observer has a great deal of information about the background of someone else's choices.

p.117); it requires that an agent is *conscious* of the changes that they are making and, as such, can be thought of as a "strategy of liberation" (see Elster, 1983, p.117).[192]

3) Coercion:

The final threat to independence Colburn identifies is coercion. Although there may be circumstances under which coercion does not undermine the Independence Condition,[193] Colburn asserts that there are two distinct ways in which coercive practices can threaten the independence of a commitment. First, when coercion takes place on a regular or repeated basis it "can be part of the causal process that leads an agent to take certain options to be disvaluable" (Colburn, 2010, p.30). Whether this happens through a process of preference adaptation or behavioural conditioning, it clearly undermines independence because it leads to the opacity of reasons discussed in the previous section. Second, "coercion necessarily involves the subjection of one's will to that of someone else" and, as such, makes it the case that "the explanation for one's action or choice is rooted in the will of the coercer, rather than oneself" (Colburn, 2010, p.30). Through placing me in a relation which is governed by dominance, coercion ensures that my will is bypassed in favour of the will of my coercer.

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[192] Luc Bovens suggests the following example as paradigmatic of character planning:

> Imagine a poker player who enjoys the game tremendously because of the opportunities for cheating involved. She comes to realize that cheating is morally reprehensible and decides to start a better life on this score. Initially she does not find fair-play poker terribly exciting. Nonetheless, in her quest for Aristotelian virtue, she is committed to becoming the kind of person who enjoys fair play. And in order to carry through this project of CP, she chooses the Aristotelian route of habituation. That is, she decides not to give in to her initial misgivings and to stick to fair play, hoping that some day she will thus come to enjoy this style of playing. (Bovens, 1992, p.58)

The poker player *consciously* adjusts her behaviour (and, ultimately, her preferences) in order to become a better person. Although there is a sense in which this adjustment is motivated by factors which are outside of her control, her decision to respond to the realisation that cheating is wrong is prefaced on reasons which are her own and are not opaque to her.

[193] Colburn points to the example of giving one's possessions to a mugger. This does not violate the Independence Condition because the motivations are neither opaque to me — as Colburn puts it, "I want to avoid getting stabbed" (Colburn, 2010, p.30) — nor content-insensitive— since they are grounded in "a new feature of the content of one of my options" (Colburn, 2010, p.30) (the fact that keeping my possessions now involves the risk of serious physical harm). Nevertheless, such cases still threaten autonomy because they "[make] it more difficult for me to live a life in which I pursue what I decide is valuable" (Colburn, 2010, p.30).

The three types of threat Colburn regards as sufficient to invalidate a commitment with respect to IC share a common feature.[194] Each of the failure scenarios describes circumstances where "an agent's will is bypassed in respect of her judgements about what is valuable" (Colburn, 2010, p.30-31); where her control over those commitments has been usurped.[195] Independence will be stymied (and autonomy threatened) when one or more these forms of influence occur.

§4.4.2 Colburn, Dworkin and the Hierarchical Conception of Autonomy

With a clearer picture of the factors that will limit independence in view, we are now in a better position to assess the extent to which the Colburnian conception will be able to meet some of the other challenges faced by the Dworkinian view to which it bears a *prima facie* resemblance.

Colburn maintains that theories of autonomy can be divided into three[196] distinct families: 1) those grounding it in the concept in reason; [197] 2) those which ground it in the structure of our motivation to act; and 3) those which view the value as an expression of individuality.[198] Dworkin's hierarchical conception is an example of the second family of theories— it locates autonomy in the degree of harmony that obtains between first and higher-order desires and posits that, in cases of disharmony, the former should be subordinate to the latter:

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[194] Although it is worth noting that this feature may manifest itself in different ways

[195] This explanation has clear parallels with my earlier description of the barrier constructed between belief and reason in cases of indoctrination. Indeed, with respect to opacity of reasons, it is evidently the same barrier with additional implications; when one separates belief from reason, one will also restrict an agent's ability to develop, access and control her own commitments, desires and pro-attitudes. What is interesting (and as we will see in Chapter VI), is that critiques of faith schooling tend to focus solely or primarily on this threat to independence and forget that violations of autonomy can occur in other ways.

[196] Colburn doesn't discuss the *relational autonomy* (see Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000) although he does use some of the literature which falls under the umbrella term (e.g. Friedman, 1986)

[197] Such as the position espoused by Kant (2003).

[198] As already noted, this is the kind of conception Colburn favours.

Autonomy is conceived of as a second-order capacity of persons to reflect critically upon their first-order preferences, desires, wishes, and so forth and the capacity to accept or change these in light of higher-order preferences and values. (Dworkin, 1988, p.20)

This type of theory is attractive because, like autonomy as a global ideal, it leaves room for autonomy in the sorts of cases outlined in our consideration of the *argument from expertise* and the *argument from organisational effectiveness*: as long as a first-order desire or commitment adequately coheres with a related second-order desire and is endorsed at the highest level,[199] it is deemed autonomous.

However, we might wonder why second-order desires ought to be decisive in conflict scenarios. As Marilyn Friedman (1986) points out, there are cases in which it looks as if it would be better (from the perspective of self-government) to bring higher-order desires into line with first-order desires rather than *vice versa*. For example, Colburn suggests we imagine "an individual conditioned into a desire for some oppressive level of obedience to a spouse. This individual might have a strong first-order desire not to wash the dishes, and a strong higher-order desire not to have such disobedient desires." (Colburn, 2010, p.11) It is plausible to maintain that the subjugated spouse's autonomy would be enhanced by embracing the desire to be disobedient rather than repudiating it. So, it is not straightforwardly obvious that higher-order desires and commitments underpin our autonomy in the way those who espouse hierarchical theories maintain they do.

Colburn rejects the hierarchical view so need not concern himself with rebutting the majority of criticisms levelled against it.[200] However, he does acknowledge there is something intuitively plausible about that idea higher order values will often (if not always) be

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[199] This higher-order endorsement must itself be the result of values formed in a procedurally independent way.
[200] Colburn highlights the complaint, attributable to Watson (1975) and Thalberg (1978), that "the crucial notion of identification" with one's first-order attitudes "is sufficiently vague to make one skeptical about the whole [of Dworkin's] theory" (Colburn, 2010, p.11).

indicative of something of importance to our autonomy and sets out to determine what this thing of significance might be. Of the three possibilities he outlines,[201] he finds two wanting. The first is that higher-order desires are more representative of our 'true' or 'authentic' selves (Colburn, 2010, p11). He rejects this position because, and as the example of the subjugated spouse illustrates, "it seems to identify too narrow a subset of our possible motivations as what counts as self-governance" (Colburn, 2010, p.11). There are situations in which our first-order desires and commitments embody individual authenticity better than their higher-order counterparts. The second possibility is that the hierarchical arrangement theories like Dworkin's are predicated upon "describe an ideal of rationality". We should identify with our higher-order preferences because they are the most rational. However, even if this kind of account accurately reflected the most recognisable hierarchical theories,[202] it places a huge (and unnecessary) explanatory burden on anyone who wishes to defend it. This is because it also demands we explain why autonomy requires the lionisation of reason; why reason should occupy a "pre-eminent place at the core of autonomy" (Colburn, 2010, p.11). Although many theorists endorse rationalist conceptions of autonomy,[203] Colburn voices legitimate concern about whether, in the absence of Kantian metaphysics, it is possible to provide objective justification for reason being thought to constitute the *only* legitimate basis for self-governance:

> After all, introspection suggests that there are other motivations which seem, as much as acting on reason does, to derive from the 'self'. So, if our core concept of autonomy is self-governance, it is unclear why those other motivations mightn't also count. (Colburn, 2010, p.8)

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[201] Each of which, roughly speaking, corresponds to one of the families of theory he suggests.
[202] With respect to Dworkin and Frankfurt, Colburn argues it doesn't.
[203] E.g. Sher (2008); Lehrer (1999; 2003); Benson (1983); Haworth (1986), Siegel (2004) and, to some extent, Callan (1988).

We should be wary of rationalistic conceptions of autonomy because, by reducing autonomy to "self-governance according to what is determined by reason," they "recognise no authority for individuals over questions of what will make their lives go well." (Colburn, 2010, p.8)

The final possibility which may provide us with good reason to think the autonomous person is one whose desires are arranged in the manner Dworkin suggests arises from the idea that such hierarchies are *instrumentally* rather than intrinsically valuable. This is the position that Colburn endorses. According to this view, ensuring one's first-order desires are in harmony with one's higher-order desires is, generally speaking, "the best guarantee of some other important condition to be realised" (Colburn, 2010, p.12). We should be cautious of the idea that the formation of a supporting second-order desire will *necessarily* point us in the direction of a person's deepest preferences, but it will often act as a reasonable guide. As Robert Young puts it:

> The opinions about their own motivations which people form, even after the most careful introspection, are not always the most reliable indicator of their deepest preferences. Where, for instance, a person shows remorse over his failure to perform some action which he believed he ought to have done (given that he was not self-reflectively aware of any countervailing want or inclination), or where he shows genuine admiration for the [behaviour] of others — an admiration which does not flag even when he regularly fails to measure up to the standard of those he admires — we are apt to give maximum credence to such conative considerations in determining his real desires. (Young, 1980, p.37)

Examples like the subjugated spouse illustrate that the hierarchical arrangement is not an infallible indication that an agent is autonomous, but points us in the direction of a more fundamental ideal. As we have seen, for Colburn, this ideal is *individuality* or, to use a term with rather less conceptual or political baggage, *self-authorship*.

§4.4.3 Autonomy, Individuality and the Ab Initio Problem

So, although Colburn views certain aspects of a Dworkin-style hierarchical conception of autonomy as complementary to his own account,[204] he attempts to distance himself from the latter by insisting that, like Raz[205] (1986), his own formulation of autonomy as individuality turns on the idea that, to be autonomous, an agent must be said to "[shape her] life as she sees fit"(Colburn, 2010, p.13) Accounts based on individuality are different from mainstream hierarchical views because, when considered as "understandings of the concept of self-government" the former take the motivational hierarchy espoused by the latter to be only "constitutively or instrumentally valuable" whereas the latter see it as intrinsically so. In other words, for theorists espousing autonomy as individuality, the manner in which commitments, values and pro-attitudes are related to one another only matters insofar as coherence between one's first-order and higher-order commitments facilitates self-authorship. On a hierarchical conception, this relationship is just what it is to be self-governing.

But, while successful in rebutting concerns about cases such as the subjugated spouse, Colburn's distancing move does not fully address an additional criticism which could be damaging to his broader conception of autonomy; namely that, even though the motivation may be different from in hierarchical accounts, by valourising *independence*, he advocates "a theory of authenticity"[206] and, as such, the position is vulnerable to what John Christman calls the *ab initio* problem (Christman, 1989, p.10). The *ab initio* problem is commonly thought to be borne out of any account of autonomy seeking to maintain "the seemingly implausible claim that a psychological element or process that lacks authenticity can nevertheless impart

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[204] He explicitly acknowledges that he "[uses] some of Dworkin's apparatus in elucidating [his] own views" (Colburn, 2010, p.13).

[205] And following in the intellectual tradition of Humboldt and Mill (see Colburn, 2010, pp 13-19).

[206] According to Robert Noggle, "a theory of authenticity will determine what must be true of an element of a person's psychology (typically a desire) in order for it to be true that, if that element is in control of the person's activity, the activity may count as autonomous" Noggle, 2005, p.88)

authenticity to some other element or process." (Noggle, 2005, p.90). One way of reading Colburn's claim that autonomy requires our values, commitments and pro-attitudes to be grounded in a non-derivative commitment meeting both the EC and IC is as an attempt to ensure that, ultimately, those commitments terminate in something expressive of that agent's true or authentic self; in an expression of her individuality. Colburn rejects the possibility that this individuality is necessarily located in our higher-order preferences – a non-derivative commitment *needn't* be a higher order preference[207] – but his account still suggests the existence of some kind of 'real' self to be expressed. If one bears in mind that independence is violated when "an agent's will is bypassed in respect of her judgements about what is valuable" (Colburn, 2010, p.30-31), the move to ground autonomy in IC looks particularly problematic. This is because it is plausible to maintain that most (if not all) of our early commitments violate such a condition – the processes by which parents and teachers transmit values to very young children generally (perhaps always) lack the transparency Colburn suggests is necessary for autonomy. Indeed, even if one wishes to eschew the language of authenticity, it is plainly the case that children's early preferences are not independent. How then does one move from the non (or pre-) autonomous state of infancy and early childhood to the fully autonomous state of adulthood without motivating the *ab initio* criticism?

There are two ways to avoid the force of the *ab initio* problem. Either attempt to argue that, contrary to appearances, an individual's initial commitments are authentic, or — as Robert Noggle suggests — deny the assumption upon which the problem is based; maintain that, "a psychological element can be authentic even though it arises from non-authentic sources." (Noggle, 2005, p.97) Colburn appears to adopt the latter option. However, as we shall see, this brings additional difficulties for the conception of autonomy he endorses.

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[207] Even if it generally is one.

On the basis that Colburn views autonomy as a global property pertaining to whole lives, he seems happy to grant that overall autonomy *may* arise out of heteronomy. In a series of pen portraits of fictional individuals, we meet Geraldine:

> Geraldine was brought up as a devout adherent of a culture that requires a strict and repressive upbringing, with as little exposure to other ways of life as possible. Her parents and teachers took care that Geraldine was never able to decide for herself how her life ought to go. As an adult Geraldine is fully committed to the way of life that she lives: both to the practices it requires of her now, and the personal history that it involved. Having been brought up in the 'right way' is a central part of what makes her life valuable in her eyes. As a young adult, Geraldine is aware that other people disagree with her. We might also imagine that she possesses the disposition such that if she reflects on her life, she continues to believe, despite recognising the genesis of her commitments, that she is right, and she lives her life as best she can in keeping with those commitments. (Colburn, 2010, p.37).

In Colburn's view, Geraldine is autonomous.

Now, on one hand, it is possible to see the attempt to locate lives such as Geraldine's within a conception of autonomy as a laudable effort to ensure that a person's social 'situatedness' is not perceived as a barrier to self-determination.[208] Perhaps Colburn's position can be seen as an effort to move away from the idea of the autonomous person as a "self-interested maximiser" towards one which acknowledges that, "autonomous agency does not imply that one mysteriously escapes altogether from social influence but rather that one is able to fashion a certain *response* to it."(Barclay, 2000, p.54 - my italics) As Colburn sees it, as long as the origins of Geraldine's commitments do not *preclude* her from independent endorsement, the history of those commitments matters far less than her current relationship

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[208] Many critics of the classical liberal view of autonomy have, rightly in some cases, dismissed conceptions of the term which "promote a vision of the autonomous self as essentially independent and self-sufficient," and seek to deny the social nature of the self (Barclay, 2000, p.52). These criticisms are particularly evident in feminist and communitarian critiques of autonomy (see E.g. Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000).

with or disposition towards them. If she has "the disposition to endorse her values" if and when she does reflect upon them, it is possible to regard her as autonomous.

On the other hand, the case of Geraldine seems counter-intuitive, particularly when one considers that elsewhere Colburn maintains that authenticity[209] is mediated by the extent to which the explanations for an individual's preferences are not hidden from them; that "our preferences are authentic just in case they do not have covert explanations." (Colburn, 2015, p.121) In the early stages of her life, Geraldine's preferences look as if they were thoroughly opaque to her – they could quite feasibly have been explained with reference to factors which were covert (her isolation from ideas and people who could corrupt her by exposing her to the 'wrong path', for example). Moreover, in adulthood, it simply isn't clear that the mere fact that Geraldine, "recognises the genesis of her commitments," is enough to redeem the preferences arising out of her upbringing. What does this "recognition" amount to? Is she merely *aware* that her values were passed to her by her parents, or does she have a thorough *understanding* of the manner in which they restricted her access to the world outside her community? In order to be able to ascertain whether she *really* understands how her commitments arose, we require far more information than Colburn provides.[210] One is certainly left wondering why Geraldine's preferences couldn't be considered adaptive. True, she is now aware that "other people disagree with her," suggesting alternative views are no longer hidden from her as they were during childhood. But, it is entirely plausible that her repudiation of the commitments arising out of such views is the result of sour grapes reasoning; Geraldine repudiates alternatives because her upbringing has forced her to "downgrade" inaccessible options. This means that, even when these options *appear*

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[209] Which he conceives of (in a somewhat non-standard manner) as "a label for the property possessed by all and only those preferences whose satisfaction contributes to our lives going well." (Colburn, 2015, p.121)

[210] This particular worry is further exacerbated by the fact that Colburn's account does not require that Geraldine ever reflects in the manner necessary to establish whether she satisfies either of the criteria of autonomy.

available from an outside perspective, they do not (and could never) constitute live options for her. As Steven V. Mazie puts it in a discussion of the Amish practice of *Rumspringa:*[211]

> Observing the fact of diversity is not the same as appreciating the charms, opportunities and challenges of particular ways of life, and it is not equivalent to actually exploring one or more of them. (Mazie, 2005, p.748)

Of course, one response to the claim that Geraldine's preferences are obscured from her in a manner likely to stymie the development of her autonomy is to refocus on the issue which motivates the *ab initio* concern and point out that, at least on the face of it, this state of affairs is common to everyone. Like every child, Geraldine is brought up to value things from a position lacking authenticity,[212] but, as long as she is able to fulfil the requirements of independence and endorsement once she reaches adulthood, there is no reason to view her as less autonomous than someone who was raised with a more liberal, open or permissive background. Maybe Colburn's perspective simply forces us to accept a wider range of childrearing techniques than a more substantive account of autonomy would necessitate.

For reasons which will become apparent, I am reluctant to accept this view. It is necessary to recognise that we are, at least in part, constituted by our history and social background; that "the fact that any of us has the capacity for autonomous agency is a debt that we owe to others" (Barclay, 2000, p.57). What's more —as evidenced by the need for advice, instruction and guidance played out in the arguments from expertise and organisational effectiveness — relationships with others continue to support our ability to *stay* autonomous throughout our lives (see also Barclay, 2000, p.57). Nevertheless, there are backgrounds and

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[211] A Pennsylvania German term meaning "running around" and which refers to the time during which pre-baptised Amish youth "enjoy a measure of freedom before settling down, being [baptised], getting married, and becoming adult members of the community. During this time they face the two most crucial decisions of their lives: whether to join the church, and if and whom to marry" (Kraybill et al., 2013)

[212] There is a difference between this 'non-authenticity' and 'inauthenticity' which mirrors the difference between the non- (or pre-)rational child and the irrational adult alluded to in the discussion of NIBI (see §3.5).

types of socialisation which militate against the development of autonomy (or the capacities required to exercise it)[213] and certain childrearing and educational techniques (such as indoctrination) clearly entail that children's beliefs, preferences and commitments are more opaque to them (even when they reach adulthood) than others. Colburn is happy to acknowledge that Geraldine's upbringing may properly be described as "autonomy threatening," and goes on to argue that it leads to a way of life that "the autonomy minded liberal must be strongly biased against" (Colburn, 2010, p.40).[214] For Colburn, the question of establishing criteria to settle the question of whether an individual is autonomous is rather less important than "designing our political morality and institutions in the best way we can, from the point of view of wanting people to be as autonomous as possible" (Colburn, 2010, p.38). To this end, he thinks that it is possible to side-step the issue of whether Geraldine's endorsement of her non-derivative preferences is, in fact, "free from factors undermining her independence" (Colburn, 2010, p.25) and move straight to the more pressing concern of how we design our institutions to ensure that the disposition for autonomy develops in all citizens (Colburn, 2010, p.38).

I'm not sure this move can be allowed. The question of how autonomy manifests itself in real human lives and, therefore, the extent to which the manner of one's upbringing constrains the development of a "disposition to endorse [one's] values," is logically prior to the question of how we construct our institutions in order to maximise the probability that such a disposition will arise in those lives. While I am sympathetic to the contention that an infallible ability to 'spot' autonomy from an external viewpoint is not of fundamental importance to Colburn's overall project of deciding how autonomy-producing institutions are constructed, the success of the latter task is dependent on being able to say more about the difficult cases – e.g. that of

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[213] Barclay cites "the pervasive reality of gender subordination" as an example (Barclay, 2000, p.56)
[214] He makes a similar argument in an earlier paper entitled 'Forbidden Ways of Life' (Colburn, 2008).

Geraldine -–which are likely to cause disagreement; particularly when it comes to groups who do not value (substantive) autonomy very highly. Even if it is difficult to tell the autonomous agent from the heteronomous one, especially when she exhibits beliefs and commitments which appear to be more consonant with heteronomous ways of living (often those which involve a significant degree of deference to authority), we need to establish clear methods of adjudication for our decisions about educational practices.

One way to go about this would be to take a harder line on the Geraldine case; to claim that, even as Colburn describes her, she does not meet the basic criteria to be called autonomous. Although this is tempting, I think it would be a mistake. After all, Colburn certainly recognises that the historical origins of our commitments may impinge on the extent to which we can be deemed autonomous when he notes the unlikelihood that an upbringing such as Geraldine's will lead to autonomous agency. He merely prioritises the importance of *present* circumstances as they pertain to the designation of autonomy:

> *As an adult*, Geraldine is fully committed to [her] way of life… if she both possesses the disposition to endorse her values when she reflects and *now* satisfies the Independence Condition, then the life she lives in accordance with her commitments is autonomous, despite the fact that her being so is tremendously unlikely given the history of her commitments. (Colburn, 2010, p. 40. My italics)

Colburn doesn't wish to claim that individuals who are brought up like Geraldine *will* develop into autonomous adults, he simply wishes to suggest the possibility of circumstances under which, following such an upbringing, such individuals *might* satisfy the IC and EC, however improbable this may be.

Still, more is needed to demonstrate how the opacity of Geraldine's background differs from that of a substantively liberal upbringing; how the necessary transmission of a framework of values and desires is autonomy threatening in one set of circumstances but not (or not

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usually) the other. To do this, we need to consider a more straightforwardly liberal upbringing and compare it to that of Geraldine. With this in mind, consider Libby:

> *From a very young age, Libby is aware that people around her may believe, value and desire different things from her. She attends a highly diverse, multicultural school in an inner-city area and so comes into regular and sustained contact with alternative views and pro-attitudes. Although her parents implement various rules and Libby cannot simply do as she pleases, they are prepared to explain their reasoning and to accept criticism and questioning (although they reserve the right to overall authority over Libby's conduct when she is young). Libby has always been told that, although her parents have strongly liberal/humanist values, her path must be one of her own making; that "some people believe x and others y", but that she must ultimately "decide for herself" what is the best way to live.*

Libby's upbringing is substantively liberal in nature, but we can imagine it resulting in a range of outcomes. Here are just three possibilities:

Libby 1

> *Despite going through a period of hyper-religiosity in early adolescence, as an adult, Libby endorses the liberal-humanist views of her parents. She disagrees with them about some issues and, when she visits home, debates and discussions with the rest of the family are common. Nevertheless, overall and in general, the family is united in its values and motivations for action.*

Libby 2

> *Goes through what her parents assume to be a hyper-religious "phase" during early adolescence. She asks to take her 1st Communion, regularly attends school-prayer meetings and church. She likes to engage the people around her in discussions about*

God and religion. And, although neither of her parents is religious (indeed, they

disagree with many of the positions that their daughter advocates, particularly her

views on homosexuality), they allow her to develop and express her faith as she

wishes. Once Libby 2 reaches adulthood, she is a devout Catholic. As in the case of

Libby 1, family debates are frequent, but conversation is sometimes fraught. Because

her parents so vehemently disagree with her, Libby often reflects on her values and

desires but knows deep down they are the ones that she wishes to have.

Libby 3

Goes through what her parents assume to be a hyper-religious "phase" during early

adolescence. She asks to take her 1ˢᵗ Communion, regularly attends school-prayer

meetings and church. She likes to engage the people around her in discussions about

God and religion. Although neither of her parents is religious (indeed, they disagree

with many of the positions that their daughter advocates, particularly her views on

homosexuality), they allow her to develop and express her faith as she wishes. Once

Libby 3 reaches adulthood, she is a devout Catholic. However (unlike Libby 1 and

Libby 2), she does not reflect on her views, desires or commitments (although she

could if she wished to) and does not enter into discussions about them with her family.

It is entirely plausible to suggest Libby is autonomous (in Colburn's global, non-substantive

sense) in all three iterations of the example. First, there is clear evidence not only of

awareness of but *engagement with* diversity of opinion about conceptions of value and the

good life. Even though, as an adult, Libby 3 no longer chooses to engage in discussion or

reflection (like Libby 1 and Libby 2), she is *capable* of doing so and has done so (quite

readily) in the past; this is demonstrated by her switch from a rather open set of values and

desires, to a set which is rather similar to Geraldine's.[215] Second, despite their differences, it also seems clear that all three versions of Libby endorse their values in the requisite sense; these are the sorts of values that they *want* to have. Finally, all three examples demonstrate independence: Libby has developed her commitments in a manner which ensured that, from the earliest point possible, they were not opaque to her. Indeed, Libby's parents took steps to highlight the necessity of her independence by regularly pointing out that she must "decide for herself" what to value.

Why does Geraldine's upbringing make autonomy "tremendously unlikely" when a similar outlook may develop in a way which is not autonomy threatening? One reason is that, unlike Libby, when Geraldine exhibits the disposition to endorse her commitments in the requisite fashion,[216] the extent to which this reflection occurs "in a situation which ensures her independence"[217] is entirely dependent upon her ability to *transgress* the very upbringing she seeks to endorse. To put it another way, when Geraldine develops autonomy, she does so *in spite of* the restrictive nature of her background rather than because of it. By attempting to ensure that Geraldine "never felt as though she was able to decide for herself how her life ought to go" and restricting her access to other ways of life, her parents (and teachers) acted in ways which were paradigmatically constructed to bypass Geraldine's own will in favour of that of her parents (and wider cultural community) even if they were, in certain respects, unsuccessful in this regard.

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[215] Of course, it would be possible to make a similar switch in a non-autonomous way (e.g. through process of radicalisation or brain-washing), but the open and transparent process through which Libby's conversion took place suggests that this was not what happened in this case.

[216] If or when she reflects upon them.

[217] E.g. one that it isn't content-insensitive, coerced or the result of an adaptive preference.

§4.4.4 The Authenticity of Initial Selves

While Colburn never explicitly offers the Geraldine example as a rebuttal of the *ab initio* requirement, the suggestion that autonomy *may* develop out of a (seemingly) heteronomous background[218] generates a related worry about authenticity and the manipulation of early selves. This concern is acknowledged by Robert Noggle who argues that, because the notion of the "self-creating self" is incoherent,[219] we should reject the intuitive pull of the *ab initio* requirement; the idea that the authentic[220] (autonomous) self must arise from similarly authentic psychological elements (or be authentic 'all the way down'). Instead, we should come to recognise that the self develops through a gradual process whereby:

> The earliest core desires, as well as the initial elements of the child's cognitive conceptual scheme, arise via processes that would be considered authenticity undermining if they were used to implant beliefs and desires into an adult. (Noggle, 2005, p.101)

Noggle is aware this position could entail the acceptance of an intuitively unpalatable conclusion *vis a vis* the authenticity (and thus, autonomy) of our earliest commitments. He illustrates this via two examples. The first of these is 'Edgar the Evil'. Through "standard child-rearing techniques"[221] Edgar has been raised by his crime-boss father to supress any benevolent impulses he may have in favour of behaving in a selfish and violent manner at all times. As an adult, Edgar is "thoroughly evil". The second, 'Oppressed Olivia', has been brought up, using similarly "standard child-rearing techniques" to internalise the sexist

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[218] Or an autonomy threatening one.

[219] As Noggle puts it: "complete self-creation would require the truth of two contradictory propositions: first, that the self-creating thing exists, which seems to be necessary for it to *do* anything, such as create something; and second, that the thing does not exist, which must be true in order for it to require to be created" (Noggle, 2005, p.96).

[220] Noggle draws out the idea of authenticity via a distinction between the "political metaphor" of being free from the interference of "external forces" and "the idea of government *by the legitimate authority*". A violation of authenticity is akin to the way "a usurper takes power from within the state, rather than conquering it from the outside," it relocates control from self to an (internal) usurping force (Noggle, 2005, p.87).

[221] These "include such processes as operant, aversive, and classical conditioning; role model imitation; blind obedience to and subsequent internalization of behavioural norms; uncritical acceptance of propositions on the authority of parents and teachers; and so on" (Noggle, 2005, p.103).

attitudes of the patriarchal society she inhabits and, as a result, wishes only to be a traditional housewife. (Noggle, 2005, p.102)

Both these cases (and others like them) are troubling because— although we might recognise that the "authenticating self"[222] will need to gradually emerge from "a chaotic psychological soup," (Noggle, 2005, p.101) elements of which will not be under the conscious control of our early selves— the manipulation they involve seems excessive; it simply runs too deep. We are concerned that, if parents manipulate the development of selves from the very bottom up, this will ultimately undermine the possibility of authenticity (and thus autonomy). Noggle thinks we should reject this worry. True, by supplanting an original self with a new set of (externally imposed) beliefs, pro-attitudes or convictions, the child-rearing practices he highlights would violate the authenticity of adults. But, authenticity is governed by a "self-referential condition" — the extent to which the psychological element under consideration can be called 'authentic' is dependent upon the *relationship* between that element and the "true" (or authentic) self. Therefore:

> It makes a great deal of difference whether such processes are being used to build an initial self, or whether they are being used to implant psychological elements into an *existing* self. (Noggle, 2005, p.104)

Unfortunately, unlike situations in which an adult is subjected to brainwashing and her original pro-attitudinal framework is supplanted for another,[223] in the cases of Edgar and Olivia, the evil or oppressed self is "the only game in town" (Noggle, 2005, p.103). We might wish they had developed better selves or heap moral disapprobation on the adults responsible

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[222] That is, a self with the capacities required to independently endorse a commitment, desire, value or other pro-attitude.

[223] Indeed, the term 'brainwashing' was coined to describe the political "re-education" of adults in Communist China and Korea (see Taylor, 2004).

for their ethically dubious upbringings, but, Noggle asserts, we cannot maintain the preferences they have are inauthentic (and, therefore, non-autonomous):

> Each of the selves that [emerged] formed around a core that includes attitudes that are morally and factually defective. But if the question of authenticity is a question about what beliefs and desires are truly a person's own, then it is difficult to see any basis for the claim that these beliefs and desires do not belong to the self that arises from Edgar's and Olivia's childhoods. (Noggle, 2005, p.103)

One way to respond to the intuitive unease these cases engender[224] would be to contest Noggle's assertion that Olivia and Edgar's personalities could have been created via "standard child-rearing techniques". One might suggest parents can avoid the practices Noggle lists, or assert that the nature of Edgar and Olivia's upbringings must have been, in some sense, beyond the "standard" pale; that to achieve those outcomes, the techniques must have been deviant or distorted in some way.[225] However, it just seems wrong to deny that parents must rely on at least some of the techniques Noggle mentions (e.g. conditioning and imitation). As we have already seen in the case of early belief formation, some degree of (non-cognitive) influence is inescapable. Values, desires, and other pro-attitudes will inevitably follow suit. And, even if extreme cases of immorality (such as Edgar) require fundamentally more draconian parenting techniques than more moderate forms of upbringing, this conclusion will only get us so far. What we require is a way of differentiating legitimate early influence from illegitimate early influence. For Noggle, this distinction is dependent upon a normative evaluation of the (moral) *content* of the pro-attitudes (or

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[224] Arguably, the need to address this unease will be particularly pressing for formal accounts (like Colburn's) since they are predicated on the idea that there is no 'right way' to be autonomous.
[225] I have a degree of sympathy with this view with respect to Edgar. It seems highly likely that to get Edgar to repress any and all of the compassionate human impulses he had as a young child, Edgar's father would have had to go well beyond practices that could be considered acceptable in all but their content. However, since this claim is unnecessary for my broader conclusion, I will not pursue it any further.

behaviour) issuing from that influence. However, this position is mistaken. To demonstrate why, it is necessary to consider a further example:

> *Greta the Good has been raised by charity worker parents to follow in their footsteps. Using "standard child-rearing techniques," they encouraged Greta's impulses to behave in an altruistic or compassionate manner and made her supress any violent, aggressive or selfish feelings she might have. Consequently (and unquestioningly), once she reaches adulthood, Greta is thoroughly good. Indeed, she is unable to value or desire anything which isn't good and is incapable of evil behaviour.*

Setting aside the question of what "thoroughly good" would mean in practice,[226] on Noggle's account it would be tempting to regard Greta's upbringing as ideal.[227] However, it simply isn't clear that she is either authentic or autonomous. Indeed, there is a sense in which she is imprisoned by her goodness, quite unable to act (or consider acting) differently. When Greta is good, it is because her blindly conditioned desires compel her, not because of any decision of her own.[228] This is worrisome because it means that Greta is not morally responsible for her good acts; she is not the proper subject of praise for her 'saintly' behaviour or desires.

Noggle is wrong to think our initial selves are "the only game in town" and that, therefore, any and all initial selves are authentic. The reason examples such as those of Olivia and Edgar trouble our intuitions is not a form of residual concern arising out of our abhorrence for raising children to hold "attitudes that are factually and morally defective," [229] it is something separable from this. As the example of Greta demonstrates, the same intuitions can be activated by a case in which an individual is raised to behave in a manner which is morally

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[226] The answer is bound to be controversial and need not concern us in the current context.

[227] Certainly, if the description of her adult character and behaviour is accurate, some might be inclined to consider her saintly.

[228] While this compulsion may be *phenomenologically* similar to the cases of 'deciding' discussed in §4.4, because the reasons for Greta's goodness are both content insensitive and opaque to her, it lacks the independence necessary for autonomy.

[229] At least, not in the sense Noggle appears to mean "morally defective".

irreproachable; that is, when the content itself is not defective. For this reason, we must look to something other than the content of an individual's pro-attitudinal framework to establish the difference between legitimate and illegitimate forms of influence in upbringing and education. With respect to pre-autonomous agents, I posit that this deciding factor will turn on the likely relationship between an individual's commitments and her future self, on the extent to which her pro-attitudes are *responsibility-wise authentic* or *responsibility-wise inauthentic* (Haji & Cuypers 2004, Cuypers, 2009).

§4.4.5 Responsibility-Wise Authenticity

Although Noggle understands authenticity as a relational concept – "some element is authentic *to* a particular person" (Noggle, 2005, p.103) – Cuypers presses the relational aspect of authenticity further. For Noggle, authenticity is a simple "two place relation… a [psychological] element is authentic to a person just in case it bears the right relation to her true self" (Noggle, 2005, p.103) but as the 'pre-normative'[230] or young child has yet to establish a self, her initial self is her only self. Therefore (on Noggle's view), every desire, value, aspiration or urge her parents or teachers seek to inculcate is authentic no matter how problematic or morally reprehensible. For Cuypers, however, there is another aspect of the self which must be taken into account when determining authenticity; the future self. Although we should not seek to fully establish what an individual's future self will comprise (who exactly the future self will be), we can legitimately stipulate that, in order to be autonomous, she must develop into a moral agent:

> It is undeniable that the primary aim of educating children is to make sure that they become moral agents – a specific kind of normative agents… Children must be raised so that they

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[230] Cuypers's term.

develop into free agents who are capable of shouldering moral responsibility for their

behaviour. (Cuypers, 2009, p.134)

Now we can see why the base-level manipulation to which Edgar, Olivia *and* Greta have

been subjected is problematic; it means that, as adults, they fail to be responsible for the

behaviour which arises from their pro-attitudes and, therefore, fail to be autonomous.[231]

Of course, some might argue that it is possible to maintain that all initial pro-attitudinal

schemes are authentic *without* accepting that Edgar, Olivia and Greta (or any other individual

who has been subjected to an upbringing which renders his or her core attitudes

unchangeable) are autonomous. As cases of coercion illustrate (and Noggle himself points

out) authenticity is usually posited as a necessary but insufficient condition for being an

autonomous agent (Noggle, 2005, p.88 and p.108). Does our unease about certain kinds of

upbringing rest on a concern about some additional condition for autonomy? After all, when

Colburn describes Geraldine's upbringing as 'autonomy threatening' the threat seems to

inhere in the possibility that Geraldine will lack *control* over her life, not the fact that her pro-

attitudes originate from a particular (external) source.

Following RS Peters, Cuypers asserts that "a choice (or decision) is autonomous if and only if

its agent both has control in making it *and* is authentic with respect to it" (Cuypers, 2009,

p.126). In other words, it is necessary to meet a control condition *and* an authenticity

condition if one is to be deemed autonomous. It is tempting to think this position is mirrored

by Colburn's distinction between independence and endorsement, with the former reducible

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[231] One might respond that Noggle's rendering of the examples says nothing of irresistibility or uncontrollable pro-attitudes. Both Edgar and Olivia have been given a 'bad lot' but we have no reason to think that their parents have transmitted the framework of pro-attitudes in a manner which renders them *necessarily* fixed; indeed, Noggle explicitly points out that the techniques used were identical to those used during a standard (normal) upbringing. However, as Cuypers notes, Noggle's claim that *all* initial selves are authentic selves still leaves room for the possibility that "[first core attitudes that are] "beaten into" a child, or instilled via "shock therapy," at the pre-normative agent stage" (Cuypers, 2009, p.133) may be authentic. Given the level of suffering these processes will cause, we may legitimately condemn them, but if all first attitudes or frameworks are authentic, they too will meet this criterion.

to control and the latter to authenticity. However, this would be an oversimplification. Since the conception of autonomy which both Colburn and I seek to advance is one which is fundamentally governed by the notion of a life being 'one's own', there is a sense in which authenticity is woven into IC and EC. A life cannot really be one's own if it is infused with values, desires and other pro-attitudes which have not merely been given as "a debt that we each owe to others" (Barclay, 2000, p.57) but have been designed and manipulated to produce a particular kind of person.[232] So, while the authenticity component of autonomy is, at least partially, theoretically distinct from the 'control' component, these elements are not fully independent of one another.

By emphasising the necessity of a legitimate relationship between the individual and her future self,[233] the notion of *responsibility-wise authenticity* captures a greater degree of complexity than the 'two-place relation' involving myself and my pro-attitudes posited by Noggle. Through this, it forces into relief the way in which, just as early beliefs can be deemed problematic when they are never likely to be redeemed by reason, the pro-attitudinal elements of one's psychological makeup can be thought to be "autonomy subverting" if I am denied the opportunity to develop the *ability* or *capacity* to consider, reflect upon or revise them. Base-level manipulation, particularly base-level manipulation which is broad in scope and targets all areas of an individual's normative scheme, erodes control and, as a consequence, is problematic in terms of both moral responsibility and authenticity.

§4.4.6 The Colburnian Conception – A Summary of the Defence

In the preceding few subsections, I have sought to defend Colburn's global conception of autonomy —characterised as "an ideal of people deciding for themselves what is a valuable

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[232] I discuss how this issue relates to the enrolment of children in religious values and practices in Chapter VI.
[233] Although Cuypers never uses this phrase, he does refer to his account of education for authenticity as "forward looking" (Cuypers, 2009, p.133)

life and living their lives in accordance with that decision" (Colburn, 2010, p.19)— from a number of related but distinct criticisms: namely, the concern that *all* human lives are subject to independence undermining factors and will, therefore, fail to meet the Independence Condition, the associated *ab initio* objection, and the problem of the base-level manipulation of initial selves engendered by the most plausible rebuttal of the *ab initio* requirement. Clearly, these criticisms must be avoided if one is committed to the view that autonomy is a proper end of education or wishes to assert that one reason indoctrination is morally objectionable is because the practice stymies or impedes the development of autonomy. However, there is good reason to maintain that a Colburnesque conception of the ideal can be defended against all of these concerns.

IC cannot be satisfied if an individual's commitments or other pro-attitudes are content insensitive (at least when they are not 'nested' in other commitments and ultimately grounded in one or more, non-derivative, content-sensitive commitment(s)), if they are opaque to reason, or if they have been coerced. As long as these kinds of threats are avoided, it is possible to hold a conception of the good involving little in the way of critical reflection on one's values and commitments *and* remain autonomous. Modes of upbringing will be regarded as independence (and, therefore, autonomy) threatening if, in order to reach the point at which she is able to authentically inhabit the values and commitments she has, an agent must transgress the very upbringing she seeks to endorse (as was the case with Geraldine). To summarise, independence is undermined when, "an agent's will is bypassed in respect of her judgement about what is valuable" (Colburn, 2010, p.30-31) and threatened by any form of education which seeks (or is likely) to subjugate an individual's will in this manner (whether or not it is actually successful).

In spite of the fact one can generally use Dworkinian-style identification between higher and lower order desires as a guide to whether or not a person (or life) is autonomous, the

Colburnian view forces us to realise that coherence between pro-attitudes is not *intrinsically* valuable. We may use the apparatus of hierarchical theories like that which Frankfurt and Dworkin provide, but should see coherence only as a sign-post; a signal which is important only insofar as the harmony it indicates enables an individual to govern herself. Although this allows Colburn's conception of autonomy to side-step some of the problems which beset the best known hierarchical conceptions,[234] it was necessary to address the possibility that, through an emphasis on what might be interpreted as 'authenticity' —self-authorship or "belonging to the self" (Noggle, 2005, p.94) – Colburn's conception could fall foul of the *ab initio* problem.

Since selves, "gradually [emerge] as [an individual's] cognitive and motivational systems develop the kind of structure and stability and the rational and reflective capacities necessary for the existence of a coherent and stable self that can be the source of authenticity" (Noggle, 2005, p. 101), it initially looked as if the best way around the problem would be to dismiss the claim it is impossible for autonomy to arise out of heteronomy. However, this move appeared to leave Colburn's conception vulnerable to the problem of base-level (or global) manipulation. If initial selves are "the only game in town", parents who deliberately mould their children's selves from the bottom up, will still produce authentic offspring. However, it was possible to establish that Noggle's claim about the authenticity of *all* initial selves is mistaken. We can criticise upbringings such as Edgar the Evil on the basis of something other than the morally dubious content of the commitments they entail and reject certain forms of early self-formation on the grounds that they are, to use Cuypers' term, *responsibility-wise inauthentic*. If authenticity is viewed as a relation-based concept which includes the development of moral agency — of being an apt target for moral praise and blame with respect to the commitments one has and the behaviour which issues from them — then

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[234] The problem of infinite regress, for example (see Noggle, 2005, pp. 89-96).

certain types of early self are not authentic and can legitimately be rejected on the grounds they are autonomy subverting.

Interestingly enough, the move to explain autonomy in terms of a broader relationship with responsibility is also evident in Colburn's account. Because his conception of an autonomous life includes not only "deciding for [oneself] what is a valuable life" but also "living [one's life] in accordance with that decision" (Colburn, 2010, p.19), the extent to which an individual's life is autonomous is partially determined by the degree to which she is able to *successfully pursue* her own values and commitments. Responsibility enters the picture because even the fact an individual's life plays out in accordance with her own deeply held values is not sufficient for that life to be autonomous, it must also have the quality of being 'self-directed':

> I take this to mean two things: first, the reason that my life goes that way must be because I made it so, and also I must bear the consequences of the way I choose to live it. (Colburn, 2010, p. 32)

In order to have a self-directed, autonomous life, I must be "substantively responsible" (see Scanlon, 2000, pp. 248-249) for the direction my life takes. This constraint echoes and supports the requirement that initial selves are responsibility-wise authentic.

The foregoing excursion into the nature of autonomy was necessary in order to thwart some possible objections to a formulation of the concept grounded in notions of independence. With these objections set aside, we are now in a position to resume our discussion of whether we are justified in adopting autonomy as an aim of education. In order to do this, let us briefly revisit Hand's claim that "neither circumstantial nor dispositional autonomy will serve as an aim of education because "the former is desirable but not learnable [and] the latter is learnable but not desirable." (Hand, 2006, p.539)

§4.5 Hand on Autonomy

Recall that, in Hand's view, "there is no quality of character one could plausibly call autonomy at which it is reasonable for educators to aim." (Hand, 2006, p.536). However, as our discussion of the Colburnian conception has illustrated, this is because Hand erroneously identifies the autonomous disposition with an extreme form of "autarchy". When autonomy is conceived as a global disposition for self-determination, it is able to avoid the criticism that it will, as a matter of course, lead to foolish behaviour such as ignoring the advice and instruction of experts and other authorities. What's more, since in those cases where autonomous thought and action leads to behaviour which is foolish or immoral the agent will be substantively responsible for that behaviour, then, unlike the heteronomous individual, she will be an apt target for blame; her autonomy is part of what makes her a moral agent.

Of course, while these arguments demonstrate the *desirability* of autonomy, it is still necessary to show this form of autonomy can meet Hand's second condition for a worthy aim of education; that the disposition is teachable. This question seems especially pertinent given that EC may be satisfied by values and commitments upon which an individual has never actually reflected (Colburn, 2010, p.25-26)— that it need only be the case she *would* endorse her commitments "*were* she to reflect on them". In this respect, i.e. as it pertains to educational interventions, Colburn's position resembles theories which regard autonomy as a *latent* disposition or ability. In other words, theories which claim that what matters for self-government is the *capacity* to exercise autonomy,[235] not the disposition to exercise that capacity. While, as will become apparent in the next section, there are clear differences between mainstream capacity accounts and Colburn's overall position, it is necessary to

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[235] Usually conceived of as some form of critical self-reflection.

address some of Hand's arguments against autonomy as a capacity (AC) in order to build a case for the teachability of the value as I conceive it.

§4.5.1 Autonomy as a Capacity and the Capacities Required for Autonomy

According to Hand:

> To possess [the capacity to determine one's own actions] a person need not be inclined to determine her own actions, but she must have something more than the mere freedom to do so (Hand, 2006, p.540)

On the basis of this outline, we can begin to see why it would be a mistake to think of Colburn's account as a capacity account *simpliciter*. Colburn stipulates that an autonomous individual must live her life in accordance with the values she has determined; it is not enough for her to possess the requisite skills to be able to reflect upon her commitments if and when she chooses, she must be in a state where (were such reflection were to occur) both EC and IC hold (or would hold). In addition, certain minimal external conditions must also obtain.[236] These additional conditions point in the direction of a more substantive position than the *basic capacity account* Hand sketches. For this reason, we might call Colburn's account an *enhanced capacity account*: it requires that an autonomous individual has "something more" than the (negative) freedom to act in a certain way, but the "something more" is not simply an ability to choose and act on the basis of those choices (although this will be a necessary condition of autonomy so conceived).

Although Hand thinks that AC has *prima facie* appeal as an aim of education, he ultimately rejects it because he is dubious about the claim there is anything more to the *ability* to act autonomously than the *freedom* to do so —in other words, the capacity is not teachable:

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[236] E.g. freedom from coercion and a range of opportunities from which to choose my commitments (Colburn, 2010, pp 98-101).

We can see easily enough the difference between the person who is free to swim across the pool, in the sense that no-one is preventing her from doing so, and the person who is *able* to swim across the pool, in the sense that no-one is preventing her from doing so *and* she has learned how to swim. But is there a parallel distinction to be drawn between the person who is free to act independently and the person who is able to do so? And while we know well enough how to help children who come to us without the ability to swim, what kind of educational intervention would be appropriate for a child without the ability to act independently? (Hand, 2006, p.540)

For Hand, the capacity or "ability to determine one's own actions" is a naturally occurring one —it, "falls squarely into the category of what children naturally pick up for themselves" (Hand, 2006, p.542). What children have difficulty with is not considering and choosing between options *per se*, rather it is "consider[ing] all the options" in a rational manner. To illustrate, he compares uneducated children with adults who have been granted freedom after having that freedom restricted for a considerable period of time (e.g. institutionalised convicts or victims of domestic violence). In contrast to young children, Hand argues, the latter have genuinely, through a process of ill treatment, lost their capacity to act autonomously and "[exhibit] only anxiety and withdrawal in this state of freedom." (Dearden cited in Hand, 2006, p.540)

Clearly, there are differences between the situation of the uneducated child and those of the released prisoner or victim of domestic violence — in the latter type of case, individuals will often be unable to act at all.[237] But it would, I think, be extremely unusual to encounter a child who exhibited the same paralysis of action. However, this should not lead us to grant Hand's claim that (at least once we have stripped away those skills commonly associated

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[237] For example, because she has been accustomed to having her decisions made for her by a dominant partner, the victim of domestic violence and 'coercive control' may be paralysed when asked to make even the smallest of choices following the end of the abusive relationship.

with rationality), there are no capacities we could meaningfully teach which could also be identified with a capacity for autonomy.

For Hand, the claim that, under normal circumstances, a capacity for autonomy requires nothing more than the (negative) freedom to determine one's own actions[238] rests on the idea that children have "no difficulty acting on their own judgement". But, as this view appears to conflate the mere *ability to act* with an *ability to act on a judgement*, there is good reason to reject it. There is a very real sense in which uneducated children are what Sneddon calls '*oudenonomous*'. The oudenonomous individual is under no control:

> They act as circumstances and whim dictate, without having the capacities for tracking
>
> particular features of the world. (Sneddon, 2013, p.3)[239]

Hand appears to think the only capacity AC involves is one to "[consider] options and choose between them" (Hand, 2006, p.541): very young children can make choices, they just lack the rationality to make good ones. But we should be wary of the conclusion that rationality is the only capacity capable of imbuing an individual's decisions with worth or that this naïve form of choosing constitutes judgement. In order to make a judgement, children must, of course, understand what constitutes a good reason for action, and they must also be *capable* of bringing actions, pro-attitudes and the like under conscious control when this is necessary to pursue their goals (they must be able to act on something other than instinct). However, if they are to acquire the capacities necessary to live a self-determined life, they will need something more than rationality; they will require what Colburn calls "skills of agency." These include: "the ability to recognise options, make choices, seek information if it is needed to make those choices and act on the basis of those choices"[240] (Colburn, 2010, p.95),

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[238] To be left to one's own devices or free from interference.
[239] Paradigmatic examples of oudenonomous individuals would be infants and very young children or people suffering from severe dementia.
[240] Skills Hand identifies with rationality.

but, because autonomy involves living life in accordance with one's own values and convictions, it will be important to add skills of self-awareness to this list; students must learn to discern how they feel, what they like and who they are. They must be able to differentiate between and prioritise the importance of their convictions as they themselves understand them. Although teachers will not be able to teach skills of introspection in the same way they would teach subjects where the content is publicly available (e.g. science or geography), it seems uncontroversial to think educators will be able to provide their pupils with tools and information that will enhance and hone this capacity.[241] [242]

What's more, the fact that individuals can lose their ability for self-determination under certain conditions re-emphasises the fact (discussed in §4.2) that circumstances (particularly how we stand in relation to other people) may stymie autonomy. Hand's own examples of non-autonomous adults aptly demonstrate the consequences that extreme restrictions on external conditions can have on an individual's ability to think and act freely, so it is not unreasonable to conclude that similarly extreme parenting or educational practices (including indoctrination) will act as a barrier to the development of the capacities necessary for autonomy.[243] This means that, as noted in the discussion on CA, educators will need to be cognisant of the circumstances under which such failures are likely to occur and avoid reproducing them in their classrooms.[244]

One reason for Hand's reticence to accept AC as an educational aim stems from his subscription to John Wilson's definition of education as "a serious and sustained programme

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[241] By helping them to name their feelings or how to turn their focus away from thoughts or desires which are having a negative effect, for example.

[242] It should be noted that while I am suggesting these skills may be taught, I am not suggesting that all (or even most) teachers will be competent to teach them. The question of *who* should teach these skills is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[243] Possible examples might be seen in the development of the children subjected to global deprivation in Romanian orphanages during the 1980's and 1990's (Maclean, 2003) or that of the many child soldiers used in wars across the developing world (McBride, 2014).

[244] Indeed, this would be the case even if Hand's claim that autonomy cannot be transmitted via teaching were demonstrably true.

of learning, designed for human beings as such, above the level of what they would naturally pick up for themselves in their everyday lives."(Wilson cited in Hand, 2006, p.541) However, even Wilson acknowledges that, "what is naturally picked up will vary from child to child, and society to society,"(Wilson, 1979, p.14) illustrating that, even if it were true that many children develop autonomy as part of a seemingly natural process, this might be the result of the early norms of the society, group or family in which they were raised.[245]To put it another way, circumstances, particularly early circumstances, play a key role in determining what constitutes education and could, therefore, play a defining role in what aims ought to be pursued. This suggests that, even if autonomy could be picked up naturally in certain contexts, educators could legitimately aim to educate *some* of their pupils —those for whom autonomy is not the norm — for autonomy.

Hand's view that, while there will be occasions upon which the rationally targeted use of self-determined decision making will be desirable from the perspective of individual wellbeing, the autonomy part of that capacity develops naturally can, I think, be straightforwardly dismissed. The skills of agency and self-awareness that are required for an individual to be more than oudenonomous are learnt. But, although the foregoing argument shows that teachers may teach *for* autonomy, there is something to be said for the underlying idea that they won't be teaching autonomy itself. Indeed, though AC provided a useful way to approach the question of whether Colburn's global conception of autonomy is teachable, closer examination reveals that the resemblance to mainstream capacity accounts is illusory. True, in order to ensure that individuals are capable of living self-determined lives, we will also need to ensure they develop particular capacities (the so-called "skills of agency").[246] However, (in adulthood) these capacities (skills, abilities, etc.) may or may not be

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[245] Wilson's own example is learning to speak French which, "may form part of an English child's education, but would not count as part of the education of a French child who learns it informally." (Wilson, 1979, p.14)
[246] The most obvious way to accomplish this would be via a public education system.

exercised,[247] and they do not themselves *constitute* autonomy on a conception of autonomy as global self-determination. The value of these skills is instrumental; they are valuable to the extent that they *enable* an individual to pursue the conception of the good that she herself values[248] and ensure she is responsible for the direction that life takes.

Nevertheless, while the skills outlined above are not *necessary* for autonomy as global self-determination, they will often (if not usually) facilitate it and, therefore, are something we can and ought to teach *for*. When children are young, it cannot be predicted whether the life that will suit their adult selves will be one requiring endless self-examination or one in which reflection is a rarity. For this reason, and irrespective of parents' wishes, the liberal state has a duty to provide *all* children with the skills necessary to determine the path their life will take for themselves.[249] Of course, this means that a liberal system of education predicated on autonomy will effectively proscribe ways of life which prohibit any kind of questioning or rely on upbringings which involve raising children "in ignorance of the possible courses their lives might take other than those approved by their parents" (Colburn, 2008, p.624). However, since the autonomy-minded position advocated by Colburn that I endorse "will never [rule out lives which deny the importance of reflective choosing] in a way that violates the decisions of individuals about how they want their *own* lives to go," (Colburn, 2008, p.629) this prohibition is both morally and politically justifiable. While we cannot guarantee that everyone who acquires "the skills of agency" will be autonomous, the acquisition of these capacities will help to safeguard the possibility that, on realising her life is not (or no longer) a 'good fit', an individual is able to evaluate and modify her values, convictions and

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[247] It may be possible for an individual to lead an entirely autonomous life without ever exercising these capacities.

[248] In such a way that it satisfies EC and IC.

[249] This claim is reminiscent of Matthew Clayton's argument against comprehensive enrolment which is discussed in some depth in Chapter VI.

behaviour accordingly. If she is denied this opportunity, then she cannot be held responsible for the direction her life takes and is, therefore, treated as something less than a moral agent.

§4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to critically assess Hand's claim that no account of autonomy is able to adequately meet the dual demands of desirability and teachability necessary to render the ideal an appropriate aim for education. We have found this claim is mistaken; Colburn's conception of autonomy as global self-determination posits an ideal which is both desirable and involves a package of skills —"the skills of agency"—which are not (contra Hand) reducible to rationality but are eminently teachable.

Although there are many circumstances in which the exercise of the "skills of agency" will assist an individual in her quest to live the autonomous life, this should not be confused with the claim that autonomy is instrumentally valuable. I certainly suspect that an autonomous person is more likely to flourish than one who has had their values and convictions imposed upon them, but, since it is possible for an autonomous individual to endorse a wrong-headed or thoroughly ignominious life, this cannot be the only source of the ideal's worth. The value of autonomy as I conceive it arises instead from the idea that the autonomous individual is substantively responsible for the direction her life takes; she is an appropriate target for praise or blame. Where a person is denied the opportunity to direct her life, when she is used as a tool to achieve the ends of her parents or teachers, her moral agency is diminished. This is what connects the ideal of autonomy to the dignity of persons; if I bypass your will and violate your autonomy, there is a very real sense in which I fail to treat you as fully human.

I contend that autonomy as global self-determination[250] meets Hand's criteria for a legitimate aim of education. If I am correct about this, there is good reason to avoid not only

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[250] From this point on, the term 'autonomy' will refer to this conception unless otherwise stated.

indoctrination but also other educational practices which violate the value. Over the course of the next two chapters — and with a view to connecting the rather abstract issues I have covered in the early part of the thesis with the question of the legitimacy of faith schools— I seek to establish whether these pernicious practices are necessarily associated with faith schooling.

CHAPTER V

ARE FAITH SCHOOLS INDOCTRINATORY?

§5.1 Introduction

Over the course of the previous four chapters I have sought to establish the specific nature of a faith school, the meaning of indoctrination and the main reasons for thinking the latter constitutes a morally problematic teaching practice.

Recall that faith schools are:

Schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith via the transmission of religious beliefs, values and/or practices.

And indoctrination is:

A teaching process, pertaining to the transmission of beliefs, which directly results in the construction of an illegitimate barrier between the beliefs a pupil holds and the evidence and reasons she has for holding them; a barrier which causes her to be closed-minded.

Indoctrination is morally problematic for two reasons: First, it restricts the individual's ability to access the truth in a reliable way and leaves her epistemically vulnerable. Second, it violates autonomy (conceived of as global self-determination) which, in turn, infringes upon the independence, dignity & moral responsibility of the individual. Schools have a duty to promote rather than stymie both the capacity to assess truth (to be rational) and the capacity to be autonomous by developing "skills of agency" in their pupils and

indoctrination can be considered an extreme violation of this duty. With these principles established, we are now in a position to address one of the key criticisms directed at faith schools; namely that, by their very nature, such schools are indoctrinatory. If correct, this would suggest that faith schools are morally impermissible.

Over the course of the next two chapters, I will make two key arguments. First, that when narrowly conceived of as 'schools which teach for belief in religious propositions'[251] it is correct to maintain that faith schools are indoctrinatory.[252] Nevertheless, on the grounds that not all schools which may legitimately lay claim to the title 'faith school' are captured by the propositional definition,[253] I will go on to maintain that some faith schools — those which attempt to initiate children into particular forms of religious valuing and/or practice while eschewing (or attempting to eschew) the inculcation of religious belief — may be able to avoid the charge of indoctrination. The latter claim, discussed in Chapter VI, will form the basis of my second argument; that although some faith schools can escape the charge of indoctrination, there are circumstances under which these institutions may still violate the development of autonomy. When this is the case, such schools should be regarded as morally impermissible independent of any claims about indoctrination.

§5.2 Faith Schools and the Indoctrination Debate

As previously noted, the claim that faith schools are indoctrinatory is highly prevalent in the existing literature. In many cases, it is a view espoused by those who (unlike me) hold that content is a necessary condition of indoctrination; that to be guilty of indoctrination, a teacher must have transmitted beliefs which can properly be described as doctrinal. On this

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[251] (S4) in §1.6.
[252] This argument will form the basis of the current chapter.
[253] They are captured by the broader definition outlined in S4a (see above).

view, since religion is a paradigm case of doctrine, teaching *for* religious belief[254] is deemed necessarily indoctrinatory.[255] However, while there appears to be an empirical link between doctrine and indoctrination,[256]the connection is not a logical one; unlikely as it may be, I can be indoctrinated to believe anything.

With the appeal to doctrine set aside, to establish that indoctrination is the necessary outcome of all successful attempts to inculcate religious belief,[257] it must be demonstrated that confessional religious education results in a particular state of mind— one characterised by the existence of a barrier between religious beliefs and the evidence or reasons the pupil has for holding them— that they may only be inculcated in a manner which bypasses an individual's faculties of reason.[258] The question then becomes whether there is something specific about religious propositions which leads to this outcome and, if so, whether the connection is logical or merely contingent.

§5.3 Michael Hand and the Indoctrination Objection to Faith-Schools

A key proponent of the view that teaching for belief in religious propositions is necessarily indoctrinatory is Michael Hand. In Chapter I, I briefly outlined why Hand takes this to be the case, but, given the aim of the current chapter is to establish whether the claim is justified, a more detailed and sustained discussion of Hand's position is now warranted.

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[254] As opposed to teaching *about* religious belief.

[255] See Gregory & Woods (1970); Flew (1972) or Kazipedes (1987; 1991).

[256] Possibly, as I speculated in Chapter II, because the wide scope, web-like nature and momentous character of doctrinal beliefs ties them more tightly to self-identity (see Thiessen (1993)).

[257] Recall that on the outcome theory it is only *successful* instances of indoctrinatory teaching which can be deemed genuine cases of indoctrination.

[258] Here it is important to remember that, although it may be necessary to use the vocabulary of the method criterion in describing the process of indoctrination, this is not the same as adopting method as a necessary condition of indoctrination. This is because the process of bypassing reason could only be described with reference to a further method (e.g. rote learning, appeal to authority, etc.) all of which appear to have defensible uses in education.

For Hand, the risk of indoctrination provides us with a fundamental philosophical objection to faith schools. His basic argument runs as follows:

1. Faith schools teach for belief in religious propositions

2. No religious proposition is known to be true

3. Teaching for belief in not-known-to-be-true propositions is indoctrinatory

Therefore,

4. Faith schools are indoctrinatory (Hand, 2003, p.90)

As Hand is quick to point out, there are two decisive objections to the third premise of this version of the argument. The first relates to the "logical gap" between what is taught and what is learned. The premise claims that teaching for belief in not-known-to-be-true propositions is indoctrinatory, but a teacher may have performed the kinds of task concomitant with the inculcation of certain beliefs[259] without these beliefs having successfully taken hold in the minds of *every* learner; not everything which is taught is successfully learned. Of course, this does not make attempts to indoctrinate any less susceptible to criticism —if a teacher participates in activities which could foreseeably lead to indoctrination, she is as worthy of moral condemnation as she would be if she were somewhat more successful in her aim[260] — but it does necessitate that the argument is revised to take account of the fact that the mission to inculcate not-known-to-be-true beliefs must be successful to count as indoctrination. It is for this reason that Hand replaces premise (3) with:

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[259] Indeed, many or even most of her pupils may have developed these beliefs as a result of her teaching.
[260] As Hand puts it, "teaching which would constitute indoctrination *if* it were successful is objectionable whether it is successful or not" (Hand, 2003, p.96).

3a Teaching for not-known-to-be-true propositions is, *when successful*, indoctrinatory (Hand, 2003, p.96)

The second objection to the original version of Hand's third premise relates to the manner in which one comes to believe something. Hand notes that "the presentation of decisive evidence is *one* way of placing someone under a rational obligation to believe something, but not the only way" (Hand, 2003, p.96). We may also be placed under such a rational obligation by, "the exercise of perceived intellectual authority" or, to put it another way, when we are given information by an expert who, "knows what she is talking about, a person who is properly qualified to say whether a proposition is true or false" (Hand, 2003, p.96). Rather than providing us with primary evidence,[261] a *perceived intellectual authority* testifies to the truth or falsity of a proposition on the basis of her own expertise (and/or first-hand evidence). If we believe the expert to be an authoritative source, it is rational for us to accept her testimony. This is the case even if the propositions on which we perceive her to be an expert are, in actual fact, not-known-to-be-true and/or we are mistaken about her authority.

On the grounds of this observation, Hand makes a further modification to his amended third premise:

3a. Teaching for belief in not-known-to-be-true propositions is, when successful, indoctrinatory, *except when teachers are perceived to be intellectual authorities on those propositions* (Hand, 2003, p.98 my italics).[262]

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[261] That is, evidence which we are able to perceive with our own senses.
[262] There are a range of possible objections to the notion of perceived intellectual authority in the context of faith schooling, but these will be dealt with in a more detailed discussion of the premise in §5.3.4-§5.3.5.

With Hand's fully amended argument in view, we are now in a position to assess the broader position.

§5.3.1 Faith Schools Teach for Belief in Religious Propositions

Given the definition of 'faith school' I offered as a result of my analysis in Chapter I, it will come as no surprise that I am sympathetic to Hand's description of faith schools as institutions which teach for belief in religious propositions. True, my own definition is somewhat expanded to include the teaching of non-propositional content,[263] but the reasons for that need not trouble us just yet. Because my own definition also relates (if only in part) to the aim of teaching for belief in religious propositions, it should be clear that a successful argument against faith schools in Hand's sense will be enough to demonstrate why at least some of the schools covered by my own definition are open to the charge of indoctrination. For this reason, I will not labour too long over Hand's rendering of the definition. Nevertheless – and on the grounds that it will help to inform a later discussion about whether it is possible to teach certain subjects (science, for example) in a directive manner without indoctrination — a point raised as one of a number of "friendly amendments" offered by Harvey Siegel (2004) is worthy of additional consideration.

According to Siegel, Hand's definition of faith school in the first premise could be improved if he were to replace it with the following:

1. Faith schools teach for faith *in the strong sense*, i.e. belief held independently of evidence, in religious propositions. (Siegel, 2004, p.82 my italics).

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[263] Values and practices.

Siegel's suggestion is motivated by the idea that "fans of faith" are generally (although not always) keen to distinguish their religious beliefs from those grounded in reason. They, "draw a sharp distinction between faith, on the one hand, and reason and evidence on the other; in advocating the former, they reject the latter, or at least deem it to be irrelevant to faith-based belief" (Siegel, 2004, p.77). He cites Luther and Kierkegaard as examples of faithful individuals for whom faith *requires* this kind of irrational (non-rational) belief (Siegel, 2004, p.77).

While Siegel certainly identifies a legitimate interpretation of faith found the theological literature,[264] it is only illustrative of a narrow and, as such, unrepresentative form of religious believing. Hand is also unpersuaded by the argument he should adjust his position in the way Siegel suggests maintaining that Siegel's amendment fails in two ways. First, it is false. Very few advocates for faith schooling[265] would be inclined to defend the fideist picture painted by Siegel:

> The great majority of teachers in faith schools intend not that children should come to hold faith *blindly,* but that they should come to faith firmly grounded in relevant evidence and argument. (Hand, 2004a, p.348)

The dispute between those who defend faith schools and those who accuse them of indoctrination generally revolves around what is to *count* as rational evidence not whether rational evidence is of any importance to belief. Faith educators want to "go beyond" the evidence (or widen the scope of what is to be regarded as evidence) rather than encourage

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[264] The notion of faith based on virtuous irrationality is clearly manifest in Tertullian's oft-repeated proclamation, "Credo, quia absurdum est" (I believe *because* it is absurd) and is also evident in the work of William James (1904) and, on some interpretations, Pascal (1958).

[265] At least those who defend the existence of such institutions in liberal democracies.

their pupils to believe *independently* of it.[266] Indeed, this is one of the reasons why

indoctrination is so difficult to identify. In cases where schools explicitly state their

ultimate goal is for pupils to hold non-rational beliefs or where they lionise faith in the

face of contradictory evidence, it is straightforwardly possible to demonstrate why the

successful achievement of this goal constitutes indoctrination. It is the instances where

faith educators attempt to ground religious beliefs in reason and justify the associated

educational practices necessary to transmit those beliefs in a form of rationality that are

both the most challenging and (arguably) philosophically interesting. This motivates

Hand's second criticism of Siegel's amendment; namely that it "misses the point" of his

central objection to faith schools. Any school which intentionally adopted the aim of

teaching for religious (or any other) belief "held *independently* of evidence" would be

guilty of indoctrination,[267] but Hand's claim is more ambitious. He wishes to demonstrate

that "*all* faith schools, not only those operating on fideist assumptions, are, when

successful, indoctrinatory." (Hand, 2004a, p.349)

Hand is correct to resist Siegel's attempt to cast religious belief as intrinsically non-

rational. The indoctrination objection to faith schools should not be conceived of as an

attack on religious belief or the fundamental rationality of individual religious believers

but as a criticism of the teaching practices necessary to *guarantee the successful*

transmission of those beliefs from teacher to pupil. Siegel's assertion that faith schools

teach for religious belief "in the strong sense" is partially motivated by the worry that

Hand's account "allows too much to count as faith," he goes on:

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[266] See Lloyd (2007); Thiessen (1993; 2001; 2007); Cooling et al. (2016); Alexander (2015).
[267] Or, more accurately, of attempting to indoctrinate.

> Suppose I believe that there is no political unrest in Iraq, Cuba or China… that a cure for Alzheimer's disease is at hand, or that Manchester United will win the Premier League next year despite the loss of David Beckham. It is uncontroversial, I trust, that each of these beliefs either goes beyond the reasonable evidence, or is based on evidence with which others may reasonably disagree. But none of them seem obviously to count as instances of faith. (Siegel, 2004, p.76)

For Siegel, the aforementioned beliefs are sufficiently distinct from faith beliefs for us to question the accuracy of Hand's account of faith. However, Hand does not need to fully differentiate between the various types of belief which "go beyond the evidence" for his argument to hit home. Of course, none of the beliefs that Siegel describes are likely to be found on a faith school curriculum, and there is certainly more to the notion of *religious* faith than "beliefs which go beyond the evidence available, or are based on a reading of the evidence with which others may reasonably disagree" (Hand, 2003, p.93). But Siegel's point misses the mark precisely because Hand would be entirely happy to accept that, to the extent the claims one makes "go beyond" the available evidence, one has no business teaching for their acceptance in schools. Furthermore, insofar as the beliefs that a football team will do well or the cure for a debilitating disease will be found involve a kind of un(der)substantiated hope or trust on the part of the believer — trust which is not warranted given the available evidence[268] — it does not strike me as a particularly counter-intuitive to call them instances of faith in a broad sense.

That said, there is at least one reason to better accommodate Siegel's observation that some beliefs captured by Hand's account are not suitable candidates for faith. This is particularly the case for beliefs which "go beyond the evidence" but have arisen out of

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[268] Arsenal won the Premier League in 2004 and a cure for Alzheimer's has yet to be found.

various "cognitive or psychological defects" on the part of the believer. Indeed, it is prudent to address this concern not only to fully demonstrate why Siegel's thought that faith schools teach for religious belief in the "strong sense" is misguided but also because a slightly enhanced account of faith may be able to provide us with a reason[269] to avoid the direct transmission of faith beliefs even when they are (or appear to be) partially rationally grounded. To do this, it is necessary to consider a rather different conception of the term.

Lara Buchak proposes a "minimal" account of faith which can address Siegel's worry that Hand's account is too broad, but does not require that believers must unthinkingly disregard all forms of evidence to be deemed faithful.[270] Buchak provides an account of the nature of faith designed to cover a range of paradigm cases of the phenomenon (including religious faith), and she assumes that "religious faith is a special case of a general, unified attitude that encompasses "secular" cases of faith… such as faith in a friend" (Buchak, 2014, p.52).[271]

According to Buchak's account of *propositional faith,*[272] a proposition must meet three criteria in order to be a *candidate* for faith:[273]

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[269] In addition to the claim the practice is indoctrinatory.

[270] Although Buchak is primarily concerned with demonstrating that faith is *compatible* with rationality (that a faithful person may be rational, not that she is necessarily rational), she is happy to grant one may have faith in propositions for which one has little to no supporting evidence: "Statements in which the actor has faith despite no or contrary evidence do seem correctly described as cases of faith, even though they are not cases in which we are inclined to think that the actor is *wise* to have faith; rather, we think his faith is misplaced." (Buchak, 2012, p. 228).

[271] Note that she views religious faith as a "thicker" sense of the term, but does not appeal to the fideist account of faith covered by Siegel's "strong sense".

[272] Faith pertaining to propositions as opposed to *interpersonal faith*, "faith in I, where I is some individual" (Buchak, 2014, p.52)

[273] This is because "while all propositions are potentially the objects of credence and of belief, not all propositions are even candidates for faith" (Buchak, 2014, p.52)

1) The interest criterion: "For a proposition to be a potential object of faith, the individual must care whether or not the proposition is true. Faith that X is incompatible with indifference about whether X."

2) The positive attitude criterion: "The individual must have a positive attitude towards the truth of the proposition… while I can be said to have or lack faith that you will quit smoking, I can't be said to have or lack faith that you will continue smoking."[274][275]

3) The insufficiency of evidence criterion: The individual "must not take her evidence on its own to support her being certain that X: her evidence must leave open the possibility that not-X. For example, while it is felicitous to say, before you know the results of a friend's exam, that you have faith that your friend passed the exam, it is infelicitous to say this once she shows you her passing grade." (Buchak, 2014, p.53)

Buchak's criteria suggest the examples Siegel provides are, at the very least, *candidates* for faith. Two of the three cases (the prediction about Manchester United's performance in the Premier League and the claim a cure for Alzheimer's is imminent) appear to meet all

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[274] Of course, this is dependent on my overall attitude to smoking; were I to think that smoking is an objectively valuable pastime, presumably it is entirely possible for me to have faith that you will continue to smoke.

[275] Here one might object that, to draw on Siegel's football example, if the fan of a rival football team came to the fatalistic conclusion that Manchester United were destined to dominate the Premier League, we might think this belief was sufficiently faith-like to count as an instance of faith in the absence of a positive attitude. Despite an intuitive feeling that this would not be an example of faith, I must confess that the view is based on nothing more than that case of the fatalistic football fan seems to defy ordinary use. If I tell you to "have faith" I am telling you to trust in me, to hope. This seems necessarily positive. Nevertheless, since it is the third condition which is pivotal to the later argument, the possibility that this particular conclusion may be questioned does not trouble me too much.

three criteria. And, while the ability of a belief in propositions about political unrest in various parts of the world to fully satisfy the conditions will depend on the believer's attitude to the situations under discussion, it is possible to think of occasions upon which they might also meet them.[276] However, he introduction of the *interest* and *positive attitude* criteria we should not call every unfounded belief an instance of faith. For example, returning to the topic of delusion, an individual suffering from Capgras Syndrome — where a person comes to believe that a loved one has been replaced by an imposter — holds a belief which (in Hand's sense) transcends the evidence and may, therefore, be regarded as faith. Yet, on Buchak's conception, when a patient is distressed by the idea that a replacement has occurred, the delusional belief could not satisfy the positive attitude criterion and, therefore, could not be described as an instance of faith.[277] Or, to choose a rather more mundane example, if I (perhaps mistakenly) believe that the ball on my lawn belongs to my daughter even though I do not recall buying it and have never seen her playing with it, my indifference to the question of whether it actually belongs to her means the belief cannot properly be considered a candidate for faith.

At this point, Siegel might respond that although Buchak's account narrows the set of propositions which could legitimately be classed as faith, it still casts the net too wide. After all, according to Buchak's criteria, if a delusional individual feels positive about her beliefs[278] and is invested in the truth of her delusion, it is possible to maintain she has faith

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[276] Suppose I am an Iraqi national living abroad and hope to return home once peace has returned to my country. In such a case, the proposition 'there is peace in Iraq' is a plausible candidate for faith (even if my faith in it is misplaced).

[277] Although it would satisfy the interest criterion.

[278] Since the Capgras delusion is commonly thought to be caused by the absence of positive feelings in the presence of a loved one (See Young, 2013), it is unlikely that it would be experienced positively. But grandiose delusions, which are predicated on "beliefs about having inflated worth, power, knowledge or a special identity" (APA, 2000) are quite likely to involve some "positive affect" (Knowles, McCarthy-Jones & Rowse, 2011; Appelbaum, Robbins & Roth, 1999).

in the delusional belief. If so, don't the parameters of the concept require adjustment? As we will see, there is good reason to think that even a 'positive' delusion will fail to meet Buchak's final criterion (what I call the *insufficiency of evidence criterion*). In order to establish why and to demonstrate the relevance of this discussion to the topic of faith schools, it is necessary to consider two further aspects of Buchak's account.

First, although Buchak's third criterion is strikingly similar to Hand's assertion that faith involves "going beyond the evidence,"[279] it also involves an additional characteristic pertaining to the *perception* of the individual holding the belief; the individual "must not take her evidence *on its own* to support her being certain that X" (Buchak, 2014, p.53). On this account, an individual who takes herself to have *conclusive* evidence for her beliefs (who has faith in Siegel's "strong sense") does not have a belief-style which can legitimately be called faith. Rather, to the extent she *thinks* her beliefs are borne out by the evidence, she takes herself to have something approximating knowledge.[280] This is so even if she is wrong about the evidential support her beliefs enjoy (to the extent her knowledge claim is mistaken). [281]Since, given a certain sort of fixity is part of what it is for a belief to be delusional, a person experiencing a 'positive' delusion will generally be convinced the content of her belief is true and will, therefore, be precluded from hedging her belief in the manner necessary to meet Buchak's third criterion of faith; she is unlikely to think her

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[279] Indeed, this is a phrase which Buchak regularly uses herself (see Buchak, 2012).

[280] Even if her belief is only partially justified, if her degree of belief is apportioned to the evidence, it does not constitute faith.

[281] In the educational context, whilst we might think that teachers should, objectively speaking, forego the transmission of unsubstantiated propositions, it seems clear that the task of persuading them to refrain from so doing will be more difficult in cases of faith in the "strong sense" than the "rational faith" Buchak espouses. When a teacher explicitly recognises the beliefs she teaches are not (fully) grounded in evidence, she is more likely to be willing to acknowledge the distance between what she *takes to be true* and what she *knows*. As well as to understand this gap necessitates caution in the discussion of certain beliefs with children. When teachers take themselves to know the truth, it will be difficult to convince them that their purported 'knowledge' is not the proper object of directive teaching (that is, teaching for belief in the proposition rather than merely teaching about it).

evidence leaves room for the possibility her belief is false.[282] This means we have a conception of faith which, in the vast majority of cases, excludes delusional belief (but not all of the examples raised by Siegel).

But, although we have considered the way in which Buchak's criteria narrow the set of propositions which can be deemed suitable candidates for faith, we have not yet dealt with the broader issue of what separates propositions which are *candidates* for faith from *faith itself*. In Buchak's view, faith necessarily involves risk— what we might call a "doxastic venture" (Bishop, 2016). As Buchak puts it: "faith involves a willingness to commit to acting on the proposition one has faith in without looking for further evidence for or against that proposition" (Buchak, 2014, p.54). The upshot of this position is not that the faithful individual is committed to act in spite of or (to use Siegel's formulation) independently of evidence, but she must make a conscious choice not to seek out *additional* evidence before acting on the basis of those beliefs.

Buchak's account of faith demonstrates that, while it is both possible and desirable to restrict the parameters of the concept so it excludes propositions which "go beyond the evidence" but about which we feel indifferent or negative, faith needn't involve beliefs which are held *independently* of the evidence or view irrationality as a virtue (as Siegel suggests it must). Instead, faith might be said to involve a calculated gamble to act on the

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[282] Of course, the idea of a delusional individual who is simultaneously open to further persuasion is not conceptually or even empirically impossible. As Bortolotti points out, there is clinical evidence to suggest that "cognitive behavioural therapy is efficacious in reducing the rigidity of delusional states" (See Coltheart (2005) or Kingdon *et al*. (2008)) and, even though CBT has not been found to enable delusional patients to abandon their delusions completely, "cognitive probing does contribute to the subject adopting a more critical attitude towards the content of the delusion." (Bortolotti, 2010, p.88) If such therapy was able to open up a gap between the hope that the delusion was true (demonstrative of the satisfaction of the positive attitude and interest criteria) and doubt (demonstrative of the satisfaction of the insufficiency of evidence criterion), we appear to have a case of delusion acting as a candidate for faith. Nevertheless, since this issue is somewhat tangential to the question of faith in schools, I shall pursue it no further.

(albeit limited) evidence I already deem myself to have. I can do this in full awareness of the possibility that further evidence may not support my action and that, consequently, my belief may turn out to be false. However, this conception suggests another way of thinking about the indoctrination objection to confessional religious education. For, if faith involves embarking on a doxastic venture, then the direct transmission of faith appears to co-opt those exposed to it into a risky activity. Since we would commonly hold that people ought to, where possible, give their informed consent to participate in risky activities, this could well give us good reason to avoid the direct transmission of faith beliefs.[283]

Of course, not all those who consider themselves to be teaching for religious belief will recognise their faith in Buchak's account. For this reason, it is wise to avoid using it to exclude certain schools from our discussion of Hand's indoctrination argument. Some faith schools *will* take themselves to be going beyond reason and evidence in the "strong sense" suggested by Siegel,[284] some will maintain that they are partially informed by evidence but require their students to take a 'leap of faith' enabling them to have beliefs which transcend what is evident in the natural (empirical) world, yet others will argue their faith is fundamentally supported by a *special kind* of evidence; one which is accessible only to those with certain kinds of religious faculty.[285] As we shall see, it will be necessary to attribute different degrees of legitimacy to each of these different forms of faith school, but to the extent that pupils are encouraged to believe in religious propositions which transcend the evidence (in some way), they constitute a legitimate target for Hand's indoctrination argument.

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[283] The issue of informed consent as it pertains to comprehensive enrolment will be discussed more fully in Chapter VI.

[284] Buchak notes that the fideist approach to faith puts faith "before the evidence, not beyond it" (Buchak, 2012, p.232).

[285] This list is unlikely to be exhaustive.

§5.3.2 No Religious Proposition is Known to be True

This brings us to Hand's second premise, "no religious proposition is *known* to be true". Recall that this is not the same as saying no religious proposition *is* true or that no religious proposition could *ever* be known to be true. For Hand, the truth of this premise is a matter of contingent fact. That is to say, we can think of circumstances under which decisive evidence for a particular set of religious propositions has come to light and, as such, we have come to know them to be true.[286] [287] Nevertheless, as it stands, there are reasonable people who have been presented with the available evidence for religious claims and who fully understand religious arguments, yet remain unconvinced. Indeed, even those proponents of faith who agree that God exists, are sufficiently divided[288] on the accuracy of other religious propositions so as to make it fairly uncontroversial to claim that, whatever the truth of the matter, the evidence in favour of religious propositions is ambiguous; it can be interpreted in a range of ways. As Hand says, "Some people judge that it points in one direction, others in another. Many feel obliged to withhold judgement until such time as more evidence comes to light." (Hand, 2003, p.93) Another way to put the claim that the evidence for religious propositions is ambiguous is to maintain it is 'controversial'.[289]

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[286] This stands in contrast to those who argue that faith propositions are, in principle, unverifiable.

[287] For example, "a world… in which Jesus Christ has come again in glory to judge the living and the dead" (Hand, 2003, p.93)

[288] Both between and within religious groups.

[289] This term needs to be unpacked with a degree of caution however. In a paper which tackles the question of what should be taught as controversial, Hand (2008) notes that the mere fact of disagreement about an issue should not, in and of itself, tempt us to say the issue is controversial:

> Many actual disputes in society at large are about questions to which there are entirely satisfactory and well-established answers, and which no educator would be much inclined to teach as controversial. (Hand, 2008, p. 214)

Furthermore, there are issues which may be unsettled — in the sense that the evidence in their favour is inconclusive — but which are not actually disputed in any great measure in society. Such issues should still be regarded as controversial. For example, public debate regarding whether school-leavers should attend

There are two strategies open to the defender of faith schools wishing to avoid the force of Hand's second premise. The first involves demonstrating that there *is*, in actual fact, "rationally decisive evidence" to prove one or more religious propositions. This would require the defender of religious knowledge to show, beyond reasonable doubt, that the propositions of a particular faith are (or ought to be) compelling to all rational individuals. The second involves loosely acknowledging Hand's contention about the availability of standard (empirical) evidence for the truth of religious propositions, but only on a technical level. Theorists who employ the second type of strategy won't directly contradict Hand's overall observations. Instead, they will say the view is "misleading or unhelpful" (Hand, 2003, p.93). This position usually proceeds in one of two distinct ways. Either through the contention that, rather than being open to verification in the event that suitable evidence emerges, religious beliefs are, *in principle*, unverifiable. Or, via the argument that, "although many religious utterances are propositional in *form*, they do not *function* as propositions in religious discourse, so assessments of their truth value are irrelevant." (Hand, 2003, p.93)

Both of the suggested strategies challenge how faith and religious belief are commonly conceived (even by religious believers themselves). In the case of the first strategy, Hand acknowledges that throughout history there have been numerous attempts to decisively demonstrate the truth of religious propositions; particularly the existence of God.[290] However, while these arguments may be persuasive or exhibit some degree of "rational

university is commonly prefaced on the view that the answer can be determined by establishing the likelihood students will get a well-paid job at the end of their studies. Although those engaged in such discussions may be tempted to call the Higher Education debate 'controversial' (in the everyday sense of the word), the apparent consensus pertaining to underlying assumptions hides a myriad of less actively disputed (but no more settled) controversies.
[290] Here Hand refers to St Thomas Aquinas and his five 'proofs' of the existence of God. (Hand, 2003, p.93).

force" (Hand, 2003, p.93), Hand argues that (as it currently stands) none of these 'proofs' are able to withstand "rational scrutiny" —fully rational individuals who are exposed to the arguments and the available evidence in their favour, and who fully comprehend the claims being made are still able to draw differing conclusions on the truth of those arguments. And they are able to resist the conclusions of these arguments without it being possible to (legitimately) accuse them of irrationality.

However, Douglas Groothuis (2004) attempts to resist the claim that disagreement between "rational, well-informed people" (Hand, 2004a, p.349) gives Hand sufficient reason to claim that no religious proposition is known to be true. Groothuis makes two arguments against Hand's second premise. The first centres on the standards he sets for a proposition to be classed as knowledge. Groothuis claims that these are too high; that there needn't be agreement amongst reasonable people for knowledge to obtain:

> Consider Galileo before his tribunal. Did he *know* that heliocentrism was true and geocentrism was false? We now know that heliocentrism is true, so we know that he held a true belief. But was he justified? He was justified if his reasons for heliocentrism held up logically and better explained the phenomena than geocentrism. We now also know this to be true, but was the evidence taken to be 'decisive' by all 'reasonable people' at that time? No. However mistaken the church officials may have been, the case for heliocentrism was not decisively settled at that point in history; it was still a matter of significant intellectual debate. Nevertheless, a good case can be made that Galileo knew that heliocentrism was true because of his unique access to the appropriate evidence and arguments pertinent to the issue. (Groothuis, 2004, p.182)

Presumably, Hand would agree that, once Galileo had established his theory with sufficient evidence, he *knew* that heliocentrism was true and that this knowledge was

present even in the absence of any agreement in the wider society. Nevertheless, Groothuis appears to be equating *general* disagreement with disagreement among (fully) rational individuals. Many of Galileo's peers failed to be persuaded by the evidence he had obtained for heliocentrism not because it was ambiguous or open to multiple interpretations, but because they refused to engage with it at all.[291] In a letter to Kepler in 1610, Galileo noted that his most vehement opponents[292] refused to look through a telescope in order to assess the evidence for themselves (Von Gebler, 1879, p.26).

In the Galileo case, the dispute over heliocentrism meets what is sometimes called the *behavioural criterion* of controversy— disagreement occurred in practice, but the dispute was not warranted by the available evidence.[293] The existence of such disagreement does not, in itself, demonstrate the evidence Galileo gathered was not rationally decisive.

Presumably, however, there will have been a transitional period during which Galileo possessed some supporting evidence for his theory, but it fell short of the evidential standard necessary for rational decisiveness.[294] In the latter case, Galileo still had a true belief, and the belief was (albeit partially) justified at the time it was held. With the benefit of hindsight, isn't it possible that we would be inclined to say that, even during the transitional period, Galileo *knew* that heliocentrism was true? Perhaps *this* is the sort of argument Groothuis is making. Maybe there are religious groups who have evidence (short of rationally decisive evidence) for propositions which are, in fact, true and which hindsight will enable us to call knowledge.

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[291] In this respect, they were behaving irrationally.
[292] These opponents were primarily, although not exclusively, theologians and philosophers.
[293] See footnote 289 as well as Dearden (1984) or Hand (2008).
[294] That is, evidence which is compelling to all suitably rational agents.

This objection to Hand's position can be resisted. We can agree that the standard of justification Hand proposes is high, but nevertheless maintain we require a higher degree of credence in propositions we wish to *teach* as true than the standard we might apply to everyday believing. This is an intuitively plausible position; there are numerous spheres of human activity which set higher evidentiary standards than those we are used to applying in our day-to-day social interactions. For example, a lawyer must prove her case against a defendant beyond reasonable doubt and a journalist must have more than a hunch that the subject of a story has done wrong before he can publish an exposé. Second, although the evidence available in what I call the 'transitional period' may have been *supportive* of Galileo's position, until he had gathered enough to tip the balance decisively in its favour, it would have been entirely legitimate to refuse to call it knowledge or to teach it (directively) as established fact. As Hand puts it, "I believe all sorts of things for which the evidence is plausible but not decisive, and no doubt many of these are true; but it would be quite wrong to say that I *know* them to be true." (Hand, 2004a, p.350) We can see the difference between plausibility and decisiveness played out in Susan Haack's distinction between "frontier science" and "textbook science":

> Most scientific claims and theories start out as informed but highly speculative conjectures; some seem for a while to be close to certain, and then turn out to have been wrong after all; a few seem for a while to be out of the running, and then turn out to have been right after all. Many, eventually, are seen to have been right in part, but also wrong in part…. The processes by which a scientific community collects, sifts, and weighs evidence are fallible and imperfect, so the ideal [that our degree of credence correlates with the degree of warrant for a claim] is by no means always achieved; but they are good enough that it is a reasonable bet that much of the science in textbooks is right, while only a

> fraction of today's frontier science will survive, and most will eventually turn out to have been mistaken. (Haack, 2007, p74)

The scientist cannot claim to *know* her hypothesis is true until such time as the evidence she has gathered proves her case decisively. This suggests that the standards of justification we set for textbook science ought to be more robust than those which we apply to frontier scientific discovery.

It is possible, however, that Groothuis is making a different assertion from the one outlined above. Rather than claiming that the vindication of a hypothesis is demonstrative of knowledge prior to that vindication, he may be claiming it is possible for a religious group to have access to "unique" evidence; that is, evidence which confirms (rather than merely supports) a group's religious beliefs and is (perhaps necessarily) unavailable to other rational agents. This possibility would mean that the religious group in question would have knowledge even when it failed to be rationally decisive.

We should, I think, be dismissive of this sort of claim. In a dissection of Groothuis's example of the "disbelieved birdwatcher" — in which an ornithologist spots a bird considered by the relevant scientific authorities to be extinct (Groothuis, 2004, p.182) — Hand argues that the dispute over the rare bird's existence arises not because the ornithologist has *unique* evidence, but because "one party has access to rationally decisive evidence that the other does not" (Hand, 2004a, p.351). Although some might claim that religious knowledge could arise in a similar way —for instance, when a religious believer is unable to reproduce the evidence proving her claim to a "special epiphany" —Hand notes that the cases are fundamentally disanalogous. In spite of the fact the birdwatcher was unaccompanied when she made the sighting, "there are established observational

criteria for determining that a species is not extinct, and the bird-watcher is entitled to describe her belief as knowledge because those observational criteria have been satisfied" (Hand, 2004a, p.351). This case departs from the "special epiphany" case because *private* religious experiences could never satisfy any such observational criteria (indeed, this is what makes them 'special' in the first place). [295] This is the case even if, as Hand acknowledges, there may be established observational criteria for determining whether God exists: "the only propositions *decisively* verified by private experiences are propositions about one's own states of mind" (Hand, 2004a, p.352). In the absence of such decisive verification, there can be no religious knowledge (although individual religious believers might be considered to have a degree of justification for their beliefs).[296]

Groothuis's second attempt to rescue the idea that religious propositions may be known to be true is epistemological in nature: how does Hand *know* that no religious proposition is known to be true? Isn't it possible that a particular individual or group has, like the disbelieved bird-watcher, been exposed to rationally decisive evidence for the truth of a set of religious propositions, but has been unable to reproduce or expose others to that evidence, or has simply chosen not to do so?[297] One response is to point out that Hand doesn't require certainty in the premise for his argument to hold. Hand does not maintain that religious propositions are *necessarily* unverifiable— that the emergence of evidence demonstrating the truth of such propositions is an impossibility. Therefore, if the truth of a set of religious propositions could be decisively demonstrated, he would be entirely

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[295] This argument recalls the argument Siegel provides in favour of his transcendentalist conception of rationality. Private (or contextual) forms of knowledge leave us impotent with respect to the question of what constitutes reasoning well (see §3.5).
[296] As in Buchak's account.
[297] Or not to do so in a manner that would be compelling to those outside of the faith community.

prepared to abandon the argument against faith schools (for those religions whose propositions had been conclusively verified).

Perhaps it is legitimate to wonder whether Hand's lack of certainty about the *possibility* of rationally decisive evidence for the truth of religious propositions ought to motivate more circumspect wording in the second premise, but given the high degree of evidence to support the underlying claim (that fully rational, well-informed people exposed to conflicting religious accounts may reasonably draw different conclusions), it seems plausible to argue that the burden of proof —to establish that the evidence points decisively in just one direction — lies with the proponent of any purportedly true faith. Hand need not *know* that no religious proposition is known to be true, he needs merely to be confident that no such religious proposition has emerged in a well-established, publicly accessible manner. The onus to defeat this claim is on the one who opposes it.

So, the attempt to demonstrate there is rationally decisive evidence to support any one set of religious propositions fails and, in so doing, also fails to defeat the second premise of Hand's philosophical objection to faith schools. How does the second strategy – which involves a claim that the premise relies on a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of religious belief – fare? Recall that the first way in which the strategy could be employed was through the claim that religious principles are, by their very nature, unverifiable. Hand dismisses this view for two reasons. First, he argues, it is difficult to make sense of the position:

> If one cannot distinguish between the circumstances under which an assertion would be true and the circumstances under which it would be false, it is not clear that anything has been asserted. *Something* must count as evidence for or against a proposition, and there

must be a point at which the evidence accumulating on one side or the other becomes rationally decisive. (Hand, 2003, p.94)

Second, if it is possible to make the claim intelligible, Hand argues that it will be incumbent upon the proponent of the position to demonstrate why propositions which are, by their very nature, unsusceptible to ascriptions of truth or falsity – and, therefore, cannot be candidates for knowledge either —ought to be taught in schools:

> The fact, if it is a fact, that religious beliefs are not even candidates for the status of knowledge is all the more reason for not passing them on in schools. (Hand, 2003, p.94)

For the opponent of Hand's position, the first objection needn't be a knock-down criticism. The claim that religious belief is unverifiable does not necessarily amount to the assertion one cannot tell the difference between the circumstances that must obtain for a religious proposition to be true and those must obtain for that same proposition to be false. It may be more accurately described as the claim that religious believing isn't subject to evidence at all. Rather, religious beliefs (particularly belief in the existence of God) could be taken to be some form of basic, first-order principle upon which other forms of believing are built; they may be rational, but not verifiable through the weighing of evidence. There will not, contrary to Hand's claim, be "a point at which the evidence accumulating on one side or the other becomes rationally decisive" (Hand, 2003, p.94). This is the sort of view advocated by reformed epistemologists such as Alvin Plantinga.

Following John Calvin, Plantinga argues that religious beliefs may be grounded without evidence or argument in much the same way that perceptual beliefs or beliefs in other minds are so grounded:

Belief in the existence of God is in the same boat as belief in other minds, the past, and perceptual objects; in each case God has so constructed us that in the right circumstances we form the belief in question. But then the belief that there is such a person as God is as much among the deliverances of reason as other beliefs. (Plantinga 1983, p.90)

For Plantinga, religious experiences (and the beliefs they engender) can be thought of as "properly basic" because they arise out of a universal[298] *sensus divinitatis*.[299] [300] These basic beliefs are not inferential:

[They are] merely occasioned by the circumstance (for example, the circumstance of beholding some majestic mountains or desert sunset) which triggers the working of the *sensus divinitatis*. Those who believe in God simply find themselves with this belief. (Bolos & Scott, 2017, §6.b)

If Plantinga is right, religious beliefs can be warranted[301] in the absence of verifiable evidence (in Hand's sense).

There are a number of reasons to reject Plantinga's position, not least that the analogy between religious beliefs and perceptual beliefs appears somewhat dubious. For example, the former do not appear to have the universality of the latter; that is, "while nearly everyone who has experience *x* is led to the belief that he or she is seeing a tree, experience *y* leads some to a particular belief about God but leads many others in different directions." (Grigg, 1983, p.126). A thorough treatment of Plantinga's detailed and sophisticated

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[298] A universal capacity rather than one which is universally triggered.

[299] "Sense of Divinity".

[300] According to Calvin, when this sense is not present or is stymied (as in the case of the agnostic or the atheist) this is because the "tendency has been in part overlaid or suppressed by sin. Were it not for the existence of sin in the world, human beings would believe in God to the same degree and with the same natural spontaneity that we believe in the existence of other persons, an external world, or the past." (Plantinga, 1983, p.66)

[301] The term Plantinga uses to describe the feature of true beliefs which makes them knowledge.

attempts to argue for the claim that, if true, Christian belief is warranted, would require an entire thesis, but perhaps the most persuasive group of objections are what have become known as the "Great Pumpkin" objections (GPO's).[302] These objections are based on the concern that, given Plantinga holds that the question of which beliefs are properly basic is a matter for individual (religious) communities[303]— that each group must determine its own bedrock— he and his fellow reformed epistemologists must also allow that the same applies to "any bizarre aberration we can think of" (DeRose, 1999, p. 1). As Linda Zagzebski puts it, Plantinga's account does not allow "a rational observer outside the community of believers to distinguish between Plantinga's model and the beliefs of any group[304] no matter how irrational and bizarre" (Zagzebski, 2002, p.122).

While Plantinga's position involves a degree of epistemological relativism, he does not accept that his account is susceptible to the GPO; that it must allow that any community generated candidate for a properly basic belief must be allowed to stand.[305] This is because the strategy he employs is designed to apply primarily to Christianity, a belief system which is itself built on the premise of "a personal God who created us with —at least in part—the intention that we can know and love him" (Scott, 2014, p. 299). *If true*, Christian beliefs[306] are warranted in all cases where the *sensus divinitatis* is activated (i.e. when we perceive God) because this is part of what it means to function properly (even if there is no

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[302] This name originates from Plantinga's own example in which Linus (a character from the Peanuts comic strip by Charles Schulz) adopts the bizarre belief that the "Great Pumpkin returns every Halloween" (Plantinga, 1983, p.74) to bestow gifts upon the children of the world.

[303] He advocates what might be interpreted as a strong contextualist position.

[304] Zagzebski lists "sun-worshippers, cult followers [and] devotees of the Greek gods" (Zagzebski, 2002, p.122) whereas DeRose (1999), following Plantinga himself, discusses "voodoo epistemologies".

[305] Indeed, since he seeks to defend the rationality of faith, he is also committed to the view that all beliefs (even those which are properly basic) must be possible candidates for "epistemic appraisal". As Bolos & Scott put it, if one is able to find a "defeater" — a reason which undermines the belief that is considered properly basic— then "it is still perfectly possible for anyone to argue against the basic beliefs of another community, and to show them that one of their beliefs is false or unjustified." (Bolos & Scott, 2017, §7.a)

[306] Presumably alongside the core beliefs of the other Abrahamic faith traditions which are predicated on a similar kind of divine being.

guarantee of that truth). Nevertheless, via what Scott calls "The Return of the Great Pumpkin Objection," it is possible to show that a suitably "enhanced" account of the Great Pumpkin belief— according to which, the Great Pumpkin has "implanted" Linus with an "imperceptible faculty" which enables the two to communicate but has failed to do likewise for anyone else (Scott, 2014, p.302) —is able to mirror Plantinga's strategy for Christianity. This means that, even if Christians happen to have adopted the only true set of religious beliefs, the "outside rational observer" cannot distinguish between the epistemic acceptability of the views of Christians and those of the Great Pumpkinites (Scott, 2014, p. 303) and, thus, that the practice of establishing schools favouring the confessional transmission of either belief system looks distinctly unwise.[307]

Reformed epistemology provides us with one way to make sense of the claim that religious propositions are, narrowly speaking, unverifiable —it is not that we cannot identify whether these beliefs are true or false, we simply can't expect them to respond to evidence in the same way as propositions which aren't "properly basic". However, because Plantinga and other reformed epistemologists take the basic nature of religious beliefs to be indicative of the fact such beliefs can be rational and warranted, they must be interpreted as making a claim to a form of religious knowledge (albeit knowledge which is justified in the absence of evidence for those basic propositions). On this interpretation, it

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[307] It is worth mentioning that Scott proposes a solution to the 'Return of the Great Pumpkin Objection' based on the idea that "stable and enduring communities" (Bolos and Scott, 2017, §7.a) will possess "favouring evidence" (such as the historical persistence of Christian beliefs or the fact they are held by people from a wide variety of demographic groups) that Pumpkinite beliefs lack (Scott, 2014, 306). Of course, the Great Pumpkin story can be further amended to accommodate the idea of a wide-ranging Pumpkinite tradition which would, therefore, be able to lay claim to similar kinds of "favouring evidence". Under such circumstances, Scott seems happy to concede that this would be enough to regard Great Pumpkin beliefs as rationally acceptable even if, as outsiders, we consider them to be false. But while this might satisfy Plantinga's goal of demonstrating that there may be such a thing as rational faith, once again, it does not seem to be enough to support the idea of compelling such belief through confessional religious education.

is possible to determine whether beliefs are true or false — to paraphrase Hand's contention, there is *something* which can count *in favour* of belief in religious propositions, as well as (community generated) standards for assessing the degree to which such beliefs are rational. But, if so, Plantinga's position is merely another attempt to prove a point about which it is reasonable for fully rational people to disagree; indeed, about which different communities may necessarily disagree. It cannot decisively demonstrate that the premise "no religious proposition is *known* to be true" is false.[308]

The final strategy requiring examination arises from the claim that Hand's premise misunderstands the nature of religious beliefs in a different way from the first such strategy. Here religious beliefs are considered unverifiable (or not known to be true) on the basis that, although statements of religious belief or "religious utterances" *appear* propositional in nature, they are not. Instead, it is argued that religious beliefs are non-cognitive; they are not assertions of some purported fact, but are expressions of feeling or denote the believer's subscription to a particular behavioural code (Hand, 2003, p.94). This kind of contention is somewhat evident in Hanan Alexander's use of the distinction between 'belief that' and 'belief in' in his treatment of the separate (but related) issue of McLaughlin's initiation thesis.[309] For Alexander, religious understanding, particularly religious understanding as it is transmitted via a process of religious initiation:

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[308] Moreover, even if it were possible to show that Plantinga's position is correct, it is difficult to understand how one could approach this form of religious believing as an educator. We do not generally teach children to rely on their senses or that other minds exist but these are the kinds of beliefs Plantinga thinks analogous to (Christian) religious beliefs. The immediacy of these basic beliefs (an immediacy that Plantinga wants to claim for religious beliefs) means that the most teachers can do is enable their pupils to hone their existing capacities and put them to use in the right sorts of contexts; to sharpen pupils' appreciation of their religious perceptions. On this theory, it is certainly not clear that traditional confessional religious education would be the correct sort of methodology.

[309] Recall that this is Eamonn Callan's term for Terence McLaughlin's argument that, "the initiation of children into religious practice could secure an understanding of religion unavailable, or at least less readily available, in the absence of initiation, and that the relevant understanding enabled or enhanced in some way autonomous choice regarding religion." (Callan, 2009, p.11)

Is characterised not by the appreciation of an object such as a work of art or some putative theological truth – God's existence or transubstantiation - but by entering into a relation with another subject in an intimate I-Thou moment in which, to use Buber's words, the other fills the firmament. To the believer the presence of God is all too real… experienced in a meeting between subjects which Buber (1970) called 'dialogue'. The result is not any sort of 'objectual' understanding at all, but a form of insight into oneself and others that is achieved by a letting go, at least in part, in order to receive another subject…It is a form of what Scheffler (1983) called personal as opposed to propositional or procedural knowledge that entails a meeting of two subjects, not the confrontation of a subject with an object to be understood… (Alexander, 2009, p.39)

Hand finds this position more intelligible than the claim that religious *propositions* are unverifiable; it is easier to make sense of the view that religious utterances are statements of emotion — or even expressions of "I-Thou relations" — than the assertion they are propositions which cannot be verified at all. However, Hand contends that non-cognitivist theories bear little resemblance to religious belief and practice as it is understood by many (if not most) ordinary people of faith. When, for example, Evangelical Christians assert their belief in the existence of God, claim that those who have been 'saved' will ascend to heaven, or that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary and later resurrected, they are in the business of making actual (not just *prima facie*) truth claims; claims about how the world is (or was). [310] Indeed, the fact that many Evangelicals also believe in Biblical inerrancy (or infallibility) demonstrates that, for them, belief in religious propositions is belief about purported matters of fact.[311]

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[310] Analogies can be drawn with a range of other sects within the major faiths (for example, some forms of Hasidic Judaism or the Salafi movement within Islam).

[311] This is not to say that members of Evangelical groups never experience doubt. For an ethnographic account of the everyday lives of Evangelical Christians, see Strhan (2015).

Although Alexander is correct to point out there is more to faith than cognitive states concerning propositions, the notion of 'belief in' as he frames it — as an interpersonal relation or encounter — is dependent upon a belief *that* the subject who is encountered (God) exists. Alexander himself notes the interconnected nature of the two types of believing when he says, "We believe that many things are true about people in whom we trust… and it makes little sense to be loyal to someone without affirming her existence." (Alexander, 2009, p.31) Plantinga makes a similar point when he argues, "One cannot sensibly believe in God and thank him for the mountains without believing that there *is* such a person to be thanked and that he is in some way responsible for the mountains." (Plantinga, 1983, p.18). For this reason, it is possible to dismiss the view that Hand's premise fails because it misconstrues religious belief as propositional: if it does, there are a huge number of religious believers who do likewise, many of whom (it must be assumed) will want to transmit those beliefs to their children. It is to the question of whether the fact those beliefs are not-known-to-be-true leads to indoctrination that we now turn.

§5.3.3 Teaching for Belief in Not-Known-to-be-True Propositions is, When Successful, Indoctrinatory

Hand's claim that "teaching for belief in not-known-to-be-true propositions is… indoctrinatory" draws further friendly criticism from Siegel. In this context, Siegel's concern is that the requirement to avoid teaching *anything* which is not-*known*-to-be-true is too strong and, as such, allows far too much (entirely justifiable) teaching to be called indoctrinatory. If the evidence of the past is anything to go on, it is possible to have considerable evidence to suggest that some proposition is true when, in actual fact, it is

false.[312] Teachers (and schools) wishing to avoid indoctrination need not go as far as only teaching what is *known* to be true — a task which would prove impossible for even the most skilled of educators. They simply need to ensure that they only teach for belief in propositions which are *justifiably* (in a strong sense) thought to be true on the basis of the reasons and evidence available at the time at which those propositions are taught; that the propositions are supported by reasons or evidence which confers "positive justificatory status" upon them. Moreover, "the student[s should] be encouraged to believe [those propositions] on the basis of those reasons/ that evidence" (Siegel, 2004, p.79).

On this occasion, Hand is willing to accept Siegel's suggestion and revise the premise. He now maintains that "no religious proposition is supported by *rationally decisive evidence*" and that "teaching for belief in propositions not supported by rationally decisive evidence is… indoctrinatory…" (Hand, 2004a, p.345).

Since the foregoing arguments against the claim that there are religious propositions which are known to be true apply equally to the new formulation,[313] we need not ask separately whether there are religious propositions for which there is rationally decisive evidence; one may have *reasons* to hold a religious belief, and they may be *persuasive*, but there are no such reasons which are rationally decisive or binding upon all rational agents. Nevertheless, the move to include not-known-to-be-true propositions for which there is (or

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[312] This point mirrors a similar claim made by Callan and Arena (2009) (see §3.3). Here Siegel offers the following example:

> Our 1850 physics teacher taught her students a proposition concerning the relations between the Newtonian concepts (and the entities/ quantities referred to by them) of force, mass and acceleration. By our lights, i.e. the perspective of contemporary physics, that proposition is (and was in 1850) false. (Siegel, 2004, p.79)

[313] Indeed, owing to the fact that the term 'rationally decisive' appears to have a kind of public accessibility criterion built into it, it could be argued that it will more successfully defeat positions such as Plantinga's because, even when faith exhibits a degree of rationality, the justification engendered is not decisive for all agents at all times.

appears to be) rationally decisive evidence within the set of propositions which can be taught legitimately without indoctrination partially addresses a different, but prevalent, criticism of Hand's position and others like it. This argument turns on the idea that, although we cannot be certain about the truth of religious propositions, it is possible to question the extent to which the propositions we teach as true elsewhere in the curriculum can be said to exhibit the necessary decisiveness. In other words, that the propositional content of other curricular subjects – science represents a paradigm case – is just as likely to suffer from a lack of rationally decisive evidence as religion. If we are entitled to teach for belief in those subjects then, it is argued, it should be possible to teach religion directively too.

Given that the purpose of this section is to establish the soundness of Hand's third premise, I will set aside the question of whether there is (or should be) a disparity in the treatment of religious propositions and those which occupy other areas of the curriculum until I have addressed the former issue. After all, if it can be shown that teaching for belief in propositions for which there is no rationally decisive evidence needn't be indoctrinatory, then there will be no further need to justify the legitimacy of teaching for belief in such propositions whether they occur in religion, science, politics, history or any other subject on the curriculum. Nevertheless, as the overall aim of the chapter is to determine whether faith schools are necessarily indoctrinatory, my initial assessment of the premise will focus on the teaching of religious propositions.

Although Hand notes two fatal objections to his initial formulation of premise 3,[314] once it is amended to take account of the fact that teaching may only be described as

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[314] See discussion in §5.3.

indoctrinatory when it is successful, and to acknowledge that a person can be rationally compelled to believe a proposition on the basis of testimony,[315] he maintains that there are a number of "philosophically powerful" reasons which count in its favour. One such reason arises from the ambiguous evidential status of propositions which lack rationally decisive evidence in their favour. Take the case of a teacher undertaking the task of inculcating religious beliefs via confessional religious education. For her to be successful in her aim to *impart* religious beliefs (as opposed to simply exposing her pupils to them or teaching about the beliefs of others) she will need to "do more than merely present them with the evidence, for the evidence is not decisive." (Hand, 2003, p.95). However, this "going beyond the evidence" will involve illegitimate forms of influence such as "the exercise of psychological power," charm or intimidation (Hand, 2003, p.95). This is because, by definition, the evidence itself is not sufficient to compel the belief. If a pupil comes to believe something on the basis of these other types of influence, she holds her belief separate from the evidence which ought to justify it. Her belief is based on something other than the evidence in its favour. As indoctrination just is teaching which results in a belief being held in this manner, the pupil in question holds an indoctrinated belief (or beliefs).

§5.3.4 Indoctrination and the Perception of Intellectual Authority

Of course, on the grounds that the presentation of rationally decisive evidence is not the only way to rationally compel belief, there is a possible response open to those inclined to defend the transmission of religious propositions; one that would enable those propositions

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[315] Recall that the modified premise reads:

> 3a Teaching for belief in not-known-to-be-true propositions is, when successful, indoctrinatory, except when teachers are perceived to be intellectual authorities on those propositions (Hand, 2003, p.98).

to be taught directively without indoctrination. It seems reasonable to assert that many (if not most) of the things we learn have been imparted to us, not via the presentation of some kind of (rationally decisive) evidence, but via testimony.[316] Perhaps pupils cannot be *directly* presented with rationally decisive evidence for religious belief, but if it was possible to present them with expert testimony on religious matters or, on Hand's account, even if they were to *believe* their teacher was such an expert, then the charge of indoctrination could be avoided — it is entirely rational to believe a proposition on the basis of (perceived) expert testimony (see Hand, 2003, p. 96-97).

There are two reasons to think this move leads to an intellectual dead-end. First, coming to believe something on the basis of testimony is usually deemed rational because testimony is best understood as a form of second-hand evidence; it is inextricably linked to the evidential status of the propositions to which it relates.[317] Given that religious propositions lack rationally decisive evidence in their favour, religious testimony is unable to inherit the warrant necessary to ground religious beliefs. Second, although the exercise of *perceived* intellectual authority may, on occasion, enable a parent or teacher to avoid the charge of indoctrination, the circumstances under which this is the case are strictly limited and action on the part of the perceived authority to maintain the perception in the absence of evidential justification will invalidate the exception to indoctrination it engenders. I will deal with each of these responses in turn.

One way to understand the relationship between (direct) evidence and testimony is by way of an analogy with primary and secondary sources in the study of history. Strictly

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[316] It was just this observation which motivated Hand's second amendment to the original version of the third premise.

[317] Indeed, Siegel maintains the modification Hand makes to the premise in order to accommodate (perceived) expert testimony is unnecessary because testimony is a form of indirect evidence (Siegel, 2004, p. 81).

speaking, historians consider all records produced as a result of direct participation in or observation of historical events to be primary sources and, therefore, forms of first-hand evidence. Secondary sources, which analyse or 'repackage' accounts of the past are distinguished from primary sources according to the degree of remove from the events in question (Scheuler, 2014, p.163).

Although the division between primary and secondary sources is not always clear cut and does not fully match the philosophical division between direct acquaintance with the evidence and second hand acquaintance via testimony (many primary sources of evidence are, in fact, *examples* of testimony[318]), it can help to demonstrate the way in which direct evidence plays a justificatory role in the development of belief through testimony. Whilst not necessarily less reliable than primary sources, secondary sources are often considered more susceptible to inaccuracy, bias and other illegitimate influences.[319] This is because they are not as closely tied to the events in question; their authors did not have direct contact with the evidence. When we give secondary accounts credence, it is generally because the author is able to demonstrate she has paid serious and careful attention to many (often competing) first-hand accounts of an event and has, on the basis of that acquaintance, been able to draw conclusions with a wider range of evidence than direct personal experience might allow (Barton, 2005, p746). This highlights that it is the (perceived) *quality* of the evidence which grounds our confidence in the resulting testimony. Although testimony may derive part of its warrant from the characteristics of

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[318] E.g. journal accounts, letters or newspaper reports written by eyewitnesses.
[319] Of course, first-hand witnesses still have biases, make errors and, in some cases, deceive (see Barton, 2005, p. 746) but this fact does not detract from the force of the broader analaogy.

the testifier,[320] the legitimacy of any beliefs a second-hand account engenders will ultimately rest upon the evidence underpinning the testifier's claims.

As we have seen, the current evidence in favour of religious propositions is ambiguous or inconclusive. This means that, no matter how persuaded she is by the evidence and testimony to which she has been exposed, a teacher who testifies to the truth of a religious proposition cannot be regarded as having had direct acquaintance with the kind of rationally decisive evidence necessary for her to claim (or her pupils to correctly ascribe) expert status on the truth (or indeed falsity) of that proposition. There is no such evidence available.

Since Hand's account allows that the mere *perception* of expertise on the truth of religious propositions is enough to compel (rational) belief, it could be objected that it simply doesn't matter whether a testifier has actually had direct (or indirect) acquaintance with rationally decisive evidence for the truth of those propositions, or even if such evidence is available at all. As long as the religious educator is somehow able to pull off the trick of convincing her pupils that she is a religious expert, she can continue to impart religious beliefs free from the accusation of indoctrination. The problem is, the manipulation that would usually be required to maintain the belief in religious expertise looks suspiciously like the manipulation we are concerned about when we object to indoctrination. Is Hand really committed to saying, in the words of one critic, that "someone could defend herself against the charge of indoctrination by insisting: 'I can't have indoctrinated him; he thought I knew what I was talking about.'"? (Gardner, 2004, pp. 124-125)

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[320] As well as, in some instances, the characteristics of the person to whom she is testifying and/or the relationship between them.

To address this criticism, it is necessary to look more closely at the way in which the exercise of perceived intellectual authority functions in Hand's account of faith schools and indoctrination more broadly. In a paper which defends the possibility[321] of religious upbringing,[322] Hand describes the perception of intellectual authority as follows:

> When a person perceived by others to be an intellectual authority asserts that a proposition is true, she places them under a rational obligation to accept her assertion. She *imparts a belief* to her listeners and she does so by *appealing to their reason*. But she does not *prove* her assertion. The form of leverage she uses is not the evidence itself, but her claim to have seen the evidence. She *testifies* to the evidence rather than *producing* it. Beliefs imparted in this way are rationally held, in the sense they are held on the basis of evidence and are open to revision and correction, even though those who hold them have not seen the evidence for themselves. (Hand, 2002, p. 551)

This constitutes "a method of imparting not-known-to-be-true beliefs [or beliefs which lack rationally decisive evidence] in such a way that they are rationally held" (Hand, 2002, p. 551). Of course, the most obvious response to this argument (a response which Hand acknowledges) is that it simply relocates the point at which indoctrination takes place. As we have already seen, there is no rationally decisive evidence to support the claim to religious expertise so, in order to get a child to believe that one is a religious expert, it looks as if one must bypass their processes of reason. However, in the case of parents Hand argues that this objection fails. Not because there is anything wrong with the claim that getting someone to believe that you are an intellectual authority when you are not is

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[321] Here I use the word 'possibility' rather than 'permissibility' because Hand's primary concern is with a "question of logic"; namely, whether one can "consistently ascribe to parents both a right to give their children a religious upbringing and a duty to avoid indoctrinating them?" (Hand, 2002, 545)

[322] The transmission of religious beliefs to children by their parents or guardians.

indoctrinatory, but because parents don't have to *convince* their children of the truth of such a belief — "it is already there" (Hand, 2002, p. 553).

It is Hand's contention (he calls it "a matter of psychological fact") that very young children view their parents as "intellectual authorities on everything under the sun" (Hand, 2002, p.553). Therefore, although parents who utilise their child's misattribution of expertise to impart religious beliefs may be morally culpable for failing to correct the original misapprehension, or for using it to impart beliefs which lack rationally decisive evidence,[323] the wrongdoing falls short of indoctrination; children taught to believe in this way have not suffered damage to their overall powers of reasoning and are free to revise their beliefs on the basis of new evidence. In other words, although the evidence children have for their beliefs in these circumstances is, ultimately, inconclusive, the fact it was imparted via rational means excuses the parent from the charge of indoctrination (which necessarily involves the construction of a barrier between belief and reason).

§5.3.5 Perceived Intellectual Authority: Parents and Teachers

On the face of it, Hand's position looks as if it might also enable teachers in faith schools to use the lever of perceived intellectual authority to impart belief in the sphere of religion. After all, isn't it likely that, particularly in the early years of schooling, young children will incorrectly ascribe expert status to their teachers on matters of religion and, therefore, have rational cause to believe what they say on those matters? Nonetheless, Hand does not think it is possible to extend his claim about perceived "parental omniscience" to teachers:

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[323] Hand appears to think the former "crime" is more ethically justifiable than the latter, maintaining, "young children, it is plausible to suggest, have an emotional need to believe in their parents' omniscience" (Hand, 2002, p.553).

Except perhaps in the earliest years of schooling, pupils *do not normally* regard their teachers as intellectual authorities on religious questions. Children learn very quickly that there are no legitimate religious authorities… they know that their teachers are in no position to testify to the existence of decisive evidence for the truth of religious propositions. Pupils may respect their teachers' religious beliefs, and recognise them as authorities on the history, philosophy and sociology of religion, but they do not regard them as authorities on questions of religious truth" (Hand, 2003, p.98 my italics).

This is a bold empirical claim for which Hand provides no real evidence,[324] nevertheless, because he thinks it possible to "manufacture" the conditions necessary to generate belief in religious expertise (via a process which would be indoctrinatory), the existence of individuals who *do* regard their teachers as intellectual authorities on religious questions need not trouble the overall account. The reason lies in the underlying claim that "young children impute religious authority to their parents without prompting" but would need to be (illegitimately) persuaded to extend this natural form of trust to their teachers (beyond the very early years of schooling). This would require "a considerable exercise of psychological power" (Hand, 2003, p. 98) which, if successful, would result in the irrational style of believing symptomatic of indoctrination.

Hand's account of perceived intellectual authority arouses a number of concerns, not least among those who regard the exercise of authority — be it that of parents, teachers or the community at large —to be a constitutive element of indoctrination (see Gardner, 2004; Taylor, 2016). Peter Gardner questions Hand's assertion that children naturally attribute intellectual authority to their parents and wonders why, given Hand does not provide

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[324] Surely there are many religiously-minded people who regard faith *leaders* (e.g. priests, imams, rabbis and so on) as experts with enlightened religious knowledge. If this is possible, then the idea of a teacher being viewed in a similar way does not seem to stretch the imagination too far.

empirical evidence for the claim, we should accept the "psychological fact" that children automatically accept their parents as "omniscient" (Gardner, 2004, p.124). Hand's response is to claim that it is just *obvious* that young children regard their parents as authorities on most matters. His argument is not an appeal to evidence generated through psychological research, "but to ordinary human experience" (Hand, 2004b, p.644). However, given the justificatory role this 'fact' plays in Hand's wider theory of religious upbringing, it is not at all clear that the matter can simply be left to stand. Particularly as the question of the extent to which children view adults as intellectual authorities (on religious questions) appears to be rather more complicated than Hand acknowledges; complicated in a manner which may have repercussions for any wider discussion of teaching for religious belief in schools.

Very young children are often portrayed as being highly credulous – indeed, according to many evolutionary biologists this "credulity bias" is an adaptive feature which ensures survival into adulthood.[325] However, there is some evidence to suggest that the role credulity plays in child development is overplayed. In a review of empirical research into scepticism in young children, Woolley and E. Ghossainy (2013) conclude that "when assessing reality status,[326] children are as likely to doubt as they are to believe" (Woolley & E. Ghossainy, 2013, p.1). Although much of the research into ontological beliefs in childhood focuses on instances where children attribute existence (or 'realness') to things which do not exist (e.g. Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy), Woolley and E. Ghossainy show a particular interest in studies focusing on situations where children deny the reality status of real things (such as unknown animals or extraordinary events). Research in this area

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[325] See Dawkins (1995; 2006).
[326] Determining whether an object, entity or event is real or not real.

appears to show that, contra the standard view — according to which our default (childhood) state is to believe and that disbelief takes extra cognitive work (Woolley & E Ghossainy, 2013, p.2) — skepticism (indeed, misplaced skepticism) is rather common among young children.[327] [328]

So, does the prevalence of skepticism in early childhood give us reason to abandon the credulity thesis altogether? And what might it mean for Hand's position if we did? Even on the basis of psychological evidence, it would be wrong-headed to entirely jettison the idea that children are often credulous; children do not simply begin as skeptics and develop into believers. Nonetheless, we do need to acknowledge that, "magical and rational views of reality coexist throughout development" (Woolley & E. Ghossainy, 2013, p.3) and so do skepticism and credulity.[329]

According to Woolley and E. Ghossainy, the naïve skepticism of very young children arises out of an inability to "evaluate the scope and relevance" of their own knowledge "[leading] to an over-reliance on [that knowledge] in evaluating reality status" (Woolley & E. Ghossainy, 2013). In other words, young children often fail to realise that there is more to the world than their own experience and, as a result, also fail to recognise there are other people who may be better equipped to understand and explain things than they can themselves. Whilst this might demonstrate the falsity of Hand's contention that belief in

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[327] See also Woolley & Van Reet (2006); Shtulman & Carey (2007).

[328] Skeptical beliefs are particularly prevalent when children are asked to assess the reality status of events or things they are shown in books or on television (Woolley & Cox, 2007; Vaden & Woolley, 2011). And, although social context makes a difference — when asked to assess the veracity of biblical stories, children over the age of 6 were far more likely to think a story depicted 'real' events and characters if it also made reference to God (Vaden & Woolley, 2011) — younger children (4 year olds) exhibit a higher degree of skepticism about events which "violate [their own] naïve theories [about how the world works]" even when they are framed in religious contexts consonant with their own cultural background (Woolley & E. Ghossainy, p.7).

[329] See Harris (2012); Subbotsky (1993; 1994; 2010).

parental omniscience is "just there" — it looks as if the perception of parents as intellectual authorities may be a learned ability representing a significant stage in the development of rationality — parental testimony does appear to be one of the key factors which enables children to overcome their tendency towards (misplaced) skepticism.[330] What's more, the role of emotion and emotional attachment should not be underestimated in this regard. There is some evidence to suggest that children are more likely to be skeptical about events or creatures which elicit fear or anger (see Samuels & Taylor, 1994; Carrick & Quas, 2006)[331] and the quality of a child's relationship with his mother has been shown to mirror the extent to which he is likely to believe what she tells him over the testimony of a stranger (see Harris, 2012, p.85-86). With regards to the intergenerational transmission of religious belief, there is also longitudinal research to support the view that:

> When children perceive their relationship with parents as close, affirming and accepting, they are most likely to identify with their parents' religious practices and beliefs, while relationships marked by coldness, ambivalence, or preoccupation are likely to result in religious differences. (Bengtson, et al. 2013, p.98)

So, the psychological literature appears to suggest that, at least in cases of relatively secure attachment, the skepticism pendulum *is* eventually apt to swing towards a bias in favour of parental testimony (even if this does not occur as straightforwardly as Hand suggests). Perhaps it is useful to think of this bias as a form of 'rational faith' similar to that proposed by Buchak. Children believe what their parents tell them because, in virtue of a special and

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[330] Woolley and E. Ghossainy also emphasise that evidence and context play a role in this process (p. 8).
[331] Although it is worth pointing out that these assessments were based on the reports of children who were exposed to stimuli which were designed to elicit fear or anger. It seems entirely possible that children are more likely to *report* the belief that an entity or event isn't real or couldn't happen when they feel scared or angry without these reports matching their true beliefs about the target entity or event. After all, in such situations children are likely to very much want it to be true that such things aren't real.

intimate relationship —one which will have involved many demonstrable instances of the parents acting in their children's best interests and telling them things which turned out to be true — they feel able to suspend the search for additional evidence and accept what they are told. Learning to listen to parental testimony is valuable because it enhances a child's understanding and rationality through the use of gradually widening circles of presumed authority: from the child herself, to her parents, to other adults and, finally, experts in general.

While the claim that belief in "parental omniscience" forms part of a complicated (often rationality enhancing) developmental process departs from Hand's account of how the bias forms, it needn't threaten his overall claim that the presence of such a belief may be enough to redeem the transmission of beliefs lacking rationally decisive evidence from the accusation of indoctrination. This is because, when the belief occurs organically during normal development, is not manipulated by the parent and is time limited,[332] the parent is not responsible for constructing an illegitimate barrier between the child's beliefs and her reasons for holding them; her reasoning powers emerge intact.

I am less persuaded by Hand's claim that the tendency to attribute intellectual authority to teachers, particularly on religious matters, is rare. The misattribution of intellectual authority to teachers happens far more regularly than Hand acknowledges. Many parents will have experienced the initial tendency of young children to take everything their new teacher says as gospel.[333] And while Hand may be right in thinking that a child is less likely to accept the notion that a teacher is an authority on matters which are, like religion,

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[332] Note the similarities between this and the description of epistemically innocent beliefs in Chapter II.
[333] As well as the related frustration that arises when the methods a parent suggests to help her child with the completion of a piece of homework are rejected on the basis that they do not concur (or the child perceives that they do not concur) with what the teacher said.

controversial, it seems entirely possible that belief in 'teacher omniscience' is a natural extension of the process of widening the child's view of who is likely to know better than her.[334] If so, it is plausible to suppose that belief in teacher omniscience can regularly occur in a way which falls short of indoctrination.

Hand uses the proposed disparity between the perceived authority parents and teachers to bolster his claim that faith schools are, by definition, indoctrinatory (Hand, 2002, pp. 97-98). Does the fact that teachers may, on occasion, also make use of the rational loophole the perception of intellectual authority provides mean that faith schools can justifiably exploit it? Does the possibility of a religious *upbringing* without indoctrination demonstrate that schools which teach for religious belief are able to avoid the practice after all?

I think this is doubtful. Even in the case of parents, Hand only uses the perception of intellectual authority on religious matters to demonstrate the (fairly restrictive) circumstances under which it would be *logically possible* to give a child a religious upbringing without indoctrination. He does not say that it is *impossible* for parents to indoctrinate in virtue of the misattribution of religious authority and, as we have seen, any attempt to cultivate the error so that it interfered with the child's rational faculties would still be indoctrinatory. Moreover, parents have a duty to 'come clean' about their lack of expertise on religious matters once their child is old enough to properly understand what this means. This is because, whilst there may be situations where it is morally justifiable for an adult to mislead a child:[335]

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[334] This is not to say that all children will develop a belief in 'teacher omniscience' or that, even when they do, it will apply to all teachers.

[335] Hand cites three cases, the reasons for which can be categorised into three types: 1) protection from danger, 2) emotional security, 3) (mutual) entertainment (See Hand, 2002, p.554).

Once we are dealing with young adults, the range of justifiable exceptions to the prohibition on the abuse of perceived intellectual authority is much reduced. In the great majority of cases we shall want to say that the adult's right not to be deceived by those she regards as intellectual authorities outweighs any benefits she stands to gain from the deception. (Hand, 2002, p. 556)

This suggests that as children begin to develop intellectually (and certainly as they reach late adolescence), deception and manipulation — even deception and manipulation which falls short of indoctrination — become increasingly morally untenable.[336] Hand recognises the dangers that threaten to undermine the use of perceived intellectual authority as a tool to inculcate beliefs for which there is no rationally decisive evidence, but is prepared to acknowledge that there are instances when a parent will need to balance the varying needs of the child against one another. For example, if the inculcation of religious beliefs will facilitate a distinctive kind of "social benefit"[337] (see Hand, 2002, p. 555). In cases where this benefit is sufficiently great, and as long as they avoid indoctrination, parents will have reasonable justification for transmitting the beliefs that give rise to it.[338]

This also provides us with some reason for the asymmetry between belief transmission in schools and belief transmission in upbringing. Because schools are involved in a later stage of the development of children and usually occupy a narrower role in that development,[339] it is plausible to think the range of benefits they can trade-off against any deception in which they participate will be significantly reduced. The upshot being that

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[336] Although, as we shall see in the next Chapter (§6.5) my autonomy based account of education suggests a narrower range of circumstances in which practices like this should be tolerated than Hand's account.
[337] E.g better relationships with family members through the development of "[closer] social ties" (Hand, 2002, p.555).
[338] See also Brighouse et al. (2015)
[339] The sphere of childhood activities for which the school is responsible is far smaller than the sphere which falls under the remit of parents.

schools will be less able to (permissibly) exploit the misattribution of intellectual authority when it occurs.[340] What's more, as schools are responsible for the education of large numbers of children, many of whom will not acquire a belief in teacher omniscience, it would be practically impossible to make significant use of the rational loophole the belief provides even when it did develop. To attempt to ensure that *every* child believed in teacher omniscience would necessarily involve indoctrination, but to try to provide confessional education solely to those pupils who naturally developed the belief would be difficult to manage and serve very little purpose (particularly as it would be perpetually under threat of being undermined by the eventual realisation that deception had occurred).

Hand's overall claim about the perception of intellectual authority should be allowed to stand. There *are* circumstances under which the misattribution of expertise can provide a basis for belief in propositions which lack rationally decisive evidence and, although the exploitation of this misattribution might be wrong in other ways,[341] it is logically possible for it to occur in a manner which falls short of indoctrination. This claim does not, as Gardner worries (see p.96), mean that *all* charges of indoctrination can be circumvented by taking advantage of an erroneous belief in expertise. Indeed, Hand's view is still compatible with the claim that indoctrination *necessarily* involves the perception of intellectual authority (as both Gardner (2004) and Taylor (2016) argue)[342] since the

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[340] As this point connects directly with the claim that, even when they fall short of indoctrination, faith schools may still be guilty of teaching in a way which is morally problematic (particularly in terms of the development of autonomy), I shall return to it in the next chapter.

[341] Some of which shall be explored in Chapter VI.

[342] Although this position seems untenable when one considers that indoctrinators often use means other than appeals to intellectual authority to transmit beliefs which are resistant to counter-evidence. Hand cites the example of O'Brien's indoctrination of Winston Smith in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

> There is no question of O'Brien being regarded as an intellectual authority on the beliefs he is trying to impart but he succeeds in imparting them all the same. His method is to establish a non-rational connection in Winston's mind between rejection of the Party's doctrines and the paralysing fear of Room 101. (Hand, 2004b, p.645)

exception provided by the perception of intellectual authority is so narrowly circumscribed. Nevertheless, this element of Hand's position may have received a considerable amount of scholarly attention because, at least as it is currently worded, it appears to suggest the perception of intellectual authority offers indoctrinators an easy way to side-step criticism without altering their practices. I would therefore suggest that premise 3a is further modified to better illustrate that, while the perception of intellectual authority is a rational means via which to transmit belief, not all such perceptions are themselves rational. And, in cases where perceptions of intellectual authority are exploited or manipulated in so as to disable an individual's ability to revise them on the basis of evidence, indoctrination will still have taken place.

So:

> 3a (revised) Teaching for belief in propositions not supported by rationally decisive evidence is, when successful, indoctrinatory, except when teachers are perceived to be intellectual authorities on those propositions (Hand, 2003, p.98).

Becomes:

> 3a* Teaching for belief in propositions not supported by rationally decisive evidence is, when successful, indoctrinatory, except when teachers are perceived to be intellectual authorities on those propositions and the following conditions hold: The perception of intellectual authority 1) originates from the pupil; 2) is not the result of (non-rational) manipulation; 3) leaves intact the pupil's ability to

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Although O'Brien must exert some form *power* in order to complete the process of Smith's indoctrination, he needn't exert intellectual authority.

rationally revise the perception (as well as the beliefs which issue from it) on the basis of evidence and reason.

And, on the basis of the foregoing argument, enables us to add:

3b* Teachers in faith schools are, in most cases, not perceived to be intellectual authorities on religious propositions in the requisite manner.

To summarise, the discussion thus far demonstrates that, with the necessary modifications, Hand's third premise is correct; there is good reason to think that teaching for belief in propositions for which there is no rationally decisive evidence is, in all but a few (extremely limited) types of case, indoctrinatory. This is primarily because any attempt to inculcate beliefs which lack rationally decisive evidence will need to rely on something other than evidence to ground those beliefs. And, although perceived intellectual authority may serve as rational grounds in many instances, any attempt to manufacture the conditions necessary to ensure belief in propositions without rationally decisive evidence in their favour, or to exploit this rational loophole in a way which renders the believer incapable of reassessment, will be indoctrinatory. This means that permissible cases of transmission via perceived intellectual authority will be even more limited in schools than in upbringing.

However, before we can conclude that schools which teach for religious belief are indoctrinatory, it is necessary to examine one final point that could count against the amended version of Hand's argument. This is the assertion that, because the evidentiary

standard for directive teaching is set so high, much of what we currently teach as part of the standard[343] curriculum is transmitted via indoctrination.

§5.3.6 Teaching for Belief across the Curriculum

The assertion that teaching for belief in propositions which lack rationally decisive evidence constitutes indoctrination often raises a further, slightly more practical, concern; namely, that since we lack 'rationally decisive evidence' for all manner of things which we currently teach as true in schools, teaching for *religious* belief is not the sole locus of indoctrination. Jim Mackenzie puts it thus:

> If all teaching of propositions for which we lack proof or decisive evidence (apart from Hand's special case of perceived intellectual authority of parents over very young children) is indoctrination, then much of what occurs in schools is indoctrination. (Mackenzie, 2004, p. 649)

Of course, if Mackenzie is correct about this, an obvious response would be that the moral wrongness of indoctrination necessitates we simply stop teaching for belief in all such instances. However, Mackenzie wants to make something more than a descriptive claim about what is currently taught in schools. He wants to argue that there are cases in which teachers will not be able to draw on rationally decisive evidence (which he equates with "proof" or "certainty" (Mackenzie, 2004, p.648) or perceived intellectual authority, but in which they will still (justifiably) be able to impart belief by "force of evidence" and without resorting to indoctrination.

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[343] Non-denominational.

In Mackenzie's view, Hand's claim that there are just three ways to impart belief – rationally, via the production of decisive evidence or perceived intellectual authority, or irrationally[344] — is problematic because it fails to acknowledge that we often teach on the basis of evidence which, far from being "rationally decisive", is "merely a matter of what lawyers call the balance of probabilities" (Mackenzie, 2004, p.648). In other words, much of what we teach directively will constitute our "best bet" (see Tillson, 2014, p.145) at an explanation and fall some degree short of "proof".

In order to better understand this concern, I shall approach it via the paradigm case of science education. The claim that science is replete with beliefs which, while they occupy a position of orthodoxy, are neither known-to-be-true nor supported by rationally decisive evidence is often raised by those wishing to dismiss the content criterion of indoctrination,[345] especially as it relates to religion. For example, Elmer Thiessen argues:

> Both science and religion are trying to make sense of empirical reality, though the focus may be on different aspects of reality. The theorizing in both science and religion must begin with central beliefs which are variously identified as "first order principles," "primary beliefs," "presuppositions," "epistemic primitives," or "doctrines". Both science and religion are very much human enterprises, and while both are shot through with elements of subjectivity, neither is entirely subjective. Both search for objective truth. Both are subject to verification involving a variety of criteria such as applicability to empirical data, coherence, simplicity, and explanatory power. (Thiessen, 1993, p.84)

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[344] Via indoctrination or some other insidious means.
[345] See §2.5.

Of course, because the conception of indoctrination I endorse does not depend on a strict division between doctrine and non-doctrine,[346] it is not necessary to demonstrate that there is something fundamentally different about the structure of the enterprises of religion and science. Nevertheless, given that I do want to argue that (textbook) science[347] will, in many cases, be a candidate for non-indoctrinatory directive teaching (and that this is an argument which cannot be applied to directive or confessional religious education), it is necessary to address the more pressing worry that even the most established scientific propositions do not meet Hand's criterion of rational decisiveness.

Mackenzie maintains that the difference between scientific propositions with some evidentiary weight but which lack rationally decisive evidence and religious propositions is "merely one of degree". He goes on to argue that, if it is possible to teach for belief in such propositions without indoctrination elsewhere in the curriculum, "the mere claim that we lack decisive evidence for the central tenets of religions is not sufficient to show that the teaching of them must be… indoctrination" (Mackenzie, 2004, p.649). He suggests that Hand's position on religious propositions looks particularly untenable if one is persuaded that the problem of induction is a genuine one[348] and that, "as a matter of logic *no* cumulation of observations… *can ever suffice to prove*… any statement which has the form of a scientific law." (Mackenzie, 2004, p.649) I shall deal with each of these points in turn.

First, Mackenzie may be correct that the relevant difference between many religious propositions and the other types of proposition commonly taught in schools is the degree

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[346] The outcome account I posit allows that indoctrination can occur when the teaching of any subject matter results in the symptomatic state of mind outlined in §

[347] Alongside textbook history, geography, mathematics and so on.

[348] According to Wesley Salmon (1991), most attempts to solve the problem of induction have involved casting it as a 'pseudo problem'. See for example Strawson (1952); Harré (1957); Hilbe (1971).

of evidence available. Indeed, as we have seen, Hand explicitly acknowledges it is epistemically possible to conceive of a world in which there is rationally decisive evidence for some set of religious propositions. However, it is difficult to see why Mackenzie minimises this difference with the use of the word 'merely'. After all, the difference between teaching something which is patently false (because it has a high degree of evidence counting against it and nothing in its favour) and something which is practically certain (because the evidence in its favour is overwhelming) will also be a matter of degree. It is not obvious how this fact can count against the broader argument that, as it stands, religious propositions do not enjoy the level of evidential support that is had by well-established scientific propositions.

Furthermore, and as we saw in our discussion of whether any religious proposition is known to be true, some forms of religious believing do not draw on publicly available standards of evidence. In those cases, the difference between religious propositions and those of other types is one of kind rather than degree.[349]

Second, Hand's position only delimits the circumstances under which *directive* teaching is appropriate. It provides a framework for understanding when teaching which treats a matter as settled (thus encouraging pupils to assent strongly to propositions rather than simply understanding them) can be justified, as well as stipulating the circumstances under which such teaching will be able to avoid indoctrination. There is nothing in the claim that we can only teach for (strong) belief in propositions which are underpinned by rationally decisive evidence precluding teaching students *about* matters for which the supporting evidence falls short of being rationally decisive. And, this being so, the position is entirely

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[349] Although, for reasons discussed in §5.3.2, we cannot treat special epiphanies and similar personal revelations as evidence in any meaningful sense.

compatible with (non-directive) teaching which exposes pupils to a wide range of beliefs, paradigms and theories and, in so doing, encourages them to proportion the credence they assign each belief to the degree of evidence available. Students should only be taught to treat propositions supported by rationally decisive evidence as well-established or settled. Anything which fails to meet this standard should be taught as speculative or open to revision. When teachers seek to "steer" pupils "towards a pre-determined conclusion," (Hand, 2013, p.499) —when they look to compel belief— this can only avoid the charge of indoctrination if it is the rational decisiveness of the evidence which motivates the (near) certainty.

Mackenzie's final concern initially appears somewhat trickier to address. If Karl Popper is correct and scientific laws can *never* be proved,[350] then any teacher who attempts to teach for belief in law-like statements is teaching for belief in propositions which are not certain. According to John Tillson, this leaves Hand with three options if he hopes to justify the direct transmission of scientific laws: 1) provide a solution to the traditional problem of induction and demonstrate that, contrary to appearances, law-like statements can be proved with reference to evidence; 2) argue that, because teaching for belief in law-like statements will lead to indoctrination, we should not teach for belief in them; or 3) show that the perception of intellectual authority can be used to impart belief in law-like propositions without recourse to indoctrination (Tillson, 2014, p.145).

Interestingly, Tillson appears to reject all three options when he contends that, while it is prudent to admit that law-like statements can never be proved, we needn't completely reject the possibility of directively imparting propositions of this form in the classroom.

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[350] Although, we can assess the relative reliability of theories according to the number of times they have been exposed to a process of testing without falsification (Popper, 2002; 2012; Bortolotti, 2008, p.50).

Instead, he maintains we should supplement our endeavours in teaching for belief in law-like statements with a "challenge":

> The idea behind explanatory and predictive science (and probability in general) is to make the best bet, and some bets are clearly much better than others. Thus we ought to absorb 'best bets' into our taxonomy of education. One could *directively* teach that 'this theory is our best bet'. (Tillson, 2014, p.145 my italics)

The reason that some bets are better than others is because they are more likely to pay off. In this context, the best (epistemological) bet is the one which is most likely to be true.[351] Given that (unlike frontier science) the scientific laws featured on a standard curriculum are the product of a vast accumulation of observational data, the evidence their favour seems compelling enough for teachers to be able to (legitimately) "steer" their pupils towards a *qualified* acceptance of these laws.[352] This practice can avoid indoctrination as long as pupils are taught to accept that the proposition is our 'best bet' (and why scientists think this is the case) rather than being straightforwardly guided to accept the content of the proposition itself.[353]

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[351] It is possible to think of ordinary bets where the pay-off is so great that an individual would be willing to wager on extremely unlikely circumstances in order to be in with a miniscule chance of winning. This kind of bet could translate into an epistemic case where I might weigh epistemological possibilities against other kinds of goods (e.g. eternal salvation). But, given that the purpose of Tillson's argument is to provide a broader theory of propositional curriculum content, I presume that the bet he is referring to is purely epistemic in nature (although his claim that we should select the propositions we include in the curriculum on the basis of "moment" appears to suggest that other factors will come into play in during the selection process) (Tillson, 2014, p. 142).

[352] Here one might also wish to add another kind of case which is suitable for directive teaching, those where what is taught is neither supported by rationally decisive evidence nor a 'best bet' but is the best way to explain something given the pupil's current level of education. For example, Newton's laws of motion or simplified versions of Boyle's law.

[353] Tillson's position on propositional pedagogy as it pertains to law-like statements resembles a prominent family of arguments used to justify induction in the philosophy of science. Here, theorists such as Reichenbach (1940) and Salmon (1974, 1991) suggest that we will tend to make more successful scientific predictions if we use inductive methods than if we resort to non-inductive strategies such as "making wild guesses or consulting a crystal gazer". Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that Reichenbach's argument, "seeks not to justify a belief in a proposition but rather to justify a practice" (Salmon, 1991, p.100).

Through embracing the idea that there may be an ineliminable degree of doubt about the truth of scientific laws, and by acknowledging this will often necessitate encouraging children to hedge their conclusions accordingly, Tillson's 'best bet' thesis suggests a further way to approach Mackenzie's concerns. Recall that Mackenzie assumes Hand is committed to the claim that (the exercise of perceived intellectual authority notwithstanding) the only way to avoid indoctrination is to teach rationally decisive content and that this equates to content which is *certain* or *known* to be true.[354] But, once Hand amends his view to accommodate Siegel's point that what ultimately renders a teaching practice indoctrination is not the truth or falsity of the propositions one teaches, or even whether those propositions are known to be true (proven), but a combination of "the justificatory status of what is taught," and "the way in which what is taught is believed" (Siegel, 2004, p.79), it is possible to dilute Mackenzie's criticism. The standard of *rationally decisive* evidence is less onerous than that of proof, but, when we teach for belief in propositions which are so grounded, the force which compels belief is still strong evidence.[355] Probability counts in favour of a proposition supported this way, but we cannot claim certainty with regards to it; our beliefs are fallible. What's more, we can (and should) acknowledge this fallibility in the classroom.[356] Indeed, both Siegel (1990) and Tillson (2014) endorse the inclusion of courses in epistemology and the philosophy of science in the curriculum to allay concerns about indoctrination and better develop an appreciation of scientific reasoning in pupils.

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[354] Of course, we can forgive Mackenzie this assumption because it is based on a claim which Hand actually makes (both in his arguments related to religious upbringing (2002 & 2004b) and in his early formulation of the argument against faith schools (2003)).

[355] Tillson describes propositions with the requisite degree of evidence as propositions "supported by sufficient probative force to make denial irrational" (Tillson, 2014, p.146).

[356] As long as this is done in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Of course, someone wishing to defend Mackenzie's position (or go further and maintain that science is no more rational than religion) may still take issue with the 'best bet' thesis on the grounds that it simply relocates the problem of induction. Given that no amount of evidence will ever be enough to render law-like propositions certain, such critics may wonder why accumulation of vast amounts of supporting evidence makes a law-like statement any more likely to be true (and therefore, more likely to be our 'best bet'); they may wonder how the presentation of evidence functions to improve the probability of truth even when it is acknowledged that the support it offers falls short of a guarantee of certainty.[357]

Unfortunately, the problem of induction cannot be fully settled within the confines of this thesis. Perhaps the current objection simply entails that Tillson's initial assessment of Hand's options with respect to law-like statements was correct and we must abandon the idea of teaching them directively altogether. Perhaps teachers of science[358] must instead restrict their directive efforts to the belief that all the experiments (or observations) conducted thus far have failed to falsify certain law-like statements and allow the question of whether this evidence gives us predictive power (or the power to generalise) to remain open. Teachers adhering to this method would not be guilty of treating all transmission of knowledge as indoctrination[359] and pupils would still be taught to understand the content of the theories put before them, but teachers would need to remain rather more circumspect

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[357] As Mill puts it, "a single instance, [is] in some cases, sufficient for a complete induction, while in others myriads of concurring instances, without a single exception known or presumed, go… little way towards establishing a universal proposition…" (Mill 1843, Bk III, Ch. III).

[358] As well as those of history, geography, literature, economics and so on.

[359] They would not be adopting the position Daisy Christodulou criticises in her attack on progressive educators (see §2.6).

about the possibility that even very well-established law-like statements might be falsified than they are currently wont to do.

I must admit this is not a perspective I find particularly attractive. In spite of the obvious problems implicit in fully justifying induction, it would be difficult to imagine a world in which most people[360] do not (successfully) use past evidence to make predictions and generalisations. Furthermore, although this may be done with varying degrees of accuracy and legitimacy, there is a strong argument to be made for the pragmatic value of the process[361] and thus for teaching the explanatory value of that process in schools. That said, if it is necessary to eschew the directive teaching of law-like statements, this conclusion will bolster rather than damage the claim that teaching for belief in religious propositions is indoctrinatory. If it is ultimately impossible to provide the evidentiary grounds to directively transmit belief in well-established, law-like propositions —propositions which constitute the basic apparatus human beings use to navigate and make sense of the world — then beliefs which (as was established in the discussion of whether religious propositions are known to be true) lack even a fraction of that evidence must only ever be taught non-directively if educators wish to avoid indoctrination.

To sum up, the difference between religious propositions and the propositions dealt with by (textbook) science[362] is, as Mackenzie himself argues, one of the degree of justification those propositions currently enjoy. Religious propositions are not well-supported by publically available, rationally decisive evidence and, therefore, when they are considered in the classroom, should be treated as an open matter. Teachers should not steer their

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[360] Even those who are vehemently religious.
[361] See footnote 349.
[362] And, therefore, many other areas of the standard academic curriculum.

pupils to accept particular religious beliefs because the evidence which exists in their favour is ambiguous. To those who would claim a similar status for certain scientific beliefs, I would argue that the outcome conception of indoctrination requires that teachers err on the side of circumspection where matters are more doubtful. There is arguably less harm to be done by being open to the possibility that an established proposition may eventually be proved false, than from the certainty that an unsupported proposition is true. This is not to say that we should encourage pupils to attribute high levels of doubt to everything they are taught, simply that they should remain cognizant of this fallibility and that this awareness ought to be proportioned to the degree and type of evidence supporting any belief or set thereof.

§5.4 A Philosophical Argument against Faith Schools Restated

The aim of this chapter has been to critically assess Hand's claim that faith schools are indoctrinatory; that there is something specific about the aim to teach for religious belief which, when successful, will lead to beliefs exhibiting the symptomatic closed-mindedness of the indoctrinated state of mind. By now, it will be evident that this is a conclusion which I support. However, since it has been necessary to amend Hand's initial argument a number of times over the course of this discussion, it is first necessary to present the revised argument in its entirety:

1 Faith schools teach for belief in religious propositions.

2 No religious proposition is supported by rationally decisive evidence.

3a* Teaching for belief in propositions not supported by rationally decisive evidence is, when successful, indoctrinatory, except when teachers are perceived to be intellectual authorities on those propositions and the following conditions hold:

The perception of intellectual authority i) originates from the pupil, ii) is not the result of (non-rational) manipulation and, iii) leaves intact the pupil's ability to rationally revise the perception (as well as any beliefs that issue from it) on the basis of evidence and reason.

3b* Schools and teachers cannot engineer or maintain the conditions under which he perception of intellectual authority can avoid indoctrination without undermining those conditions.

Therefore

4 Faith schools are, when successful, indoctrinatory

This amended version of the argument preserves the spirit of Hand's initial position, addresses some of the most persuasive criticisms against its early formulations[363] and clarifies the role of perceived intellectual authority in a manner which addresses the most common misunderstandings of the position; more specifically the idea that the perception of intellectual authority always *prevents* indoctrination[364] when, in fact, the circumstances

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[363] Not least Siegel's point about the distinction between knowledge and justification.
[364] See Short (2003); Gardner (2004).

under which this will be the case are rather rare. On this basis, I conclude that the argument against faith schools understood on a narrowly propositional basis —i.e. as schools which teach solely or predominantly for *belief* in religious propositions —is correct; faith schools in this sense are, indeed, indoctrinatory.

§5.5 Should Faith Schools be Abolished?

In Hand's (2003, 2004a) view, the conclusion that faith schools are indoctrinatory provides sufficient grounds to call for their abolition. Nevertheless, some commentators have criticised this claim for being too swift. Douglas Groothuis (2004) initially argues along similar lines to Mackenzie and wonders whether, since in many instances non-denominational schools will also be guilty of teaching for beliefs which are not-known-to-be-true, they too should be abolished. This criticism can be easily defused on the basis that the revised argument pertains to a more falliblistic conception of the proper content of directive teaching.[365] However, Groothuis argues that his second point applies equally to Siegel's less demanding version of the argument.[366] Here his concern is the means by which faith schools are to be abolished, the possible practical issues facing a government who seeks to pursue this policy, and the potential ramifications for other kinds of religious institution.[367] But, although these are certainly issues which policy makers persuaded by the claim that "indoctrination is such a manifest and readily avoidable evil that necessarily indoctrinatory institutions ought *obviously* to be abolished" (Hand, 2004a, p352) would

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[365] Even on Hand's original argument, the criticism is not particularly persuasive. As we saw in Chapter I, the feature that makes faith schools (as described in S4 of the term) distinctive is the aim to teach *for* religious belief (confessional religious education). Non-denominational schools are not so encumbered; they can adjust their approach to teaching for belief according to the available evidence without any overall change in the character of the school (an option which does not appear to be open to faith schools).

[366] That indoctrination will only result when schools are successful in teaching for beliefs which are held "irrationally" (on the basis of evidence which is not rationally decisive).

[367] He seems peculiarly concerned by the idea that the abolition of faith schools may lead to the complete abolition of religious institutions on the grounds that they too are indoctrinatory.

have to address, they do not, in and of themselves, count against the broader *philosophical* argument. Given the morally objectionable nature of indoctrination, there is a persuasive philosophical reason to abolish schools which employ the practice even if it (or is likely to be) practically difficult or politically unpopular.

Siegel also voices concern that Hand's position on the abolition of faith schools lacks adequate justification. He argues that although Hand is correct to point to the great damage done to a child's mind by bypassing her faculties of reason, the strength of this position could be improved by adding a premise which explicitly refers to the "violation of autonomy" (Siegel, 2004, p.82) indoctrination represents. Unsurprisingly given Hand's position on autonomy as an educational aim,[368] he is unpersuaded by this assertion, responding that, "nothing is clarified and much obscured" by adding the concept of autonomy to the argument (Hand, 2004a, p.353). Siegel is right to highlight that indoctrination is wrong not merely because it "deprives children of the ability to think rationally" (Hand, 2004a, p.353), but because, through so doing, children are also deprived of the ability to determine the direction of their own lives and of taking moral responsibility for that direction. Nevertheless, Hand is correct to point out that it is still morally objectionable to interfere with the rational capacities of a child whether or not one considers autonomy to be a legitimate educational aim.[369] The autonomy claim strongly supplements but is not necessary to the contention that indoctrination is wrong. This being so, Hand's call to abolish schools which favour the confessional approach to religious education could legitimately be adopted irrespective of one's position on autonomy.

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[368] See the extended discussion in Chapter IV.
[369] This is primarily because of the epistemic danger holding one's beliefs apart from evidence and reason is likely to pose (see §3.3).

The latter conclusion may seem surprising. Indeed, the reader may wonder why so much attention was devoted to autonomy in the foregoing chapters (particularly Chapter IV) only to dispense with the concept so readily in response to question of whether faith schools ought to exist at all. In order to address this puzzlement, it is necessary to recall that Hand's argument only pertains to faith schools defined in a relatively narrow sense of the term. In other words, as (S4) *schools which teach for belief in religious propositions*. However, in Chapter I I argued that, while it is certainly possible to characterise schools with this distinctive aim as paradigm cases of faith schools, these institutions may also differ from non-denominational schools in terms of the values (or pro-attitudes) and behavioural practices they seek to impart. Furthermore, although the transmission of religious values and practices may be underpinned by the inculcation of propositions, this need not be the case; beliefs, values and practices are conceptually distinct. This assertion led me to conclude that (S4) should be expanded to (S4a) *schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith via the transmission of religious beliefs, values and/or practices.* Of course, it may be the case that the transmission of values and practices is generally (if not always) connected to the inculcation of beliefs. But, if it is correct to think that it is, at the very least, conceptually possible for a school to avoid (or attempt to avoid) the inculcation of religious belief whilst simultaneously encouraging its pupils to behave in particular ways or to value particular things,[370] then it might also be possible for a faith school (so defined) to avoid the charge of indoctrination. This kind of school may be thought to bear a rather light "religious imprint" (Mason, unpublished manuscript), but would be adequately described as a faith school nonetheless. In the next chapter, I explain the different ways in which a focus on something other than propositional content or the

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[370] John Wilson's explication of the difference between indoctrination and conditioning certainly appears to suggest that this is a possibility (see §2.2)

inculcation of belief may exhibit itself in a faith school and examine whether this sort of religious school is still problematic from the perspective of autonomy.

§5.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have defended the argument that, when defined as schools which teach for belief in religious propositions, there is good reason to conclude that faith schools are indoctrinatory. For this reason, to the extent that religious schools are bound to teach for religious belief, we have grounds to prohibit them.

In the final chapter, I will assess whether, given the importance of autonomy as an educational aim, the possibility of a different form of faith schooling —purportedly predicated on the aim to initiate pupils into religious values and practices but not to inculcate religious beliefs— suggests that there is room for a permissible form of faith education which should, therefore, be accommodated in liberal democratic societies.

CHAPTER VI

CONDITIONING, COMPREHENSIVE ENROLMENT

& PRIMING PEDAGOGIES

§6.1 Introduction

Hand correctly identifies that it is possible to make an adequate case against confessional religious schools[371] on the grounds that they are detrimental to the development of rationality without further appeal to the threat these institutions may pose to autonomy. Any individual whose beliefs are rendered impervious to evidence and reason, even if those beliefs are (accidentally) true, will be at an epistemological disadvantage of a kind which educators have a responsibility to avoid. Schools which indulge in indoctrination will necessarily contravene this duty, and, as my amended version of Hand's argument demonstrates, since schools which teach for belief in religious propositions cannot escape the charge of indoctrination without abandoning their confessional mission, they will fall foul of this requirement. Nevertheless, if I am correct in thinking that schools also have a duty to produce autonomous pupils[372] (defined as pupils with the requisite dispositions and skills necessary for global self-determination), this additional requirement will greatly enhance the case against indoctrinatory religious schools. Indeed, as we shall see, it may even provide us with grounds to argue that religious schools without confessional ambitions are similarly morally illegitimate.

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[371] I will use this term and the phrase "traditional faith schools" to distinguish (S4) from (S4a).

[372] Or, at the very least, a duty not to impede the development of autonomy in illegitimate ways.

§6.2 Autonomy and the Indoctrination Objection

Hand's dismissal of the value of autonomy (both as a general aim of education and specifically with relation to the question of indoctrination) is rooted in the fact that his conception of the term, or the conceptions of others he considers to be representative of it, are too narrow and fail to adequately capture the ideal of individuality and independence which ought to motivate it.[373] Autonomy adds two important dimensions to the harms caused by indoctrination; harms which, in my view, cannot be explained with reference to epistemic issues alone. First, because indoctrinatory practices violate the capacity of the individual to assess and determine what *she* takes to be true (particularly, but not exclusively, with reference to her conception of the good) by making her a mere vehicle for the beliefs, values or pro-attitudes of the teacher, institution and/or parent, they bypass her *will* as well as her *reason*. Second, this joint violation of will and reason serves to restrict the indoctrinated pupil's capacity for moral responsibility; through ensuring the subordination of her will to those who moulded her character, indoctrination renders her "ethically servile" (Callan, 2004, p.153).

The appeal to autonomy lends weight to the intuition that, even if the truth of a particular proposition or comprehensive doctrine could be established or otherwise proven to lead directly to the development of a range of highly desirable virtues and/or values[374] (as in the case of Greta the Good[375]), there is still something that ought to make us morally uneasy about using indoctrination to compel adherence to that proposition or doctrine; an uneasiness which seems to reside in a concern about an individual's right (and the related

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[373] See Chapter IV.

[374] It is possible to imagine that a comprehensive doctrine's 'truth' might inhere in its ability to facilitate the most flourishing human life rather than the fact it accurately describes the world; that it leads to the best life rather than 'gets the world right'.

[375] See §4.4.4.

responsibilities that right engenders) to draw conclusions about how the world strikes her and to live her life on the basis of what she takes to be true.

This gives us an additional and persuasive reason to avoid indoctrination. However, indoctrination is not the only way that educators can violate or stymie the development of autonomy. I will argue that the appeal to autonomy provides us with a further constraint on the legitimacy of schools which have a religious character but do not have traditional confessional aims; it enables us to morally evaluate the attempts of these schools to avoid indoctrination through the promotion of purportedly non-indoctrinatory pedagogies such as "Teaching for Committed Openness" (Thiessen, 1993; 2008) and "What If Learning" (Smith, 2009; Cooling et al., 2016). And allows us to assess teachers who try to "bring pupils to the threshold of theology" (Whittle, 2015; Whittle, 2016) or otherwise claim to respect the rationality of pupils whilst providing them with a religiously distinctive education. In other words, the appeal to autonomy will allow us to better assess the legitimacy of religious schools in the expanded sense I initially outlined in Chapter I:

> S4a: *Schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith via the transmission of religious beliefs, **values** and/or **practices***. (Emphasis added)[376]

Of course, because the view of indoctrination I endorse does not require that teachers (or the institutions who employ them) must *intend* to indoctrinate, it is possible that these new approaches to religious initiation are simply elaborate disguises for straightforwardly indoctrinatory practices —indoctrination involving indoctrinators who, for one reason or another, are unaware of the real nature of their teaching activities. Nevertheless, if it is

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[376] This definition captures both traditional faith schools and the newer models of faith education I assess in this chapter.

genuinely possible for schools to maintain a religious character whilst eschewing indoctrination, the extent to which such schools are able to facilitate the production of autonomy will give us the primary grounds for determining whether they are any more desirable than the traditional faith schools towards which Hand's indoctrination critique is addressed.

§6.3 Restricting Freedom or Violating Autonomy?

In order to establish whether non-traditional faith-based schooling is able to facilitate the development of pupil autonomy, it is first necessary to consider how faith educators might violate autonomy in ways that cannot accurately be described as indoctrination. Recall that, at the most basic level, indoctrination is a form of teaching for belief. However, as we have already seen, teaching is not restricted to the transmission of belief. Teachers can also influence (and even control) the actions and conative states of their pupils; they can teach behaviours and habits, and they can cultivate desires, commitments, values and so on. Moreover, the constraints a teacher can impose on the freedom of her pupils extend beyond teaching activities—they include activities which are not specifically designed to "bring about learning" of some kind. (Hirst,1971, p.10) Because the teacher is in a position of authority over her pupils, she may restrict and control their behaviour in line with a range of professional duties, not all of which fall under the concept of teaching in its purest sense. The aim of these interventions is not learning *per se*, but usually some other goal which, if achieved, may (or may not) facilitate a genuine teaching activity or learning opportunity. Removing a distracting object from a pupil's hand, stopping him from squabbling with the child next to him, or forcing him to stand when he is unable to keep from swinging on his chair are all examples of such interventions; they are primarily designed to keep the pupil in order or safe from harm rather than make him learn. Of

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course, it is to be expected that such interventions will have implications for learning —a disorderly, unsafe classroom is unlikely to be conducive to a good quality education — but these practices are part of the broader "enterprise of teaching" (Hirst, 1971, p.6) not the activity itself.

The foregoing discussion illustrates various ways in which a teacher is capable of restricting the freedom of her pupils. Clearly, however, not all restrictions on freedom amount to an assault on autonomy. Colburn (2010, p.72) illustrates this with reference to the well-worn example of Odysseus and the Sirens. During his long journey home to Ithaca, Odysseus and his men must sail past a rocky island inhabited by the Sirens. The Sirens are dangerous creatures whose enchanting voices will compel all who hear them to abandon ship and swim towards certain death.[377] Luckily for Odysseus, the Goddess Circe warns him of the impending danger and encourages him to instruct his crew to fill their ears with beeswax so they are unable to hear the Sirens' song as they sail by. Odysseus follows Circe's advice but, because he wishes to hear the song for himself, opts to be bound tightly to the mast of the ship rather than plugging his own ears. He tells his men that, no matter how much he pleads with them, they are not to set him free until they are out of danger. As the ship passes the island of the Sirens, Odysseus is mesmerised by their song and instructs his men to untie him. Nevertheless, the crew adhere only to Odysseus' earlier instructions, and they continue their voyage unharmed.

As Colburn points out, Odysseus' freedom was restricted by being tied to the mast of his ship, however, "this curtailment *promoted* his autonomy: it meant that his life as a whole involved a success in following a valuable pursuit upon which he had decided" (Colburn,

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[377] Colburn stays true to the Homeric account of death by starvation but some interpretations of the story imply that the Sirens devour their victims (see Hawes, 2014, p.107).

2010, p.72 my italics). When autonomy is conceived as a property of whole lives, even coercive force need not vitiate the value.[378]

We can also see something similar happening in the context of education. The compulsory nature of schooling —the fact that, generally speaking, children are legally compelled to attend school —puts an overarching restriction on how young people spend a great deal of their time. Nevertheless, most "autonomy-minded liberals" (Colburn, 2010, p.69) —even those who hold a more 'autarchic' view of autonomy than the Colburnian conception I endorse— are generally convinced that this sort of compulsion facilitates rather than stymies the (future) autonomy of children.[379] This is because, when successful, education assists children in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to navigate the world and make informed decisions about their place in it. In much the same way as the inculcation of rationality facilitating beliefs leads to the development of rational individuals, restrictions on freedom can, when legitimate, lead to the development of autonomous individuals.

Of course, the schooling case is not entirely analogous with that of Odysseus and the Sirens. As an adult, Odysseus was able to reflect upon his desire to hear the song of the Sirens while remaining alive and able to continue his voyage, and then to rationally formulate and execute a plan to accommodate these commitments. Very young children have no such capacity so, it might be claimed, their autonomy is not violated by forced attendance at school. This is not because an existing capacity is honoured by constraining them in this manner, but because it makes no sense to insist we must honour a capacity

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[378] See also Mill's example of restraining someone who wishes to cross a broken bridge (although Mill does not regard the prevention of an accident as a "real infringement" of liberty) (Mill, 1998, pp.106-107).
[379]E.g. Callan (1988, pp.88-122).

which does not yet exist.[380] The extent to which this position is defensible, particularly

with reference to enrolling children in comprehensive religious practices (see Clayton,

2006) will be discussed in greater depth in §6.4 but, for current purposes, we merely need

to recognise that is possible to restrict a person's circumstantial autonomy (liberty) and

simultaneously avoid any negative impact on her overall ability to be self-determining (her

autonomy).

§6.3.1 Non-Cognitive Teaching and Learning

While many of the non-cognitive propensities, dispositions, behaviours, mental and

emotional states upon which teachers focus will be linked to various beliefs in the minds of

their pupils —they will have a belief component — these states are logically separable

from those beliefs. The conceptual distinction between beliefs and actions, beliefs and pro-

attitudes, and between actions and pro-attitudes means that educators are, at least in

principle, able to target non-cognitive states in order to bring about various outcomes (e.g.

other conative states or behaviours). To demonstrate how this might work, we can consider

a rather outlandish case adapted from Snook (1972, p.24)). Imagine a teacher who burns

the feet of her pupils to punish bad behaviour and encourage good. Here it seems possible

that the sadistic teacher is not particularly concerned with what her pupils *believe*. Instead,

she may simply seek to control the manner in which they *act*; to force them to *do* as she

tells them. In circumstances like these—or in those which involve less extreme

punishments but similarly seek to forcibly restrict certain forms of (undesirable) conduct—

it is likely that fear (or avoidance) will motivate the behaviour the teacher desires.[381]

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[380] This argument is broadly similar to Noggle's position on authenticity (see §4.4.4).

[381] Of course, we can also imagine a case in which pupils are rewarded for good conduct (either in addition to or instead of being punished for bad). In this situation, it would be the pleasant emotions aroused by the rewards which would motivate the desired behaviour.

Furthermore, it might also engender a *habit* of behaving in the requisite way; the pupil may begin to exhibit the expected behaviour automatically. And, what's more, we can imagine a version of the Snook case in which this habitual activity is what the teacher *really* desires (perhaps she is not sadistic but simply seeks to ensure that her pupils do not imperil their souls by acting immorally. She would much rather they just did the right thing without her having to burn their feet all the time).

As noted early in our discussion of indoctrination, a teaching process which leads to the development of a habit (rather than a species of closed-minded belief) is a form of conditioning; it involves the inculcation of compulsive or unreflective behaviour. But it seems evident that this is not the only type of conditioning possible. In his explanation of the difference between indoctrination, conditioning and force, John Wilson suggests that if a parent or teacher is successfully able to implant in a child an "irresistible feeling of repulsion" about a particular act (masturbation, for example), this is also a form of conditioning. (Wilson, 1972, pp.17-18) If Snook's teacher simply wanted her pupils to *feel* frightened when they contemplated behaving badly (even if she was peculiarly unconcerned about their future behaviour[382]), she would also be conditioning those pupils. On this basis, I think it is reasonable to assume that conditioning can occur in a range of contexts and is linked to a variety of pro-attitudes (desires, urges, values, etc.) In what follows, I will use the term 'conditioning' to refer to the general shaping of both habitual behaviours and pro-attitudes.[383] In cases where the specific kind of conditioned state is

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[382] This is probably the mark of a *true* sadist!

[383] As Wilson points out, this use of the word 'conditioning' deviates somewhat from the technical use of the word made familiar in the late 19th and early 20th Century by psychologists such as JB Watson, IP Pavlov and BF Skinner. I follow Wilson in an attempt to make only "very basic conceptual distinctions" rather than an identification of the precise psychological mechanisms through which the phenomena I discuss arise (see Wilson, 1972, pp.23-24).

relevant to the wider argument about faith-based education, I shall refer to 'behavioural conditioning' and 'attitudinal conditioning' respectively.

While both indoctrination and conditioning fall outside Green's *Region of Intelligence* (Green 1972), it is difficult to imagine that it would be possible or, for that matter, desirable to completely avoid the latter when raising or educating a child —a claim which, for reasons rehearsed in Chapter III, cannot be made on behalf of indoctrination. The difference between these two types of formation is partly explained by the fact that so much of what is conditioned occurs unconsciously; it goes unnoticed by both the conditioner and the conditionee. In many cases, conditioning is the unintentional by-product of living lives together with other people. This is not to say that *all* conditioning is unintentional. It is perfectly possible to consciously design a programme of interventions with the specific aim that individuals to whom those interventions are directed begin to behave or feel a particular way. Nor does it mean that, in its unintentional form, conditioning is morally good (or even neutral), or that individuals/institutions cannot be held responsible for failing to recognise or foresee the negative consequences of the conditioning processes in which they are involved. But, the fact that conditioning will often take place irrespective of our intentions does mean that those involved in the upbringing and education of children will need to be vigilant about the ways in which different types of interaction are wont to influence the behaviour and attitudes of those children. And, given the role that those attitudes and behaviours will play in a child's future capacity to determine the direction of her own life, parents and educators will need to think carefully about how to minimise the possibility that schooling and upbringing impact negatively upon the development of autonomy.

§6.3.2 Autonomy and Conditioning —Mapping the Constraints

In order to ascertain whether any of the newer forms of religious schooling we will discuss in the latter half of this chapter are capable of avoiding the charge that they are detrimental to the development of autonomy (or the skills which facilitate it), it is first necessary to remind ourselves of the features an action or conviction must have if it is to be properly described as autonomous. Recall that, according to Colburn's account:

> At any particular time [an agent] decides for herself what is valuable [she is autonomous] to the extent that two conditions hold:
>
> **Endorsement.** She has a disposition such that if she reflects (or were to reflect) upon what putative values she ought to pursue in her life, she judges (or would judge) of some such things that they are valuable.
>
> **Independence.** She is in a state where her reflection is, or would be if it took place, free from factors undermining her independence. (Colburn, 2010, p.25)

In the early stages of development, it is abundantly clear that children are incapable of meeting either of these conditions. The psychological and emotional incompetency of the young child is just the sort of factor which will undermine her independence and, since the preliminary, *proto-endorsements* of children will initially be based upon non-independent convictions and attitudes,[384] they are properly viewed as non (or, more accurately, not yet) autonomous.

Nevertheless, whilst the incompetency of children might license forms of intervention which would be unconscionable if they were to occur in our interactions with most adults,

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[384] Generally, those adopted directly (and unreflectively) from parents, educators and, in some cases, the wider society.

it does not mean that parents and educators may legitimately do as they like when they are in the process of conditioning or otherwise forming and shaping the behaviours, convictions and pro-attitudes of young children. As I argued in Chapter IV,[385] Robert Noggle is wrong to think that, because the early self looks as if it is "the only game in town", the sole grounds upon which we can dispute the legitimacy of early self-formation are those of whether the content is morally questionable; that is, whether or not the convictions themselves are morally abhorrent.[386] There are important additional constraints on the ways in which adults ought to influence children. Chief among them is the requirement that these influences do not hinder the development of children as moral agents; they must leave open the possibility that the adults whom children will eventually become can be held responsible for their convictions and pro-attitudes, as well as the actions they engender. Legitimate upbringings (and the educational processes they give rise to) must be "forward looking" and "responsibility-wise authentic" (Cuypers, 2009, p.133). And, since the autonomous life must be *self*-directed, differences in outcome (the varying degrees to which the disposition is eventually exercised in one's adult life) should be contingent upon voluntary choices rather than external impositions. Any form of conditioning which impedes a child's ability to determine her convictions by rendering them unable to satisfy the Independence and Endorsement Conditions — when those processes make (or threaten to make) a child's convictions content insensitive or opaque to reasons for example (see Chapter IV, p.20-21) —also threatens her autonomy.

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[385] §4.4.5.

[386] Because, for example, they will result in harm to others (as in the case of Edgar the Evil). Following Michael Ruse (2014), Dennis Arjo (who himself thinks the 'no harm' constraint is too weak to govern adult interactions with children) discusses this issue with relation to the possibility of a Nazi upbringing. Ruse sanctions a wide variety of "reasonable" forms of upbringing, but is nevertheless prepared to conclude that a Nazi upbringing would be morally "beyond the pale"—the convictions that the Nazi parent seeks to impart involve obvious harm to others (Arjo, 2017, pp.1-2).

The discussion so far illustrates that we have good reason to think carefully about the elements of our interactions with children we are able to control (or partially control) in order to avoid conditioning them in ways which override the development of their autonomy. I have said very little about the specifics of positive and negative conditioning and have given only a brief outline of what renders an instance of conditioning problematic. Just as it may be difficult to ascertain whether or not an individual's life is genuinely autonomous when considered from the outside,[387] it will sometimes be hard to identify which types of habits and pro-attitude and/or methods for imparting them constitute a genuine threat to the development of self-determination. As previously observed, many of our behavioural and emotional habits are the product of unreflective interactions with those around us, particularly our parents. As William Galston puts it, "loving and nurturing a child cannot in practice be divorced from shaping that child's values" (Galston, 2002, p.102). This is the case even if this "shaping" is likely to occur independently of any conscious decision by those parents.

But, whilst it is not necessary to have reflected upon a particular commitment or pro-attitude in order for it to be autonomous, it *is* necessary that I am not in a position whereby such reflection is impossible. I am likely to end up in this position if I have been indoctrinated and do not have the rational capacities necessary for such reflection, or if I have those capacities but am otherwise incapable of identifying of my own thoughts and feelings about the commitments I have. Furthermore, if I am *able to* reflect in the necessary manner, and the reflective process leads me to conclude I am mistaken about the value under consideration —that my desire for, positive attitude about, or commitment to a

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[387] Indeed, in cases where a person's convictions are grounded in reasons which are opaque to them, it will be difficult (or even impossible) for the individual herself to identify the extent to which she fails to meet the relevant conditions.

particular value was, in actual fact, erroneous—autonomy demands I must also be capable of eschewing that value and living my life in light of some other, more appropriate one. If my education or upbringing makes it particularly costly for me to adapt my life to suit my later commitments, then I am not fully autonomous.[388]

Here we can begin to see where the indoctrination objection to faith schools comes apart from the accusation that such institutions stymie autonomy. For whilst someone who has been indoctrinated will be unable to meet the conditions for autonomy because the barrier between belief and reason the practice constructs renders reflective revision an impossibility and violates her independence, the mere fact that someone possesses reflective capacities is not *sufficient* to make her autonomous. An autonomy producing education will need to go further than a rationality producing one. It will need to provide pupils with a particular kind of environment—one which makes self-determination a live possibility— but also work to cultivate the dispositional resources (conative as well as cognitive) necessary to live life in accordance with the decisions one makes.

This being so, it is unfortunate that most philosophical attempts to consider whether faith schools are morally permissible, even those which identify autonomy as a constraint upon such institutions, have regarded the question solely (or primarily) through the prism of indoctrination and the inculcation of belief. It is not so much that traditional faith schools (and the arguments pertaining to them) do not consider the formation of values and initiation into practices important, simply that, up until quite recently, little regard has been given to how these different types of formation might come apart in the practice of faith educators.

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[388] This idea is explored further in §6.4.

A number of recently developed pedagogical approaches to religious formation understand religious schooling in a different way from the traditional picture.[389] They see these institutions not as a site for confessional religious instruction, but as an opportunity for what I will henceforth refer to as '*priming*'. Priming pedagogies view faith education as a form of religious stage-setting. Pupils are initiated into religious practices and may well be (gently) encouraged to hold positive attitudes towards those practices and the values which underpin them, but institutions who are committed to this kind of approach will refrain (or appear to refrain) from the direct transmission of religious belief. Ultimately, proponents of priming may still desire that pupils who are exposed to it come to hold a faith for themselves. But the success of the enterprise need not be judged on the extent to which pupils end up joining the congregation; exposure could be regarded as a good in itself and enjoyed on this basis alone.

Before I fully assess whether faith schools which prime rather than indoctrinate their pupils are able to meet the requirements of an autonomy producing (or facilitating) education —or whether it is possible to prime successfully without indoctrination—I will consider an account which, on the face of it, suggests that, even when a form of education manages to leave the rationality of a child intact, respect for autonomy dictates that many of the practices we might identify with priming are illegitimate.

In a sophisticated argument against the permissibility of "comprehensive enrolment", Matthew Clayton (2006) argues that anyone who is committed to the value of autonomy as it pertains to the relationship between citizens and the liberal state— that is, anyone who believes that the state ought not to compel adherence to a particular conception of the good

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[389] See Whittle (2015; 2016); Cooling & Smith (2014); Cooling et al. (2016).

because to do so would amount to an illegitimate assault upon each individual's capacity to form and/or revise their own conception— ought also to be committed to the position that children may not be similarly enlisted or otherwise inducted into a comprehensive way of life by parents and teachers. If this account is accurate, it may provide us with grounds to reject the possibility that priming offers religious schools an attractive alternative to indoctrination or, if not, provide us with a set of constraints to distinguish legitimate forms of priming from their illegitimate counterparts.

6.4 Autonomy and Comprehensive Enrolment

One reason some liberal theorists[390] maintain it is legitimate for parents (and, therefore, teachers) to enrol children in comprehensive doctrines[391] stems from the fact that, as already discussed, children are not (yet) autonomous or capable of autonomy. Although, on most liberal views, this lack does not give parents carte blanche to inculcate their offspring with just any conception of the good— not only will restrictions apply to conceptions involving convictions which are likely to be harmful to the child (or to other people), but parents will usually have to ensure that they foster (or at the very least do not violate) the eventual development of autonomy—this form of liberalism offers parents the right to make a broad range of choices on behalf of their children. Indeed, in some cases,[392] liberals may even grant that parental rights extend to the provision of an initial framework of beliefs, convictions and commitments of a comprehensive nature.

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[390] E.g. Burtt (2003), Ackerman (1980), McLaughlin (1984) and MacMullen (2004; 2007)

[391] I use the terms "comprehensive doctrines" and "comprehensive conceptions of the good" interchangeably. Note that the epithet "comprehensive" is not uncontroversial, with some critics questioning "the normative value and descriptive adequacy of the term" (see Suissa, 2010). Nevertheless, in this context I use the phrase merely to differentiate between broadly (or partially) consistent world views and their associated systems of value and practice on the one hand, and stand-alone beliefs, pro-attitudes and actions on the other.

[392] As we saw in §1.6.

In contrast, Clayton posits that, whilst it is important to preserve autonomy as an *end-state* of education and upbringing (Clayton calls this "the end-state view" (Clayton, 2006, pp.88-89)), autonomy is also a *pre-condition* of comprehensive enrolment (the "pre-condition view").[393] In other words, an individual must be autonomous *before* any morally permissible attempt can be made to enrol her into a comprehensive conception of the good life or she can be requested to participate in its practices. And, according to Clayton's overall position, the only grounds a parent or educator could possibly use to circumvent the precondition requirement for enrolment are those justified by public reason; that is, according to principles that all "free and equal citizens may reasonably be expected to endorse" (Rawls, 1996, p.137).[394]

Before assessing the efficacy of Clayton's argument, it is worth explaining some of its background assumptions. Clayton conceives of autonomy as an individual's "capacity to form, revise and pursue her ethical convictions" (Clayton, 2006, p.11). But this "intrapersonal" dimension of the ideal represents just one of three key facets of the ideal. The autonomous person must also have an adequate range of options from which to choose and her convictions should develop in the right "environmental" conditions [395] (Clayton, 2006, p.12). Furthermore, her life should "[reflect] the convictions she has formed as a product of the *right kind of reflection* in an appropriate ethical context" (p.13). This ethical context will be partly distinguished by appropriate relations between the agent and other people. In order to be autonomous, the individual will determine her own ends and may

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[393] Note that the pre-condition view presupposes that legitimate educational processes will necessarily respect autonomy as an end-state so is more demanding than the end-state view.
[394] For example, if one was able to show that enlisting a child into certain kinds of comprehensive practice is conducive to some universally valued form of flourishing.
[395] This seems broadly similar to Hand's understanding of "circumstantial autonomy".

not be used as a tool or vehicle for someone else's conception of the good. Clayton calls this dimension the "interpersonal" condition of autonomy.[396]

For Clayton, the latter condition of autonomy provides an intrinsic reason to favour the pre-condition view and refrain from enrolling (or attempting to enrol) children in ways of life the truth of which is not affirmed by all reasonable people. Parents who defer attempts to bring their children into their own religious or cultural community better respect the ideal of independence (the guiding ideal of the Colburnian account I endorse) because they recognise their children as free and equal persons entitled not to be used to meet another's ends (even in the short term).

Clayton also argues there are good *instrumental* reasons to avoid comprehensive enrolment. Much has been made of the "stickiness" (see Gardner, 1988, p.95) of our early beliefs and values and, while young children are not as hopelessly credulous as some have been apt to conclude,[397] there is no lack of evidence demonstrating that the beliefs and, perhaps more importantly from the perspective of our current discussion, pro-attitudes and habits developed during childhood are more difficult to rid ourselves of than those cultivated in later life. Given that, "our interest in having the capacity for a conception of the good, which involves being able to form, revise, and rationally pursue such a conception is justified, in part, by considerations of our fallibility" (Clayton, 2006, p.106) —we may be wrong, for example, about the extent to which we are suited to a particular

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[396] Although Clayton's conception of autonomy can properly be described as falling into the same category of conceptions as Colburn's —Clayton also endorses a Razian understanding of independence as a fundamental characteristic of the self-determined life —the former's reference to the importance of convictions being formed as a result of "the right kind of reflection" suggests that it relies on a rather more content specific or "autarchic" view of what it is to be autonomous. However, since the two conceptions are motivated by the same concerns and may legitimately recommend similar educational policies, this difference need not occupy us too much.

[397] See discussion in §5.3.5.

way of life, or about the truth of the convictions it necessitates—it is important to safeguard the likelihood that individuals are able to consider and revise their values and attachments. Clayton illustrates the value of this capacity in an argument from the original position. When placed behind the veil of ignorance,[398] individuals who understand that they will be living in a world characterised by a plurality of values and who know that some of those values will be "more worthy than others" will choose to have the capacity for autonomy as "a means to their good" (Clayton, 2006, p.106). Although presumably, if we wish to avoid a version of the 'no moral experts' view,[399] the good in question will be the *opportunity* to escape those values which we later deem inimical to our well-being rather than any objective form of flourishing since, as Clayton points out in an earlier passage:

> The ideal of autonomy is not about the worth of one's ends or the truth of one's convictions, but, in part, about whether one's ends cohere with one's convictions. (Clayton, 2006, p.11)

In terms of instrumental benefits, Clayton's claim that we should allow children to develop a capacity for autonomy prior to encouraging them to form comprehensive attachments is grounded in a concern about the various difficulties a person might have in reflecting upon and adapting her way of life if she is subject to early enrolment. He outlines two types of problem this may cause. The first, already dealt with extensively in our discussion of indoctrination, relates to an inability to rationally revise *beliefs* because they are held on something other than a rational basis. The second, more pertinent to the question of the legitimacy of priming pedagogies, concerns the difficulty of abandoning certain practices,

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[398] See Rawls (1999).
[399] See §3.6.

behaviours, habits or attitudes in circumstances where the individual has already come to believe her convictions are rationally unfounded. In the latter case, the costs (emotional or otherwise) involved in abandoning early convictions may stymie autonomy independent of any rational capacities the individual has. Callan makes this point with reference to the example of a young woman who is attracted to a life outside of her own, closed religious community but who is also aware "her parents would reject her completely if she left". The woman knows the emotional fall-out likely to accompany any attempt to leave and adopt such a life would be unbearable and, therefore, chooses to remain. However, we would hesitate to call this a self-determined decision because it "reveals a kind or degree of dependence not consistent with being autonomous" (Callan, 1988, p.40). Clayton suggests something comparable in a brief discussion of G.A Cohen's distinction between difficult and costly actions. Here he assesses the case of Jane, a woman who is brought up "to believe that no woman should pursue a career during her childrearing years" (see Daniels, 1996, pp.220-221). Although Jane later comes to believe that this view is mistaken, she has genuine difficulty living her life in line with her new conviction that being a working mother is morally permissible because of the guilt this way of life causes her. In spite of the fact that she "disidentifies" with this feeling, it renders the decision to work "too costly in psychological terms." (Clayton, 2006, pp.106-107)

To be clear, Clayton does not deny that psychological costs may still be incurred when people revise autonomous convictions. However, his position suggests there is something particularly insidious about an inability to shed convictions for which we are not substantively responsible when the relationships from which they originate are necessarily characterised by a power imbalance. As Clayton puts it, "if parents enrol their child into a particular religion, she may find that abandoning it in later life is hard, not merely because

the ideals have an emotional grip that she finds costly to shake off, but because she would be rejecting the ideals of her *parents*" (Clayton, 2006, p.108)

As already noted, Clayton maintains it would be possible to justify comprehensive enrolment if an appeal for its benefits could be made to public reason. Clayton's understanding of this term is primarily Rawlsian in nature. Public reason places restrictions upon the coercive interventions the liberal state is entitled to make in legitimate dealings with citizens. According to this requirement, the only principles the state may compel citizens to act in accordance with are those which are "acceptable to their common human reason" (Rawls, 1996, p. 137); in other words, principles which every (reasonable) citizen will be able to accept. Since comprehensive conceptions of the good appeal to disputed (or controversial) principles, the state must refrain from imposing them. Clayton's argument against comprehensive enrolment takes the form of a parallel case. He accepts that the public reason restriction is appropriate to the political domain and proceeds to show that features of that domain are relevantly similar to the relationship between parents and children. He concludes that this demonstrates the public reason restriction must also apply to parent-child relations.

Although controversial, Clayton's initial appeal to the soundness of the argument for public reason as a means to secure the legitimacy of liberal democratic governments cannot be further defended here. Suffice it to say, if the reader finds the claim that states are only entitled to exercise political power with reference to ideals which appeal to public reason problematic, she will have good reason to reject Clayton's overall position. However, if one is minded to accept the public reason argument for liberal legitimacy, Clayton's argument has some force. He points out that, like the relationship between the citizen and the state (henceforth, the political relationship) the relationship between parents

and children is 1) "non-voluntary, in the sense we do not enter or leave it voluntarily"; 2) "coercive in virtue of its power being imposed… [and] backed up by the use of various sanctions" and 3) has a "profound effect on the lives of individuals" (Clayton, 2006, p.93). Similar conclusions could also be drawn about the relationship between the education system (or teacher) and the child. And, whilst schools generally form part of the apparatus of the state, the trend towards the veneration of parental choice in school selection[400] means that, in the current political context, educational institutions can be understood as occupying a liminal role between the two domains Clayton highlights.[401]

The fact that the parent-child relationship is involuntary, coercive and has a profound effect on individual lives leads Clayton to conclude that it ought to be subject to the same constraints as the political relationship. No state is entitled to impose its comprehensive conception of the good onto citizens as to do so would, by making each individual a mere vehicle for the convictions and values of the state, represent an affront to liberty and autonomy.Likewise (and for the same reason), no parent is entitled to impose a similar conception on her child.

Of course, it might be objected that there are relevant disanalogies between the relationship of the state to its citizens and that of parents to their children. For example, the family is expected to be a site of love and intimacy; parents are supposed to love their children in a manner that we would not expect to see in (and would be inappropriate to) the political relationship. Perhaps the *form* of relationship also engenders different duties with

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[400] For example, in the English system, since educational policies are now circumscribed by a quasi-market system according to which schools compete for pupils as a "unit of resource" Feintuck & Stevens (2013) the view that parental choice can be used to drive up standards has become akin to an article of faith (see e.g. May, 2016). This is despite the lack of conclusive evidence favour of the position (Allen, Burgess & McKenna, 2014).

[401] That is, between the political and the familial.

respect to comprehensive enrolment. One way to defend this position would be to show that the intimate relationship between parents and children is dependent on a shared (comprehensive) conception of the good life. Unsurprisingly, Clayton is relatively unmoved by this suggestion maintaining that, whilst there are instances where children "take up lives that their parents find 'alien and distasteful,'" and, as a result, become estranged from one another, there is little evidence to suggest this is "a universal phenomenon" (Clayton, 2006, p.116). Moreover, as Brighouse and Swift point out in a nuanced defence of the value of intimacy in parent-child relationships, the "fiduciary obligations"[402] of parents "often require them to be less than wholly intimate" with their children. This withholding of intimacy protects other interests those children have and can be seen in situations when the parent "masks her disappointment with… her child" or "her frustration with other aspects of her [own] life" (Brighouse & Swift, 2006, p. 93).

Parents and children clearly have an interest in the development of intimate, loving relationships; an interest which can only be fully realised if parents are entitled to exercise certain "associational rights" such as living and spending time with their children and "[revealing their] enthusiasms and convictions to [them]" (Clayton, 2006, p.116). These associational rights demand additional "control rights" for parents to determine how, for example, the child spends her time. Nevertheless, although the good of intimacy justifies such control rights, Clayton, Brighouse and Swift seem correct to think that this control ought not to extend "above and beyond [what is] necessary for the appropriate kind of associational rights" (Clayton, 2006, p.117). Intimacy cannot be used to defend parental actions designed to restrict the future development of a child, particularly when such

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[402] For an interesting discussion of fiduciary duties and autonomy in parent-child relationships, see Noggle (2002).

actions do not safeguard her interests in other respects; these interests will include her autonomy.[403]

In practical terms, the parent who demurs from enrolling her child in a comprehensive way of life will still be able to enjoy the good of intimate family relationships and will be permitted to decide what the family does on a day-to-day basis but:

> Just as a parent can take pride in the accomplishments of her children as dancers, scouts, footballers or musicians, without becoming any of these herself, so children may witness and take pleasure in their parents' comprehensive accomplishments without being schooled in the virtues and practices of the comprehensive conception or affirming its value. (Clayton, 2006, p.117)

A different objection to Clayton's position arises when we consider that, as we have seen elsewhere in our discussion of autonomy, the undeveloped nature of children licences many coercive interventions which would be inappropriate if those subjected to them were adults. Should the fact that paternalism[404] is usually deemed legitimate when the target *is* a child lead us to conclude that the imposition of a comprehensive framework is similarly permissible in the case of our dealings with children (who have yet to develop autonomy)?

This question echoes Noggle's objection to the view that initial selves can ever be authentic[405] and, just as Noggle's position can be rebutted if one is sensitive to the idea that

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[403] Of course, the intimacy argument in favour of comprehensive enrolment relates to upbringing rather than schooling. Even if Clayton, Brighouse and Swift are mistaken in their position on the role intimacy may legitimately play in parenting practices, it still isn't clear that a good which is appropriate to relationships in the home should extend to or be promoted by state run educational institutions. Perhaps it is legitimate for a parent to enrol her child in a comprehensive doctrine (and the practices associated with it) at home but the state (who will be responsible for the provision of schools) will also need to balance the good of love and intimacy in the family with a range of other public goods (educational and otherwise).

[404] Which can appropriately be defined as treating someone (generally an adult) *as if* they were a child (see Schapiro, 1999).

[405] See §4.4.4.

authenticity requires the existence of a certain kind of relationship between a child's initial and *future* self,[406] this new objection can be rebutted by considering the extent to which any imposition upon (or intervention in) the lives of children will be able to secure what Clayton calls "retrospective consent" (Clayton, 2012, p.355).

Recall that Clayton bases his argument against comprehensive enrolment on the claim that the relationship between parents and children is sufficiently similar to that between the state and its citizens to warrant analogous restrictions regarding what the former can impose upon the latter. In the case of the political relationship, it is argued that, "individuals should not be made to participate in particular practices or associations — religious ceremonies or churches, for example—without their informed consent" (Clayton, 2012, p.354). Children are incapable of giving such consent but, because "in the normal course of events the individual who is now a young child will later hold an informed view of how she was treated as a young child," she "can affirm or denounce the treatment" (Clayton, 2012, p.355).[407] This prompts Clayton to maintain that "children should be treated in accordance with norms that will command their retrospective consent or at least will not retrospectively be rejected"[408] (Clayton, 2006, p.355).

In our earlier discussion of the parallels between compulsory schooling and the case of Odysseus and the Sirens, we can see something like Clayton's thinking at work. Although children are coerced to go to school, this is an appropriate and legitimate form of coercion

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[406] One which entails she can be held morally responsible for the direction her adult life takes.

[407] Of course, Noggle's argument turns on the understanding that if one's *initial* convictions are relatively harmless in content but manipulated in a manner which ensures future endorsement (a process which, following Bertrand Russell's apocryphal anecdote in which a religious woman claims that the earth is balanced on an infinite tower of turtles, Noggle calls "bottom turtle manipulation" (Noggle, 1995, p. 102)) no wrong has been done. As we have already established that this is not necessarily the case and the position will not be defended any further.

[408] By *reasonable* adults.

because reasonable adults will eventually come to see the value of having received an education in childhood.[409] However, because liberal societies are, at least partially, defined by their irreducible and "comprehensive pluralism,"[410] it will be impossible to establish with any certainty whether a child enroled in a comprehensive way of life will eventually endorse it (and/or her enrolment in it)[411] and, therefore, if so enrolling her "will elicit her retrospective consent" (Clayton, 2012, p.355). Reasonable adults will differ with respect to their beliefs in and attitudes about their comprehensive conceptions of the good. For this reason, comprehensive enrolment into ways of life governed by controversial values and beliefs (those which cannot be settled by an appeal to public reason), is likely to be illegitimate. It is worth repeating that this does not amount to the claim that comprehensive enrolment is *necessarily* illegitimate. If enrolment can be demonstrated to have benefits which are themselves justifiable on the grounds of public reason,*[412]* then those practices may be legitimately sanctioned by liberal societies (Clayton, 2006, p.99).

Various liberal theorists of education have attempted to make the latter type of claim in order to justify an end-state perspective of autonomy.[413] For example, in a defence of religious primary schools, Ian MacMullen (2004; 2007) suggests that, by offering children a stable framework via which to evaluate their initial beliefs, behaviours and convictions, religious schools provide pupils with the "cultural coherence" necessary to *facilitate*

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[409] This is likely to be the case even if they are unhappy with the nature of the *particular* education they received.

[410] A state of affairs which arises out of the Rawlsian "burdens of judgement" in societies where "there is no agreement about [for example] the value of different religions, sexualities or occupational choices" (Clayton, 2012, p.355).

[411] Unless one actively attempts to secure a particular outlook through the use of practices which would violate an individual's ability to meet the Independence and Endorsement conditions, or to be responsibility wise authentic.

[412] The argument from intimacy can be framed as one such attempt, but, as we have seen, it fails on the grounds that intimacy can be achieved independently of comprehensive enrolment practices.

[413] See §1.6.

personal autonomy.[414] On this basis, he goes on to maintain that early comprehensive enrolment is likely to provide children from religious backgrounds with a "superior" education to that which they might receive in a secular or non-denominational institution (MacMullen, 2007).[415] For MacMullen (and others who defend similar end-state views) "enrolment is autonomy's friend" (Clayton, 2006, p.119).

MacMullen expresses the fear that children who are raised by religious families and educated in non-denominational primary schools[416] will be confused and unnerved by the experience. What is more, the result of this confusion could be that the development of autonomy is undermined:

> The total absence of familiar and reassuring language and cues and the presence of a large majority of children from families with very different ethical doctrines… threaten to disturb the young child's fragile sense of self. (MacMullen, 2007, p.186)

Clearly, this conclusion is based on a number of controversial assumptions, not least that the "Identity Diffusion"[417] MacMullen thinks may develop as a result of a child being placed in an educational context which fails to align with her home environment[418] is best addressed by making the school more like the home rather than vice versa.

MacMullen's focus on making the school more home-like can be explained by his stance on upbringing more generally. He grants a high degree of parental discretion in child-

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[414] See also Levinson (1999) and Ackerman (1980).

[415] McLaughlin similarly refers to the development of autonomy through religious upbringing and education as "autonomy via faith" (McLaughlin, 1984, p.79).

[416] MacMullen advocates an "age-sensitive" view of education for autonomy and maintains that primary schools should be subject to "less extensive" demands than their secondary sector counterparts.

[417] A term which MacMullen borrows from psychologist, James Marcia (1980), and describes an inability to make personal commitments owing to a tendency respond rather too easily to outside influences and change one's beliefs frequently.

[418] An empirical claim for which MacMullen provides remarkably little concrete evidence.

rearing on the joint bases of a child's interest in autonomy being "best served by developing [her] understanding of and provisional identity within [her] primary culture," (MacMullen, 2004, p.601) and pairs this with a commitment to the idea that "parents are people too" (Bridges, 1984, p.57). The latter assertion is designed to draw our attention to the idea that, because of the "major commitment" involved in being a parent and the fact it is "an activity of tremendous importance," we must be careful to ensure that it remains "a satisfying role for persons to play" and should not expect parents to become martyrs to the needs of their children (MacMullen, 2007, p.120). Although MacMullen still stresses that parents are not permitted to act in ways which will systematically or significantly damage their children's interests (particularly their interest in becoming autonomous), he is keen to acknowledge that parents are individual human beings with rights and interests of their own. They are, therefore, entitled to make decisions which serve those interests (and do not necessarily serve the *best* interests of their children).[419]

However, as our discussion of intimacy demonstrated, Clayton's pre-condition view is perfectly compatible with the idea that parents have a reasonable level of discretion regarding family activities.[420] Indeed, Clayton even argues that this may include attendance at religious ceremonies: as long as the *intention* is not to enlist the child prior to the development of her capacity for autonomy. "Parents who take their children to church in order to enable them to experience the traditions and practices of the church," but who also, "allow their children genuinely to become familiarized with other religious and irreligious traditions, may not violate their children's autonomy" (Clayton, 2006, p.110).

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[419] Here MacMullen invokes Callan's (2004) example of parents who wish to take "a musically talented and interested child" on a family holiday to Disneyland instead of investing the money in a piano. Callan concludes that the choice is morally legitimate even though it appears to go against the best (educational) interests of the child (MacMullen, 2007, p. 121).
[420] See also Clayton (2012, p.363).

The pre-condition view is not predicated on the idea that parents must do all they can to ensure their children become as autonomous as possible — as Clayton puts it, "a child's development of the capacity for autonomy is enhanced or hindered by a variety of conditions quite apart from her parents' choice of whether or not to enrol her into a particular comprehensive practice" (Clayton, 2006, p.119)—rather, it seeks to ensure that parents do not wrong their children by using them as a means to their own ends in a manner which fails to respect the status of children as free and equal persons who will eventually be capable of granting informed (autonomous) consent.

So, the need to recognise the rights and interests of parents does not seem to threaten the pre-condition perspective. But, if true, MacMullen's other claim— that comprehensive enrolment supports or facilitates the development of autonomy— has the potential to be somewhat more damaging. The idea is built on a further conjecture about the necessity of a "coherent primary culture" for the development of the capacity to independently assess and reflect upon one's conception of the good. But, whilst there is broad agreement that in order to evaluate one's convictions, one has to have something resembling convictions in the first place,[421] the claim that these *proto-convictions* will need to be comprehensive (or even particularly unified or stable) is less easy to establish.

There are a number of ways to resist the position that comprehensive enrolment is a necessary pre-condition for the autonomous life. For example, Clayton questions the assumption that, without a conscious attempt to provide a framework of beliefs and convictions, children will lack the requisite resources to develop their own. Children "are not blank slates" or empty receptacles waiting to be filled with convictions by an external

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[421] See McDonough (1998) for example.

source. Some (though not all) of a child's early beliefs, attitudes and convictions will develop as a result of an interaction between experience of the world and her own (natural) characteristics and "proclivities" (Clayton, 2006, p.120). Parents and teachers will clearly play a role in providing those experiences and the environment(s) in which they occur, but it simply isn't the case that a child who is not subject to comprehensive enrolment will lack a basic framework upon which to draw.

True, it might be objected that it is the fact convictions will develop in the absence of interference from adults which is the very thing that makes it so important that adults *do* interfere; perhaps conscious shaping represents the best way to prevent children from adopting pro-attitudes which favour wrong-headed or immoral ways of living. Nevertheless, if one is cognisant that parents and teachers may justifiably impart beliefs and convictions supported by rationally decisive evidence or justified on the grounds of public reason, this objection becomes less pressing. Parents can, for example, justifiably provide their children with an upbringing and education which cultivates virtues like kindness and generosity. According to Clayton's account, "parents are permitted and… morally required to impart a sense of justice to their child," (Clayton, 2012, p.362) in part, because of the role this "moral power" plays in taking our status as "full and equal citizens" seriously (Clayton, 2006, p.138)[422]. As an upshot of this requirement, Clayton is able to make an additional argument against the claim that *comprehensive* enrolment is necessary for cultural coherence: even if it is true that *some* convictions must be given rather than freely adopted, (enough of) the "embeddedness" invoked by MacMullen *et al*. can be cultivated through the development of normative or cultural frameworks which are

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[422] It can be justified by an appeal to public reason.

less than comprehensive. These frameworks could be multiple in nature[423] and might include a myriad of components apt to contribute to the development of identity over time.[424] But induction into a basic "liberal culture" could also provide the requisite components. Such a culture would include, "a raft of commitments and convictions, relating to the freedom and equality of individuals, a related conception of social co-operation, and of the norms that constrain individual conduct which flow from these ideals" (Clayton, 2006, pp.120-121). This seems to be a good enough standard by which to begin to be able to evaluate other conceptions of the good; to decide if they are more (or less) attractive than the provisional framework given in childhood and make decisions about whether or not to persue them.[425]

One objection to the idea that a basic liberal framework will be able to provide children[426] with sufficient resources for autonomy originates from the claim it is necessary to experience religion "from the inside" if the choice to (autonomously) take up a religious way of life is to be a live one. Just as one is unable to properly appreciate the beauty of a stained glass window from the outside of the cathedral (J.Milton Yinger, 1970, p.2), this position claims "it is impossible to develop an adequate understanding of religion *in*

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[423] Indeed, Phil Parvin has argued that by adopting the one-person-one-culture model, "culturalist" liberals—those who endorse the idea that cultural coherence is of prime importance to the development of autonomy—"present a skewed and simplistic account of individual autonomy and hence, of liberalism" (Parvin, 2008, 315). He goes on to produce an account of autonomy developed from the interaction *between* memberships rather than an affiliation with one such attachment:

> When reflecting on what we should or should not do in certain circumstances we do not retreat into a realm of pure reason, nor do we necessarily consult the set of ideals and values embodied in one membership or role. Rather we advance into the realm of lived experience in all its complexity and diversity. (p. 324)

[424] Clayton notes the importance of language as well as a "sense of… history" and "the values and virtues that animate [a way of life's] public culture" (Clayton, 2006, p.120).
[425] Of course, this would mean that, while (according to the Colburnian account of autonomy I endorse) individuals need not reflect on their values and convictions to be autonomous, adults who were the product of the upbringing and/or education the pre-condition view recommends would, in very many (if not most) cases have to reflect on their convictions. This system of child-rearing would be *de-facto* autarchic even though it is not based on a view of autonomy that requires autarchy.
[426]Particularly those from religious backgrounds.

abstracto" (McLaughlin, 1984, p.82). On these grounds, a "liberal culture" is insufficient to the task of giving a child the depth of knowledge necessary to enable her to evaluate religious convictions thoroughly. Since, it is argued, the posession of insider understanding will improve one's ability to select religion in an informed manner, it will also contribute to the development of autonomy.

Nevertheless, the *insider understanding view* cannot show that this sort of insight is necessary for autonomy, or that public reason is insufficient to the task of evaluating religious values in the first instance. Clayton imagines a non-religious adult with the requisite psychological and rational capabilities necessary for autonomy; she faces an adequate selection of (religious and non-religious) life-style options and is free of factors which might interfere with her ability to meet Colburn's Independence Condition. She has never lived a religious life "from the inside" but she has — as the "product of her rational reflection on questions concerning the origin of the universe or the nature and place of humankind in the world"(Clayton, 2006, p.122) — arrived at her own conclusions about these world-views (and the ways of life associated with them). If religious enrolment was *necessary* for the capacity to evaluate religious ways of life, then we would be forced to say this woman is not autonomous with respect to her atheism. However, this is counter-intuitive. It would be both unresonable and overdemanding to insist that, in order to be adequately informed to make a decision about what kind of life to pursue, a person must have insider experience of all of the lives she rejects. Perhaps a properly informed choice to adopt (rather than reject) a religious life *is* dependent on being acquainted with that religion in an intimate manner,[427] but this does not tell us why, since a capacity for

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[427] Although, even then, I do not think it would be reasonable to insist that an informed choice must rely on being thoroughly acquainted with all aspects of that religion.

autonomy *can* develop in the absence of religion (and, therefore, in the absence of this kind of understanding), we should favour early[428] comprehensive enrolment.

The possibility that children will be able to adopt autonomous lives in the absence of comprehensive enrolment suggests that, while there may be circumstances when the primary framework of convictions developed through this kind of upbringing provides the initial structure for what eventually becomes autonomous thought and action, either the practice is unnecessary for cultural coherence, or the importance of that coherence has been overstated. Nevertheless, to successfully defeat the pre-condition argument, positions like MacMullen's cannot rely on the claim that comprehensive enrolment will occasionally be compatible with the development of autonomy;[429] that there are instances when a religious upbringing will provide the framework of convictions necessary for autonomous evaluation to get off the ground. Unless it can show that comprehensive enrolment is necessary, the practice risks too much and cannot meet the public reason constraint.

By postponing enrolment until after the capacity for autonomy develops and refraining from any attempt to circumvent the will of the pre-autonomous child, the pre-condition approach better respects the interpersonal dimension of autonomy and, thus, the child's emerging independence. Since this aspect of autonomy both accounts for the (intrinsic) worth of the ideal[430] and motivates the public reason restriction on liberal legitimacy, the proponent of an end-state position needs to show that the latter is somehow better

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[428] i.e. pre-autonomous

[429] The latter assertion reminiscent of the claim, made by Colburn and others, that autonomy may *sometimes* develop out of heteronomy.

[430] Recall that autonomy is valuable because, by enabling each individual to take substantive responsibility for the direction her life takes, it lies at the heart of what it is to be a moral agent and is a key component of human dignity.

equipped to meet the intrapersonal and/or environmental conditions that give rise to it.[431]

However, the foregoing discussion illustrates that, thus far, even the most convincing

attempts to do so have been unsuccessful.[432] For this reason, it is necessary to favour the

pre-condition view and children should not be enrolled into their parents' (or teachers')

comprehensive conceptions of the good before they are capable of autonomous consent.

§6.5 Assessing Priming Pedagogies

The pre-condition view of autonomy makes it clear that comprehensive enrolment is

impermissible until such time that individuals are in a position to give their informed

consent to that enrolment. We may put this in a more Colburnian vernacular by saying

that, since individuals must meet the Independence Condition in order to be autonomous,

and comprehensive enrolment unduly threatens this possibility, it ought to be avoided.[433]

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[431] It would need to show that, despite appearing to make the child a vehicle for her parents' will, comprehensive enrolment creates a better "autonomy supporting context" or is better at fostering the deliberative capacities ("skills of agency") necessary to be autonomous in adulthood.

[432] This is not to say that such an argument could never be successful. Indeed, even Clayton is unconvinced that there is "a general refutation that can be deployed against every version [of the argument that comprehensive enrolment facilitates autonomy]" (Clayton, 2006, p.122). However, because all of the purported benefits of the end-state approach can also be achieved via the pre-condition approach, and given the risks to autonomy apparent in the former but not the latter, it seems reasonable to suggest that the pre-condition view should be the default.

[433] Observant readers will have noticed that, although both Clayton and Colburn's conceptions of autonomy emphasise self-determination as a form of independence (or "individuality") and endorse "autonomy-minded… anti-perfectionist liberalism" (Colburn, 2010, p.147), they differ in terms of the significance they grant to the *history* of an individual's commitments. Clayton insists that autonomy demands the relationship of an individual to her convictions is characterised by, "the right kind of history" and involves affirming those convictions with "the right kind of deliberation" (Clayton, 2006, p.11). But, for Colburn, the Endorsement Condition may be met by *hypothetical* approval:

> The causal history of our commitments is less important to my notion of autonomy than it is to some of the others I [have] considered… One's commitments having gone through a process of reflection might give us more *confidence* that they satisfy the condition, but it is certainly not necessary. (Colburn, 2010, p.26 my italics)

In other words, Clayton advocates a form of "autarchy" and Colburn does not. This raises the question of whether the pre-condition view is dependent on the claim that the autonomous person is, by necessity, one who has developed a *disposition to reflect* on her pro-attitudes in addition to endorsing them, rather than the mere *disposition to endorse* those pro-attitudes (if and when she does reflect). I would be inclined to argue that it is not. A person who possesses the disposition for endorsement but lacks the disposition to reflect *may* still be autonomous, but the requirement that she at least develop a *capacity* for reflection still provides adequate reason to refrain from comprehensive enrolment until such time as her "skills of agency" have

What is less clear, however, is where the boundaries of comprehensive enrolment lie and whether what I have termed 'priming pedagogies' constitute forms of this illegitimate practice.[434]

Although priming pedagogies can be interpreted as a way in which to maintain a form of education that is religiously distinctive whilst avoiding the ills of indoctrination,[435] Clayton is unequivocal in his assertion that it is, "impermissible to steer a person into a particular lifestyle without her consent" and that the pre-condition view, "prohibits religious formation that *does not prevent a child's development of critical capacities* as well as that which does" (Clayton, 2006, p.104). In other words, while the indoctrination of religious belief violates the pre-condition view, certain types of conditioning — those designed to

developed. To put in another way, the Colburnian conception of autonomy gives us sufficient reason to favour the pre-condition view. The pre-condition view is motivated by the worry that, while she has an important stake in the values and commitments she will have as an adult and her relationship to those commitments matters, the pre-autonomous child is *incapable* of giving her informed consent to comprehensive enrolment. Where individuals are incapable of giving consent to a practice and the practice under consideration cannot reasonably be shown to be necessary to their wellbeing or the relevant wellbeing of others (as with comprehensive enrolment), it is incumbent upon those in positions of power (the state, parents and educators) to refrain from acting until such time as consent *is* possible. A failure to refrain in this way may lead to the development of values, commitments and pro-attitudes for which the individual is neither responsible nor able to endorse in the requisite manner.

      Although the Colburnian conception of autonomy does not ground the value in a propensity to regularly evaluate one's commitments and pro-attitudes (or even require them to have a history which necessarily involves this kind of evaluation), the view that liberal states must demonstrate equal concern for the autonomy of all (future) citizens commits Colburn to an education system which, I would argue, ought to favour the pre-condition view. By avoiding deliberate attempts to inculcate comprehensive doctrines and refraining from involving children in the practices which underpin them, the pre-condition view of comprehensive enrolment better respects the interpersonal aspects of autonomy Colburn's independence (individuality) conception of the value regards as fundamental. It ensures that the will of those children is not bypassed in favour of the will of their parents or teachers and, in the absence of further arguments demonstrating that some other value, which can only be achieved through comprehensive enrolment, is worth prioritising over autonomy, or that, contrary to appearances, autonomy can only be developed via such enrolment, an autonomy-minded liberal like Colburn has strong grounds to defend this kind of political (and educational) arrangement.

[434] Clearly, when it occurs as part of an effort to get pupils to believe in the truth of a certain doctrine, indoctrination constitutes a form of comprehensive enrolment but it need not be the only form.

[435] This is the explicit aim of many religious educators, theorists and organisations (see e.g. Cooling et al. 2016) but, owing to the fact that the outcome conception of indoctrination I endorse demands that we will often need to disregard the goals of faith educators and look to the consequences of their practices, I reserve the term 'priming pedagogies' for forms of faith-based education that are demonstrably able to meet their aims successfully.

co-opt children into membership of a religious community[436]— may also be illegitimate from the perspective of autonomy (and even if they are not, or not primarily, designed to transmit religious beliefs).

Does this mean that — in spite of their avowed aim to develop the critical faculties of students and to "respect [their] freedom of religion and belief" (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p.2)— because priming pedagogies appear to constitute a form of steering (of religious formation), they are just as problematic as the indoctrinatory forms of faith-based education they seek to replace? There is, I think, good reason not to rush to this conclusion. When Clayton discusses comprehensive enrolment, he primarily refers to initiation practices like childhood baptism, communion and participation in religious ceremonies. Although he would clearly be opposed to forms of religious schooling which claimed to side-step indoctrination but still attempted to enlist children as 'fully paid up' members of their parents' faith community, it isn't as obvious that, given the diversity of priming pedagogies that exist, all will fall foul of the autonomy pre-condition or involve illegitimate steering. For this reason, it will be necessary to consider these positions in a degree of detail before dismissing them out of hand. In this section, I will examine four candidates for the term 'priming pedagogies' with a view to establishing whether they constitute comprehensive enrolment and, therefore, an illegitimate form of faith-based education. Of these four, I will conclude that two, 'What If Learning' (Cooling et al., 2016) and Whittle's non-confessional theory of Catholic Education (Whittle, 2015 & 2016) constitute 'priming pedagogies' which could, provided appropriate constraints are applied, be sufficiently adapted to meet the pre-condition requirement and avoid

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[436] Via participation in religious activities, habituation and the inculcation of particular emotional responses, for example.

comprehensive enrolment. Contrary to appearances, another, Thiessen's 'Committed

Openness' (see Thiessen, 1993 & 2008) should be dismissed because it is very likely to

involve indoctrination simpliciter.[437]

The final candidate (which will be considered first to frame the broader discussion) has

already been encountered in Chapter I. This is Hand's suggestion, inspired by a purported

opportunity offered by the devolved system of Academies and Free Schools in England,

that religious groups could "design curricula that are at once genuinely faith-based" and

"genuinely non-confessional" (Hand, 2012, p.558) so as to provide schools which are

simultaneously religiously distinctive and morally defensible. Recall that, when this idea

was initially considered, it was as a possible definition of the term 'faith school'. In this

context, it was set aside on the grounds that it constitutes a normative proposal for the

future of faith education rather than a suitable definition given current usage.[438] However,

we are now in a position to assess the efficacy of that proposal and, in what follows, I

argue that Hand's vision of faith-based education may also be adapted to avoid the charge

of comprehensive enrolment if the activities it offers are justifiable by appeal to public

reason (even if the configuration of activities on the curriculum was selected on religious

grounds). I go on to maintain that, since Hand's "Academy Challenge" (Gardner, 2014) is

more accurately described as a 'priming *curriculum*' rather than a priming *pedagogy* (it

pertains to what religious schools teach rather than how they teach it[439]) it may (or may

not) also be paired with (legitimate) priming pedagogies giving faith-educators a further

dimension to their educational practice.

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[437] And, even if it doesn't, is firmly rooted in an end-state position on autonomy which makes it inappropriate to the task of avoiding comprehensive enrolment.
[438] See §1.2 & §1.7
[439] Although Hand clearly makes stipulations which will impact upon pedagogy and the distinction between curriculum and teaching methods is not always clear.

§6.5.1 Hand's "New Dawn"

Despite his historically strong opposition to confessional religious schools, Hand's most recent work in this area has seen him distance himself from the assertion that religious schools ought to be proscribed (Hand, 2012). He now favours the view that religiously-minded educators ought to transform faith schools by discarding the confessional aims which currently render them morally unacceptable. These faith-*based* schools would still retain a religious character of sorts but would avoid "imparting religious beliefs" and thus indoctrination.

As we have already seen, Hand's primary motivation for suggesting that 'faith schools' become 'faith-based schools' is an opportunity afforded by the expansion of the Academy and Free School programme in England.[440] For this reason, he acknowledges that the precise recommendations he makes may not be suitable in alternative political circumstances, particularly those which favour "a single, centralised curriculum" (Hand, 2012, p.554) or are less ideologically committed to the value of school choice as a means to drive up standards.[441] Setting aside this reservation—we can assume that there is a core set of things that all children should know and still accept a fairly large degree of leeway with respect to the rest of the curriculum—Hand's basic argument for the legitimacy of the faith-based curriculum can be summarised as follows.

A school's curriculum "should, [amongst] other things, initiate children into intrinsically worthwhile activities" (Hand, 2012, p.552).[442] Although education must provide

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[440] Academies and Free Schools are state-funded, but have a greater degree of autonomy than schools which are run by the Local Authority (LA). These schools are not bound by the National Curriculum and enjoy other freedoms including the ability to set teacher pay and conditions, the length of the day and their own term dates (see DFE, 2017b).

[441] See footnote 401 (§6.4).

[442] Hand finds scholarly support for this position in the work of RS Peters (1966) and John White (2007).

individuals with the tools necessary to meet their basic needs, this is not a sufficient condition; we want children to *flourish* and, in order to do this, they will need to "participate in the kind of activities, projects and relationships that give meaning and purpose to human lives." (Hand, 2012, p.552). Given the sheer number of such intrinsically worthwhile activities, and the limited time available to schools, it is inevitable that numerous (often difficult) choices will have to be made regarding which activities to include on any curriculum. However, "since there is no robustly justified or generally accepted answer" to the question of how to select what ought to be included on the curriculum — Hand notes a "default answer" in the *status quo* according to which pupils are initiated into a selection of academic disciplines, but he nevertheless maintains that even this is not supported by "rationally compelling" (rationally decisive) arguments. (Hand, 2012, p.553) — a suitable method to determine which activities to prioritise might be to "invoke a specific conception of human flourishing in which certain kinds of activity and relationship are centrally important" (Hand, 2012, p.553). In the context of religious schooling, this would involve drawing the criteria for a faith-based curriculum from the religious conception of flourishing distinguishing the community responsible for running that school.

While Hand is justifiably reticent to make detailed pronouncements pertaining to the content of the faith-based curriculum,[443] he does not think that a genuinely "theologically informed" curriculum would look very much like the current academic curriculum. He also speculates that, at least as far as the Church of England and Methodist Church are concerned, a religiously inspired curriculum would be very likely to "assign relatively high

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[443] He explicitly argues that this must be "done by the religious organisations themselves" and that he will not "presume to do their theology for them" (Hand, 2012, p.551).

intrinsic value" to two key types of activity. These he calls "inquiry into the meaning of life" and "forms of service". The first are construed as activities pertaining to "existentially-engaged" attempts to establish the truth about the "significance, origin and purpose of human existence," as well as the practical implications this knowledge will have for each individual's understanding of the best way to live (Hand, 2012, p.554). The second, a set of activities with "the common purpose of helping others." (Hand, 2012, p.556)

There is considerable evidence for the view that the forms of activity Hand stipulates could quite easily be endorsed by Anglicans. Although the Church of England's most recent "Vision for Education," provides a Biblical justification for acquiring academic knowledge as a form of "wisdom-seeking" (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p.8),[444] it appears to place equal emphasis on "hope", "community" and "dignity" —terms not straightforwardly associated with the academic curriculum, but which may suggest similar activities to those Hand outlines in his sketch of "inquiry into the meaning of life" and "forms of service". For example, in a section on "Educating for Community and Living Well Together", the C of E document notes:

> We are only persons with each other: our humanity is 'co-humanity', inextricably involved with others, utterly relational, both in our humanity and our shared life on a finite planet. If those others are of ultimate worth, then we are each called to responsibility towards them and to contribute responsibly to our communities. (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p.7)

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[444] Somewhat undermining Hand's contention that the Church schools currently operate with the assumption that the commitment they have to offering a general education "implies a commitment to offering the *same* general education as schools of other kinds" (Hand, 2012, p.551)

This certainly looks like the kind of responsibility that would recommend curricular activities "whose primary purpose is to give help, relief or comfort to others" (Hand, 2012, p.556). Similarly, the assertion that a "special strength" of Church's "Vision" of education "for fullness of life" is to provide "a framework within which pupils and teachers can pursue the big questions of meaning such as 'Who am I?', 'Why am I here?', 'What do I desire?' and How then shall I live?'" (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p. 4) chimes with the view that a distinctively religious curriculum could be predicated upon an existential inquiry into the meaning of life.[445]

But, despite the obvious overlap between key aspects of the Church of England's "Vision" and Hand's suggestions for the content a faith-based curriculum, the overall argument in favour of latter must defeat a number of objections if it is to provide a feasible alternative to the traditional confessional model *and* avoid the pitfall of violating the burgeoning autonomy of pupils by illegitimately conscripting them into a particular faith. In his response to Hand, Peter Gardner complains that the purpose of the "Academy Challenge" will be unappealing to many of those with an interest in providing children with a religiously shaped education and wonders why faith groups with responsibility for schools would choose to take up the opportunity the new system offers them (Gardner, 2014,

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[445] It is less clear whether the faith-based curriculum Hand outlines would fit so easily with other kinds of religion. For example, in his discussion of the Islamic concept of education, J. Mark Halstead notes, "in Islam… there is no question of individuals being encouraged through education to work out for themselves their own religious faith or to subject it to detached rational investigation at a fundamental level; the divine revelation expressed in the [*sharia*] provides them with the requisite knowledge of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and the task of individuals is to come to understand this knowledge and exercise their free will to choose which path to follow" (Halstead, 2004, p.524). This suggests that religious confessionalism is more closely bound up with the principles of Islamic education than it may be with Christian education. Interestingly, and in spite of the appearance of a conflict between the idea of self-determination and the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence (*anatman*), Jeffrey Morgan has suggested that education for autonomy could be accommodated within a Buddhist conception of the good (see Morgan, 2013). Nevertheless, since the conception of autonomy he endorses is rather different to the one endorsed here (and explicitly rejects the notion of independence as an intrinsic value) this may also be somewhat of a dead-end with respect to adoption of the faith-based curriculum.

p.637). Of course, Gardner *is* correct to point out that Hand's proposition will only be attractive to faith educators who recognise that the confessional purpose of traditional faith schools is morally problematic; Hand is relying on the weight of (compelling) moral reason to do the work here. Since a number of those who endorse faith schooling also endorse confessional religious education, it seems correct to suppose, with Gardner, that the reforms Hand proposes are not ones this particular group have been "hankering for" (Gardner, 2014, p.637). Nevertheless, the rise of priming pedagogies (which, as we shall see, mainly originate from theorists *within* faith communities) does suggest that, even when the "nurture" aim stubbornly persists in some form,[446] there is a genuine desire among (some) religious groups both to avoid indoctrination and preserve the religious liberties of children.[447] So, the concern that faith educators will simply not be interested in responding to Hand's "Academy Challenge" is somewhat overplayed.

However, Gardner also reiterates a slightly more pressing worry that Hand himself raises; namely that, even in those cases where faith educators do desire to meet the challenge to provide non-confessional, religiously distinctive education, the aim is unachievable because it simply "opens the door to a subtler form of indoctrination" (Hand, 2012, p.557) and, as such, amounts to a form of "intellectual grooming" (Gardner, 2014, p.638).

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[446] As it does in various work by Elmer Thiessen (see e.g. 1993; 2007; 2008)

[447] For example, the Anglican "Vision for Education" stipulates that it is, "hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings" (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p.2). Similarly, in a discussion of the outcomes of a Jewish education David Bryfman argues:

> For Jewish education to be successful, it must be focused on making a positive difference in the lives of Jews today. This is foundationally different to Jewish education that has traditionally seen its purpose as making people more Jewish, allowing Jewish institutions to prosper, and making the Jewish community stronger. Instead, the significant outcome that Jewish education and engagement should be tackling is that Jewish educational experiences enable people to thrive as human beings in the world today—as human beings, in their various communities, and in the world at large. (Bryfman, 2017, p.10)

Hand is not entirely dismissive of this claim and observes that, "there is clearly something" to the idea that when we initiate children into worthwhile activities, this will usually involve the cultivation of an appreciation of the intrinsic worth of those same activities. What is more, this appreciation is likely to further influence judgements about what is valuable; to have an effect on the development of values and commitments (Hand, 2012, p.557). If a curriculum is based on a configuration of activities derived from what is most valuable to a particular faith tradition, it is not unreasonable to assume it may pre-dispose those exposed to that curriculum to the same configuration of values and, therefore, to the faith itself. Two questions then arise: first, does this form of influence amount to indoctrination? And, if not, does it nevertheless constitute a violation of autonomy via (behavioural and/or attitudinal) conditioning aimed at comprehensive enrolment?

Hand is, I think, correct to reject the notion that the type of influence exerted by the implementation of a faith-based curriculum is indoctrination:

> Whatever else may be going on here, *beliefs* are not being imparted by means of psychological manipulation or pressure. If my education has stirred in me a passion for helping others I shall be more drawn to conceptions of human flourishing which emphasise altruism than those which do not; but it hardly follows that such a conception has been imposed on me or that my capacity for rational belief formation has been impaired. (Hand, 2012, pp.557-558. My italics)

Although an individual's beliefs will be a partial and indirect product of the values she learns to appreciate during childhood, the process by which they develop may only be described as indoctrinatory if it puts (or is likely to put) pupils in a position where those beliefs become illegitimately separated from the reasons and/or evidence for holding them; if the transmission of those beliefs bypasses rationality. One can legitimately suppose that

a faith-based curriculum of the type Hand suggests will also ensure that (a) the critical faculties of students are not simply protected, but positively fostered; (b) none of the activities which feature on the curriculum (or the values which underpin them) put what is taught beyond question or revision; and (c) children are not taught to believe in the propositions which characterise the doctrine of the faith tradition which underpins the curriculum. So, by leaving the rationality of pupils intact and opening up sufficient space for individuals to reach their own decisions regarding their religious beliefs, Hand's faith-based curriculum can avoid the charge of indoctrination.

With this concern set aside, it might be tempting to jump to the conclusion that the faith-based curriculum offers the best solution to the problem of morally permissible faith schooling. However, that would be too quick. In order to establish whether the proposal genuinely constitutes a "New Dawn" for religious schools, we must first examine whether the influence which Hand acknowledges a faith-based curriculum may exert on those exposed to it constitutes a violation of autonomy and, more specifically, whether it amounts to a form of (surreptitious) comprehensive enrolment. Interestingly, a significant portion of Gardner's critique of Hand's position focuses on the worry that, in the event a school was to make pupils explicitly aware of the relationship between a specific religious conception of flourishing and the curriculum it inspired, the "clear articulation of the beliefs in question" combined with "an acknowledgement that pupils are doing what those beliefs enjoin" would amount to "an endorsement of those beliefs by those in positions of authority". For Gardner, this just is indoctrination[448] and so, to avoid it, he argues that faith-based schools would need to ensure they redacted any and all "religious reasons or

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[448] See also §5.3.5

explanations" for the selection of activities on the curriculum in their interactions with pupils (Gardner, 2014, p.639).

Given the foregoing argument and the overarching conception of indoctrination I defend in this thesis, it will be unsurprising to learn that I do not agree with Gardner's characterisation of the above situation. True, a faith-educator who revealed that the reason a particular set of curricular activities had been selected was because they were the best fit with a religious form of flourishing would, as long as she was also of the view that only activities of worth may feature on the curriculum, be endorsing those *activities* with reference to a specific worldview (a view which she and the school would, *ex hypothesi*, endorse). It is less clear that she would (necessarily) be *promoting* those values in a manner that would sever the relationship between the beliefs her pupils might develop with respect to those values and their reasons for holding them, or that the (explicit) endorsement of certain values by a person or organisation in a position of authority must similarly bypass the connection between belief and reason.[449] So, Gardner would need to demonstrate why the addition of an expectation that pupils pursue a selection of the general kinds of activities a faith doctrine recommends (bearing in mind that all forms of direct transmission as it pertains to religious belief will be omitted from the curriculum)

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[449] Endorsing is not the same as imparting and, while there are certainly instances where (supposedly) mere endorsement *is* manipulative (e.g. where it involves an implied threat), this does not strike me as such a case. Revealing 'I believe X' does not necessarily lead to indoctrination (just as concealing 'I believe Y' does not entail that I am *not* indoctrinating), because it may occur in a context where the pupil is fully aware that her own beliefs on the matter should be subject to evidence and reason; while finer grained methodological and contextual factors might give us an idea what the consequences of a particular instance of disclosure will be, it is these *consequences* which will ultimately determine whether the activity is indoctrinatory. Since it is possible for teachers to use the disclosure of personal perspectives, even those lacking rationally decisive evidence, as an effective pedagogical tool that does not bypass the rational faculties of students (see Hess and McAvoy (2015, pp 182-203) for an illuminating discussion of the pros and cons of withholding and disclosing controversial views), Gardner's emphasis on explicit endorsement appears to be predicated on a wrong-headed criterion for indoctrination. While teachers and schools will certainly need to be judicious in their use of techniques involving explicit disclosure, judgements about whether the practice contributes to manipulation can only be made when a significant degree of contextual information is available.

renders the faith-based curriculum problematic in this regard.[450] Providing pupils with a set

of activities deemed worthwhile on religious grounds (as long as those activities do not

include practices which pre-suppose or directly impart religious belief (e.g. 'collective

worship') is sufficiently removed from the practice of imposing or manufacturing belief so

it is held independently of reason and/or evidence. It nevertheless seems to me that there is

a genuinely worrying concern hidden in Gardner's objection, one which has to do with

something that happens *prior* to the adoption of belief. It is not that the faith-based

curriculum is indoctrinatory, it is rather that, by encouraging pupils to participate in and

have positive attitudes towards certain configurations of (worthwhile) activities, we may

illegitimately skew their capacity to determine their own pro-attitudes and, in so doing,

violate the Independence Condition of autonomy. If I am correct about this, then Gardner's

suggestion that we ought to be less than transparent about the rationale underpinning our

curriculum design might prove particularly problematic. This is because, especially in

those instances where pupils explicitly ask us to justify our choices, deliberate

concealment of the 'real' reasons behind our selections runs the risk of making the

appreciation and (possible) adoption of the values supporting our choices opaque to those

exposed to this (hidden) curriculum.[451]

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[450] Strangely, Gardner thinks it is the *explicitness* of the endorsement which causes the indoctrination issue since he appears to think the problem will evaporate if schools adopt a policy of non-transparency with respect to the religious underpinnings of the faith-based curriculum (Gardner, 2014, p.639).

[451] Incidentally, in a discussion of autonomy-promoting education, Colburn denies that an education system "designed to promote a certain valuable end" need "convey an awareness of that purpose," to be successful in the venture. Indeed, he even argues that sometimes, "the best way of promoting those values would be to avoid imposing any awareness of them" (Colburn, 2008, p.623). Nevertheless, it is worth noting not only that, in the context of state funded schooling, it would be both ethically and politically problematic to attempt to conceal the grounds for the selection of a particular configuration of curricular subjects from parents and the wider public, but that there is also a rather unrealistic prospect of successfully obscuring values in the context of the faith-based curriculum —should we, as Gardner suggests, alter the names of religious schools to conceal their origins?

To be sure, one response to this worry is to maintain that, unlike the heavy-handed traditional model of faith schooling, the kind of influence generated by a (lighter-touch) faith-based model is unavoidable. As Hand puts it, "any curriculum which includes some but not all worthwhile activities will be more congruent with some worldviews than others" (Hand, 2012, p.558), but, since no curriculum will be able to feature the full range of worthwhile activities available, we are necessarily forced to make choices. Nonetheless, as Hand is peculiarly unpersuaded by the notion that autonomy is a feasible goal for education, he may have also overlooked the possibility that the faith-based curriculum illegitimately constrains an individual's capacity to live a self-determined life.

Is it problematic if the faith-based curriculum leads to a pre-disposition to adopt a certain comprehensive doctrine? Or is Hand right to consider this an unavoidable form of morally permissible influence which faith-educators may legitimately utilise? To answer this question, it will be useful to return to Clayton's position on the comprehensive enrolment. With respect to the claim that the "shaping of one's child's values is an unavoidable part of parenting," Clayton has this to say:

> No one disputes this. The dispute between the rival accounts of autonomy and parenting[452] turns on the nature of the constraints of legitimacy with respect to this unavoidable activity. Adherents of the pre-condition view believe that seeking to shape children's comprehensive convictions is illegitimate, while imparting the virtues that are constitutive of public reason may not be. Those who hold a version of the end-state view operate with less demanding constraints of legitimacy so far as comprehensive ideals are concerned." (Clayton, 2006, p.114)

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[452] I think it is safe to presume that this argument will also apply to accounts of autonomy and schooling.

The question, therefore, becomes whether the indirect form of steering the faith-based curriculum appears to constitute is minimal *enough* to fall within the constraints of the pre-condition view. To address *this* issue, we need to reconsider the primary motivation for favouring the pre-condition over the end state view of autonomy. This is the fact that, while both conceptions appear able to foster the requisite (intrapersonal) skills necessary for an individual to be self-determining, the latter better respects the liberal imperative to show equal concern for persons by refraining from using them as a means to achieve the goals of (more powerful) others.[453] By waiting until each individual is in a position to consent to her involvement in matters which cannot be adjudicated according to public reason, the pre-condition view ensures that her deepest commitments are more likely to be her own. It may be inevitable that our lives with our children will shape their values, but we can avoid *trying* to mould those convictions so that they match our own, and, therefore, using those children as a vehicle for our own conception of the good life.[454] A major part of the harm in early enrolment resides in the fact that it is a form of influence which intentionally seeks to override the will of the individual with respect to her comprehensive values, not because it constitutes a form of influence *per se*. To highlight this, Clayton draws on the "relevant difference between intending to influence a child's comprehensive values and foreseeing such influence as a by-product of one's conduct that is differently

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[453] Even if that goal is the perfection of the individual who is being used as a means to its satisfaction (see Clayton, 2006, p.104).

[454] Here it may be objected that many parents who seek to impart religious values do so on the basis that they genuinely believe their concept of the good is valuable and that, by passing it on, they are doing the right thing for their child. However, since the same could be said for perfectionist states, this view does not absolve such parents from wrongdoing (see Clayton, 2006, p111). As we have seen, the value of autonomy does not lie in its ability to facilitate the most objectively worthwhile form of life. Parents have a duty to ensure that they facilitate the development of publicly reasonable beliefs, values, skills and attitudes (such as a sense of justice), but beyond this, they must respect that their children have a right to adopt or reject the values that they themselves hold sacred.

motivated" (Clayton, 2006, p.115).[455] While the former fails to pay due respect to the Independence Condition, the latter need not.[456] So, to determine the legitimacy of faith-based education (and other 'priming pedagogies') we will need to establish where they are located on the intending/foreseeing continuum.

On the face of it, both the provision of and choice to select a school with a curriculum drawn from a religious conception of flourishing look as if they will fall into the category of intentional (rather than merely foreseeable) shaping (or conditioning). It seems likely that parents who select even this 'diluted' form of religious schooling will do so on the grounds that the curriculum is based on values they believe are worth pursuing and, presumably, because they would like their children to consider those values with a view to adopting them as their own. Nevertheless, the conclusion that this desire will lead to illegitimate enrolment is altogether too swift.

First, it cannot simply be assumed that religious groups (particularly those who have demonstrated a desire to avoid indoctrination) will offer faith-based schools (or that parents will choose those schools) with the *intention* of enlisting pupils into the faith— not least because it conflates the *hope* that children come to value what we ourselves value with the *aim* that they do. True, it will often be difficult to establish the *real* aims of any one organisation or person, but it does not seem impossible to imagine a situation in which

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[455] Clayton uses the example of the influence exerted on food preferences by the diets children are offered during their upbringing to emphasise his point: " the inevitable effect of… different diets will be a difference in eating preferences when the child becomes an adult. But if the *aim* of the parents is simply to offer a balanced diet, this inevitable shaping of the children's preferences does not constitute a violation of their autonomy" (Clayton, 2006, p.115).

[456] Although it is worth re-iterating that violations of autonomy may still occur irrespective of one's aims if one has failed to pay due care and attention to the side-effects of a particular practice or behaviour.

religious groups (and the parents who form part of those groups) are genuinely open to the idea that children must develop their commitments voluntarily.

Second, the justification for the *configuration* of activities the curriculum offers may be drawn from a religious conception of flourishing without the activities themselves being solely (or even primarily) predicated upon that same conception of flourishing. Recall that the reason for sanctioning appeals to controversial conceptions of the good in this context was because we need a method to adjudicate between the myriad of worthwhile activities that could go on the curriculum, but there exist no robustly defensible means by which to do this. Given the importance of autonomy and the necessity of avoiding practices which amount to enrolment without consent, I would suggest it is sensible to assume that the only kinds of worthwhile activities educators may legitimately include on the curriculum are those which are justifiable by appeal to public reason. This would exclude activities such as prayer, worship and evangelism, not simply because they involve the inculcation of beliefs lacking rationally decisive evidence, but because, when we insist children participate in such practices we make unfounded assumptions about their commitments and co-opt them into comprehensive ways of living without informed consent. But, even when the set of worthwhile activities is constrained by public reason, the problem of curriculum selection remains; there are still far more publicly justifiable forms of worthwhile activity than there are slots on any, necessarily finite, curriculum.[457]

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[457] In the past few years, a slew of articles about what ought to be on the curriculum have appeared in the mainstream press. From chess to coding, philosophy to financial management, suggestions regarding curricular content are a regular feature of educational discourse. (See e.g: Gurney-Read, 2014; Bajarin, 2014; Mercieca, 2014; D'Olimpio, 2014) The response from critics (many of them teachers) is not so much to deny that the proposed activities are valuable, but to point out that teachers lack the time (and resources) to be able to teach them effectively. (See Doughty, 2015; The Money Charity, 2017).

Although one could insist that the selection rationale for the worthwhile activities featured on any school's curriculum must itself be justified by an appeal to public reason, it is not clear why this would be necessary if the initial set of activities available had been pre-selected on the basis they met this demand.[458] The purpose of the public reason restriction is to ensure that children are treated, "in accordance with norms that are capable of acceptance by any free and equal person" (Clayton, 2006, p.92). As a public reason constraint on the *nature* of all legitimate activities would ensure that everything available for inclusion on the faith-based curriculum would, necessarily, meet this condition, a selection process which drew on a particular conception of human flourishing in order to *group* these activities would only undermine the motivating principle if it somehow failed to include activities deemed to be of particular worth for *all* children (e.g. basic literacy and numeracy). Since this condition could be met via the introduction of a universal, core curriculum, I see no reason why the peripheral curriculum could not legitimately be selected on the grounds that some groups of activities correspond more closely to those advocated by religious doctrines (or even other kinds of comprehensive doctrines) than others. This kind of curriculum would maintain a religiously distinct flavour, but simultaneously avoid the dual wrongs of indoctrination *and* comprehensive enrolment.

Of course, one objection to the filtering process advocated here is already evident in Gardner's worry that faith schoolers will reject the faith-based approach because they cannot be persuaded of the worth of renouncing their confessional aims. By requiring schools to "eschew the promulgation of their religious beliefs" *and* base their curriculum

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[458] This move would also serve to address the concern, raised by Peter Gardner, that religious organisations "cannot copyright life's important questions" (Gardner, 2014, p.641). Inquiry into the meaning of life is a publicly justifiable activity and, as such, will be valuable to people holding a myriad of conceptions of human flourishing. The distinctiveness of a faith-based curriculum will derive from the unique combination of activities it offers, not the fact that the activities it offers are uniquely valuable to religious people.

on a range of publicly justifiable activities (even if the precise configuration of those activities may be selected on the grounds of a contested, religious conception of human flourishing) it could be claimed that the faith-based model requires too much or even something contradictory; that it effectively asks religious schools to strip out the distinctive essence of the conceptions underpinning them, whilst remaining distinctive with respect to those conceptions. Though it may be possible to participate in activities which align with religious conceptions of the good without faith, it may be argued that "deeds with faith are better than deeds alone" (Gardner, 2014, p.640) and, until one is fully invested in one's religion, the true value of religiously-grounded activities cannot be accessed. Yet, one does not need to reject this claim in order to support the faith-based position. One can acknowledge that the value of a religious conception of flourishing may only be fully enjoyed by paid up members of a congregation and recognise that, when they resist the urge to enrol children in a specific conception of flourishing, religious groups lose a convenient shortcut pertaining to that membership, while still maintaining that both membership and full enjoyment of the goods it entails should be reserved for those who are capable of informed consent. The faith-based curriculum does not pretend to offer a way for faith schools to remain as they currently are. Its purpose is to open up space for morally legitimate, religiously informed educational practice which avoids indoctrination and comprehensive enrolment. As we saw in the previous chapter, faith is a form of *doxastic venture* which involves "a willingness to commit to acting on the proposition one has faith in without looking for further evidence for or against that proposition" (Buchak, 2014, p.54). Since this venture entails an element of risk — the risk that we are wrong about something of great importance; the risk that we may change our mind about our commitments in future —each of us must be allowed to decide to embark on it of our own

volition rather than have it imposed upon us. We must be able to bear responsibility for the risks we take. If this conclusion is to be regretted by certain religious groups, these are regrets I am likewise prepared to bear.

§6.5.2 From the Priming Curriculum to Priming Pedagogies

We have seen that a modified version of Hand's faith-based curriculum can adequately provide religiously minded educators with a way to side-step accusations that religious schools[459] necessarily involve indoctrination and the violation of autonomy. However, Gardner's worry that the removal of confessional practices from schools is, in the words of Cardinal Newman, "to take the spring from the year" and "imitate the preposterous proceeding of those tragedians who represented drama with the omission of its principle part," (Newman, 1923, pp.69-70[460]) may still provide us with a practical reason to seek a form of religiously distinctive education which goes further than a religiously derived curriculum. If we seek to persuade the providers of religious schools to distance themselves from their traditional, morally indefensible aims, we may need to do more to accommodate their needs than the faith-based curriculum allows. If it is possible to establish religiously distinctive pedagogies[461] which similarly avoid indoctrination and

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[459] Note that from now on I will only use the term 'faith school' to denote schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith or inculcate/compel adherence to particular religious beliefs, values and/or practices.

[460] Cited in Gardner (2014, p.644)

[461] At this point, it might be objected that, because I reject the method criterion of indoctrination, the decision to investigate religious pedagogies (that is, religious teaching methods) is a peculiar one. Nevertheless, my rejection of the method criterion as a necessary or sufficient condition for indoctrination was rooted in the idea that paying attention to the methods a teacher uses will not, by itself, be able tell us whether she is indoctrinating – in order to know for certain, we will need to look at the consequences of the methods being used. The outcome criterion of indoctrination I endorse provides us with the necessary conceptual distinction between indoctrination and other forms of teaching, but, from an empirical perspective, it might well be possible to predict the *likelihood* of children developing the characteristic state of mind indoctrination involves by focusing on a range of contextual factors (including method). The problem with the traditional, confessional model of religious education is that, because it involves imparting beliefs which cannot be imparted rationally, it necessarily involves indoctrination. For priming pedagogies to be defensible in this respect, all that needs to be shown is that they need not involve indoctrination; that they *may* be successful without bypassing the reason of pupils. Since it is *possible* to indoctrinate any kind of belief, if I am able to

comprehensive enrolment, then this could provide us with an additional means to avoid the harms of the traditional model.

Due to the (deservedly) pejorative meaning that indoctrination has developed over recent history,[462] faith educators have made numerous attempts to demonstrate why the education they offer does not constitute indoctrination (or is an example of 'good indoctrination'). As we have seen, most of these attempts fail either because they are prefaced on a misunderstanding of the nature of indoctrination or because they do not acknowledge that, even if it can be held rationally by individuals, religious belief cannot be transmitted directly from teacher to pupil in a similarly rational manner.[463] For this reason, we need to be wary that the pedagogies we call 'priming pedagogies' are not simply examples of straightforward indoctrination dressed up as an alternative to the *status quo.* To illustrate this point, I will briefly examine an 'alternative' strategy —Thiessen's 'Teaching for Committed Openness — which, while its creator claims respects "ordinary rationality" and "ordinary autonomy" (Thiessen, 1993, p.106 & p.27), I will argue is essentially a version of the traditional model. I will then analyse two genuinely innovative proposals — 'What If Learning' and Whittle's theory of Catholic education— with a view to establishing whether, in addition to bypassing indoctrination, they can meet the demand to avoid comprehensive enrolment.

§6.5.3 Teaching for Committed Openness

Elmer Thiessen's theory of "Teaching for Committed Openness" (henceforth TCO) has been hugely influential in the field of Christian Education. Indeed, Trevor Cooling (whose

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establish the conclusion that priming pedagogies are able to avoid indoctrination this will not be a guarantee that educators who use these methods are, therefore, *incapable* of indoctrination.
[462] See §2.1.
[463] See §5.3.2 & §5.3.3.

work on "What If Learning" we will discuss in the next section) describes feeling a "sense of elation" when he first encountered Thiessen's concept of "normal rational autonomy" because:

> In just three words, this clear and insightful concept affirmed the activity of religious nurture but stood firm against Christian propensities to seek justification for engaging in indoctrination. (Cooling, 2013, p.259)

On the face of it then, TCO looks as if it might legitimately be able to lay claim to the title "priming pedagogy"— a method of religious teaching which seeks to initiate children into faith based practices and cultivate positive pro-attitudes with respect to a particular religion (religious conditioning), but views indoctrination as a morally impermissible practice and insists that pupils must become open minded, critical thinkers.[464] Of course, even without going into further detail with respect to the kind of teaching activities entailed by the view, the name "*Committed* Openness" itself suggests the perspective may fall foul of the imperative to respect autonomy as a pre-condition. This *prima facie* observation is substantiated by Thiessen's exposition of the approach in which he explicitly argues that, although parents and educators may not indoctrinate,[465] "[they] should boldly initiate their children into the Christian faith" (Thiessen, 1993, p.244). This "initiation" will "provide a solid mooring in the present and the particular from which their children can then expand their horizons" (Thiessen, 1993, p.245). In other words, TCO is fundamentally predicated on an end-state view of autonomy and, therefore, permits (indeed, recommends) comprehensive enrolment into the Christian faith. This makes it

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[464] Thiessen claims to find extensive scriptural support for thinking critically, not least because of the importance of truth and of not being deceived by those with evil intent (see Thiessen, 2008).

[465] The "core idea" of which he claims is "the curtailment of a person's growth towards normal rational autonomy" (Thiessen, 1993, p.233).

inappropriate to the task of providing a morally defensible form of religiously distinctive education.

What's more, even if the 'commitment' aspect of the TCO approach could be adapted to ensure that pupils were prepared for the *possibility of* commitment rather than merely enlisted into a Christian way of life prior to the development of autonomy and without informed consent —— a remote prospect given Thiessen's aim to defend the idea that healthy commitment[466] "is a *sine qua non* of happiness, self-realisation and peace of mind" (Newman, 1986, p.9 cited in Thiessen, 1993,p.276) —— the position cannot avoid the charge of indoctrination *simpliciter*. Thiessen asserts that, since it is possible to hold religious beliefs rationally, it follows that they may also be *imparted* rationally (Thiessen, 1993, p.114). But, as we have seen, while it would not be true to say that *all* religious belief is irrational belief,[467] the conclusion is erroneous: I may hold my religious belief in a rational manner but, until such time as the evidence which supports it is *rationally decisive* — compelling to all rational agents— I have no business expecting you to learn that my belief is true. This is the case even if, contemporaneously, I encourage you to develop critical thinking skills. While the ability to reflect upon and question my teachings may lessen the likelihood that you unreflectively believe what I tell you about the truth of a particular religious proposition, it will not detract from the fact that, to the extent that you come to believe it *because* I told you, that belief will be held separately from reason.[468]

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[466] Thiessen is sensitive to the concern that unhealthy forms of commitment such as "fanaticism" and "intolerance" may develop as a result of certain kinds of teaching for commitment (Thiessen, 1993, p. 276; Thiessen, 2007, p.44), but does not appear to recognise that these are not the only ways in which commitment can be unhealthy or that "critical openness" is unlikely to be the solution once certain pro-attitudes and behaviours have become second nature.

[467] Believers may have good reasons for their personal faith positions.

[468] Unless I regard you as an intellectual authority on religious matters which (for reasons discussed in Chapter §5.3.5) would simply relocate the site of indoctrination.

So, TCO does not seem able to deliver on its promise of a distinctively religious education free from indoctrination. Not only does it violate the autonomy of pupils by unnecessarily enrolling them in a comprehensive conception of flourishing before they have developed the wherewithal to give informed consent to that enrolment, but, because it sanctions the transmission of religious propositions (albeit with the caveat that pupils should be relatively open-minded and taught to think critically), it is likely to involve indoctrination. Perhaps an alternative theory will prove more fruitful.

§6.5.4 What If Learning

The "What If Learning" approach (henceforth WIL) aims to "meet the desire to teach Christianly across the whole curriculum" and explicitly claims to be "distinctively Christian," (Cooling, Green, Morris & Revell, 2016, p.5). Proponents nevertheless propose that the pedagogy is, "appropriate for students from a variety of backgrounds, whether religious or not" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.22).

WIL was inspired by a range of work by David I Smith (Smith & Carvill, 2000; Smith & Smith, 2011) who, as a teacher of modern foreign languages, observed that language lessons were primarily prefaced on the idea that pupils should become suitably prepared to become effective tourists and consumers while abroad[469] (Cooling et al., 2016, p.27). Troubled by this somewhat one-dimensional perspective of the role of foreign languages, Smith began to wonder whether a "distinctively Christian" approach to the subject might offer a new way of thinking about language acquisition and the underlying conception of the type of person it is supposed to produce. He posited that a more Biblical interpretation

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[469] This is partially evidenced by the prevalent role played by activities relating to "achieving successful commercial transactions whilst on holiday" in language classes (see Colling et al., 2016, p.27)

of the purpose of language learning would be "to equip [pupils] to love their neighbour by building hospitable relationships with native language speakers" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.27). Using and building upon the concepts of imagination, participation, reification and repertoire as expressed in Etienne Wenger's (1998) work on "communities of practice," Cooling et al. describe how Smith developed the idea that:

> Every classroom experience develops the students' *imagination* of what they are doing in their learning their *participation* in the learning experiences encountered in the classroom and beyond. Indeed, this imagination is *reified* through teacher-designed practices and classroom designed practices and classroom organisation, which together become a *repertoire* of habits that characterise particular classrooms. Experiencing these in a classroom inducts students into a community of practice. (Cooling et al., 2016, pp.27-28)

Via their participation in activities which involved a repertoire of consumerist transactions, pupils in the traditional language classroom were being inducted into a community of practice which revolved around the "tourist imagination". With Smith's alternative pedagogy, language students were instead "learning to become good at offering hospitality to strangers". Cooling et al. interpret this as marking a shift from a (secular, capitalist) concern for one's own immediate interests (or "self-love") to "love of others expressed through offering Christian hospitality to the stranger or the alien" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.28).

To transform a teaching activity using WIL pedagogy, Christian educators are required to apply the following three steps:

1) *Seeing Anew*

This involves identifying "the distinctively Christian purpose or *telos* of a teaching moment" by looking at the "imagination" the current approach engenders and thinking about the subject matter from a Biblical[470]perspective (Cooling et al., 2016, p.29)

2) *Choosing Engagement*

Once teachers have reimagined the purpose of the learning that is taking place, they must carefully select not only the activities in which their pupils will participate but the way they are expected to *engage* with those activities. So, guidance for teachers on the WIL website recommends:

> For any given lesson, we have to choose the ways of engaging that best fit our learning goals and support the new way of seeing we are inviting students to share. This means paying attention to whether the ways in which we enable learners to participate in class, and our own participation, are really conducive to spiritual and moral growth. The central issue is not the ideas and information to be learned, *but how each person in the class is to relate to them and to one another* (What if Learning, 2017. My italics).

When "choosing engagement", teachers will be identifying how children need to engage for the renewed form of imagination to be a realistic prospect.

3) *Reshaping Practice*

This is the point at which teachers restructure what they do in the classroom in light of the previous two steps. Having *seen anew* and considered "the kinds of

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[470] Presumably, this practice could be adapted to fit with a wide range of conceptions of flourishing. An Islamic teacher might reimagine from an Islamic perspective and a Jewish teacher, from the perspective of Judaism.

interactions and engagement with people and the world that [they] want to

encourage" (What If Learning, 2017), teachers have to put their overall vision into

effect. In other words, they will need to develop habitual classroom practices

according to the Christian perspectives they have identified.

Both WIL and the faith-based curriculum rest on the idea that religious schools may

legitimately select teaching activities on the grounds of a religious conception of

flourishing. However, the WIL approach entails that Christianity is woven into the fabric

of the *practice* of education in Christian schools, not simply at the level of curriculum, but

also through ethos and pedagogy. In other words, the faith-based curriculum proposes a

"priming curriculum" whereas WIL proposes a "priming curriculum"[471] as part of a

broader "priming pedagogy". That is to say, the two approaches can be paired (as they are

in WIL) or separated out (as they are in the basic version of the faith-based curriculum).

One criticism the "priming pedagogy" approach might raise is that, by smuggling religious

beliefs and values into the teaching of traditionally non-religious (secular) subjects, it runs

the risk of indoctrination. Recall that the faith-based curriculum could avoid this charge

because the choice of a configuration of curricular activities with an affinity to particular

religious conceptions of flourishing would not be any more likely to lead to an illegitimate

separation between belief and reason than other rationales for this (unavoidable) selection

process. However, by bringing Christian perspectives directly into the classroom and

creating a "blended relationship" between theology and education, it could be argued the

WIL approach constitutes "an opportunistic [attempt] to bolt on Christian beliefs" (see

Whittle, 2014, p.192) either in an inappropriate manner or in areas of the curriculum

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[471] Although it is largely derived from the traditional (academic) curriculum.

where, given their controversial nature, such beliefs don't belong. From a theological viewpoint, this could be deemed problematic because it turns Christianity into "a bonus or enhancement" to what is taught in non-denominational schools — the icing on the "educational cake" —instead of an integral aspect of the educational process.[472] But, more worryingly from our current perspective, it may also manipulate students into adopting Christian beliefs (and accompanying values) by bypassing their critical faculties (see Whittle, 2014, p.192). For example, in his criticism of WIL, Whittle suggests that the approach could recommend that the concept of tithing[473] be used to teach percentages or fractions in mathematics classes. Although this religious concept is innocuous enough (especially if interpreted as a form of charity), there are clear parallels between the use of value laden examples in this context and the way mathematical exercises were used to develop and enforce the Nazi ideology in Germany during the Second World War.[474] While the manner in which such examples are discussed and engaged with will be pivotal in determining whether their use will result in indoctrination, it seems reasonable to worry whether deliberate attempts to "*lever*, *shoe-horn*, or *strong-arm* God into the curriculum" (Cooling and Smith, 2014, p.208) [475] will also put the views pupils develop beyond rational assessment.

Whether the accusation that WIL leads to indoctrination can be made to hold water very much depends on how the pedagogy is applied. Part of the reason the method criterion of

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[472] This is a phrase that Whittle uses although, in their response, Cooling and Smith explicitly reject that this is the purpose of WIL (Cooling & Smith, 2014, pp. 207-209)

[473] The practice of donating a proportion (traditionally 10%) of one's income or produce to the church (or other religious organisation).

[474] For example, one maths textbook at the time featured the following question: "In Germany the people of foreign [alien] race are the Jews. In 1933 the German Reich had 66,060,000 inhabitants. Of those, 499,682 were practicing Jews. How much is that in percent?" (Epstein, 2014, p.77) This problem was designed to foster the 'Nazi imagination'.

[475] Cooling and Smith explain that the terms in italics are all examples of those used by teachers participating in research into the efficacy of WIL.

indoctrination was rejected in an earlier part of this thesis was because we cannot consider

the legitimacy of a particular methodology apart from its likely consequences. These

consequences depend on a range of contextual features, not least the epistemic status of the

beliefs a method is intended to transmit and whether it even amounts to a form of *belief*

transmission in the first place. It seems plausible to think the tripartite process of *seeing*

anew, *choosing engagement,* and *reshaping practice* could be marshalled in a manner

which (dependent on the form of activity and engagement selected) has the potential to

lead to straightforward indoctrination, but this doesn't seem to be a *necessary* upshot of the

WIL approach. For instance, one of the examples given on the What If Learning website is

a primary science lesson about photosynthesis. The teacher, Adam, sought to ensure that

his pupils, who were conducting an experiment that involved growing cress in different

conditions, engaged with the idea that, far from being an "isolated fact," the process of

photosynthesis demonstrates the "interconnectedness of everything". Enthused and

puzzled by the notion that "plants, animals and humans are all interdependent," one pupil

wondered how the world came to "fit together" in this way. The lesson thereby gave pupils

an opportunity to experience "wonder" and "was consistent with acknowledging a

creator…"[476] (What If Learning, 2017).

In this case, whether WIL could be thought to have facilitated indoctrination is partially

dependent on Adam's response to the 'opening up' of a potentially spiritual or religiously

orientated discussion. It seems clear that if he either declined to address the pupil's

question (perhaps by saying that, while the scientific consensus regarding how biological

processes developed assumes evolution and natural selection, there is no consensus

regarding the ultimate reason there is something rather than nothing) or threw it open to an

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[476] Although, in the example we are informed that Adam did not, in actual fact, discuss this matter.

undirected class discussion, the accusation of an attempt to indoctrinate would be unfounded and the symptomatic state of mind highly unlikely to develop. The WIL approach explicitly emphasises the idea that learning should provoke rather than close down critical thought and the online guidance does not recommend Adam should have gone on to explain the eco-system with reference to God. But the website nevertheless suggests that Adam's practice "challenged the sacred-secular divide," implying that, perhaps, unguided discussion was not his sole or primary aim.

Since we know that indoctrination need not be intentional and the (emergent) Christian ideas Adam hoped to draw out lack rationally decisive evidence, we might still worry that the spectre of indoctrination hangs over the practice of bringing religious 'reasons' into the science classroom in anything but the loosest fashion.

Cooling et al. are not blind to the concern that WIL may trouble our intuitions about indoctrination or about religiously distinctive education, but they maintain these generally arise as the result of the ubiquity, prevalent even amongst teachers in religious schools, of the "positivist assumption," — that "a transmission approach where students are told Christian facts [is] what [is] required... if the Christian ethos of [the] school [is] to be honoured" (Cooling et al., 2016, pp.4-5).[477] Cooling and his team argue not only that this assumption is wrongheaded, but the perspective it engenders "implies a model of pedagogy that [does] not resonate with the What If Learning Approach". Indeed, they assert it led the teachers involved in their study into the efficacy of the approach to

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[477] Cooling et al. conducted research into the efficacy of WIL by observing and interviewing 14 teachers in Church of England and Catholic schools over the period of approximately one year (see Cooling et al., 2016).

conceive of Christianity in a manner which made the method difficult to implement

(Cooling et al., 2016, p.5).

The mistake Cooling et al. take the teachers they interviewed to have made was to assume

that WIL entailed the direct teaching of Christian truths[478] when, in fact, it requires

educators to "reframe their subject teaching from within a Christian imagination as an

alternative to an assumed secular imagination" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.120). Because

Cooling explicitly rejects the (positivist) idea — implicit in my argument that the

transmission approach to teaching religious propositions is morally illegitimate because

those propositions lack rationally decisive evidence—that there are universally compelling

standards of rationality,[479] he is not particularly troubled by the possibility that the

religious reframing he advocates could, in some circumstances, lead directly the

development of beliefs which are held non rationally in this sense.[480] And, as an upshot, he

may be more tolerant of teaching which I think runs a serious risk of being

indoctrinatory.[481] As my position on these matters is largely covered in Chapters III & V, I

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[478] Some were also concerned that the approach was "non-inclusive" for those of other and no faith. (Cooling et al., 2016, p.120)

[479] Although, on the grounds of the 'critical realist' view he endorses, he does acknowledge that individuals "can make valid judgments between theories" of human flourishing, some of which will be entirely false. Cooling nevertheless maintains that our interpretations of reality are mediated by "reasonable initial bets" (Hill, 2004) or "fiduciary frameworks" (Polanyi, 1974) and thus maintains "reality is open to being known in different ways… all of which will be partial" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.137).

[480] This is not to say that Cooling does not recognise the threat the transmission approach poses in this regard, or the risk religious indoctrination poses to children. Indeed, in a clash with Thiessen over what constitutes permissible evangelism, he even worries that Thiessen's emphasis on "persuasion" would lead to a form of "intellectual bullying" and prefers a more "interpretive approach" which helps pupils "to clarify how their own worldview shapes them as people and to understand how the Christian worldview offers a different perspective" (Cooling, 2013, p.267).

[481] To illustrate, another example taken from the What If Learning website involves a lesson on the environment where children were asked to "reflect on our world as God's world". Here, the teacher deliberately replaced references to "the world" or "our world" with "God's world" in the course materials, learning objectives and classroom displays. This 're-imagining' was designed to prompt reflection on the idea of receiving a precious gift and of being a guest (in God's world). However, the teacher chose to summarise the lesson as follows:

> The world is a gift that we have been entrusted with, we have been given the job of caring for it. It is God's world and we are his special guests so we live in the world trusting him and remembering it belongs him. (What If Learning, 2017)

will not return to it here, especially as there are many examples of lessons using the WIL

approach (see Cooling et al., 2016; Cooling & Smith, 2014; What If Learning, 2017)

which do appear able to resist the charge they are indoctrinatory.[482] What is more pertinent

to the discussion at hand is whether the reframing advocated by the WIL approach

amounts to a form of illegitimate conditioning or comprehensive enrolment into a

Christian way of life or its practices.

Recall that one of the key ideas underpinning the WIL approach is that of the 'Community

of Practice' (CoP). Pupils develop a "shared imagination" via specific, religiously

informed, "patterns of participation" and "reification" which eventually form a "repertoire

that becomes characteristic of the community" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.29). It is here the

approach could become problematic with respect to autonomy even when educators resist

(or believe they are resisting) the urge to directly inculcate religious propositions.

According to Smith & Smith, the success of a CoP will be determined by the extent to

which it is able to cultivate "[a] sense of self shaped by the forms of participation that

define a group as members." (Smith & Smith, 2011 cited in Cooling et al., 2016, p.29). If

the WIL CoP is predicated on distinctively Christian values and is, in the words of Smith,

designed to "unwittingly [conscript]" individuals into "Christian cultural liturgy" (Smith,

2013, cited in Cooling et al., pp.160-161), then we have good reason to think that it

amounts to a form of comprehensive enrolment; an intentional attempt to ensure that a

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This, given the rationally disputed nature of the content, is indoctrination simpliciter. It may be possible to construct a lesson where pupils reflect on these issues, use the language of "God's world" versus "our world" and think about the implications this language has, but if one of the aims of WIL is to avoid indoctrination, by inculcating a specific (and controversial) conception of the world, this lesson failed to meet it.

[482] E.g. a PE lesson on push-passes in field hockey where pupils were expected to encourage their partner and give feedback on how well their partner encouraged them. This activity might ordinarily be conceived as one designed to produce "elite performers," however, in a Christian context, it was re-imagined as an exercise aimed at developing "skilful encouragers" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.58).

child becomes a member of a particular religious group (here defined by the phrase "Christian imagination").

Interestingly, (and with good cause) Cooling et al. are uncomfortable with the metaphor of conscription which, by conjuring up the image of an individual who is compelled to act regardless of her will or beliefs, threatens to overstep the boundaries of legitimate "formation". They prefer the term "recruitment" which they say implies "independent decision-making rather than indoctrination" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.161). However, even this shift is not, in itself, enough to protect WIL from the accusation that it may involve comprehensive enrolment since the approach is still prefaced on an end-state view of autonomy; children may be 'recruited' into a Christian *"habitus"*[483] as long as their critical faculties are also developed because this, it is argued, will be enough to ensure that they are free to "recalibrate" their convictions by pursuing the distinctive practices of a new way of life if and when they so choose.

As we saw in our discussion of Clayton's position, this is not necessarily the case. The tenacity of early habits often means that they stay with us despite our conscious efforts to shed them. For this reason, we might conclude that, while Smith's "conscription" metaphor is less desirable than Cooling et al.'s allusion to "recruitment", it also represents a more accurate assessment of what WIL is trying to achieve. Unless recruitment is postponed until autonomy has developed, the lack of informed consent makes it little better than conscription.[484]

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[483] A term derived from Pierre Bordieu meaning "an orientation and understanding of the world that is absorbed and shaped at the level of practice" (Smith and Smith, 2011, p.10).

[484] No doubt, Cooling et al. would respond that, since no education can be completely neutral, my position simply entails that pupils are conscripted into the "secular imagination". However, this complaint is based on a peculiar understanding of neutrality. Clearly, the politically neutral, liberal imagination I endorse is neither devoid of normative content (in the sense that it stipulates what citizens owe one another) nor neutral with

§6.5.5 Whittle's Theory of Catholic Education

Earlier, we saw that the faith-based curriculum can legitimately open up a space for religiously inspired activities in schools. Nevertheless, the conscription worry suggests that this might be as far as we are able to go. If, as with WIL, we attempt to nurture a specific sort of comprehensive "imagination" (religious or non-denominational[485]), we may be drawing children into controversial ways of life before they are properly equipped to consent, and we simply cannot guarantee their retrospective consent to this treatment. Perhaps, we might conclude, the problem with WIL is not that it attempts to draw Christian theology into education, but that, like many other forms of faith education before it, simply conceives of the relationship between theology and education the wrong way. Religion is essentially "something for adults" (Whittle, 2014, p.198). And, while we might like to influence the choices children take, the constraints on the legitimacy of such behaviour are much tighter than the proponents of WIL acknowledge.

As our discussion of the faith-based curriculum highlighted, the thought that a religious conception of flourishing may, when suitably circumscribed, legitimately inform curriculum design will not strike those who are strongly committed to the view that the purpose of faith education is to nurture religious beliefs, values and/or practices as religious enough. They will worry that the rejection of the formative aim to reproduce the beliefs and/or culture of a religious tradition asks religious educators to "evacuate the pedagogical process of theological content" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.149). However, while

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respect to its consequences. It is, nevertheless designed to open up a space for individuals to determine, select and change their own conceptions of the good. Thus, while it may rule out conceptions which themselves rule out this kind of autonomy, the "imagination" it entails is complementary to, rather than the opposite of, a "religious imagination".

[485] Arguments against comprehensive enrolment rule out attempts to enlist children in atheistic/humanistic comprehensive doctrines just as they rule out similarly controversial religious conceptions.

it may be true that many of the practices currently sanctioned in religious schools would be prohibited in a faith-*based* system, it is not clear that schools with a curriculum prefaced on religious conceptions of flourishing would have to be pedagogically identical to non-denominational schools. In this section, I investigate the possibility of a form of pedagogical distinctiveness with reference to Sean Whittle's theory of Catholic education. I go on to argue that his position also suggests a number of improvements that could be made to WIL in order to address the problem of conscription.

Whittle's theory of Catholic education is inspired by Hand's conception of faith-based education. He suggests that, while traditional defences of Catholic education appeal to the idea that "Catholic schools exist in order to support parents who want to bring up their children in the Catholic faith," (Whittle, 2016, p.93) they have tended to overlook the "potential and place of theology in its general sense," as an "overarching discipline or subset of human learning" (Whittle, 2014, p.199). In other words, traditional theories of Catholic education tend to focus on transmitting the content, values and practices of Catholic doctrine rather than the ways in which that doctrine might inform educational practice more broadly. Like Hand, Whittle maintains that a more legitimate way to conceive of the relationship between theology and education is for the former to "[provide] the guidelines for the aims and the content of the curriculum as a whole" (Whittle, 2014, p.197). Drawing on the work of the systematic theologian Karl Rahner, who emphasised the importance of grappling with mystery as a fruitful route to an experience with God,[486] Whittle proposes that a distinctively Catholic, non-confessional theory of education could itself be based on a certain kind of mystery; namely, those which are "unsolvable in

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[486] Although, "this is not an automatic process and it is equally possible for an individual to fail to recognise the presence of mystery, let alone the possibility of using this experience to affirm the experience of God" (Whittle, 2016, p.95).

principle".[487] The reason for the focus on unsolvable mysteries is that, because they can be thought to demonstrate the limitations of our rationality, they "present a challenge to the abilities of reason." Developing an awareness of these challenges and limitations to rational human thought may provoke differing responses, but is likely to lead individuals to wonder what, if anything, lies "beyond what is humanly knowable" (Whittle, 2016, p.97).

Whittle's theory is theologically rich and complex, but we need not fully unpack it in order to grasp some its prospective implications for education in Catholic schools. Instead of teaching their pupils to hold Catholic beliefs and convictions, value what Catholics value, or behave in a Catholic manner —to *be* Catholics— teachers would ensure that the curriculum was designed to bring about a variety of regular (and, presumably, increasingly complex) encounters with mystery. Due to the nature of the world, these would be both solvable and unsolvable in nature, and pupils would need to learn how to establish the difference. As Whittle sees it,

> This is distinct from maintaining that the whole curriculum teaches theology or even theological ideas. The curriculum is geared to developing rational ability through the acquisition of various disciplines. However, in the course of this pupils would need to be challenged with the unsolvable in principle mysteries that are part and parcel of both the workings of reason and the various disciplines of the curriculum. (Whittle, 2016, p.98)

Whittle's focus on developing rationality via the disciplines leads Cooling et al., to conclude his approach is devoid of religious content and they argue that Rahner's theology functions merely as a novel way of illuminating "a largely secular concept" (Cooling et al.,

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[487] E.g. antinomies (Whittle focuses on the Kantian antinomies from the *Critique of Pure Reason*), paradoxes and intractable philosophical problems such as the problem of other minds (Whittle, 2015, pp.134-135).

2016, p.149). It is true that Whittle's approach does not so much invoke a religious conception of flourishing as a religious conception of the way in which one may encounter God via education. For this reason, it may be rather less attractive to those who endorse a confessional approach to religious schooling than WIL or even Hand's original conception of the faith-based curriculum. However, given the emphasis that the WIL approach places on the cultivation of a particular (i.e. "distinctively Christian") "imagination," it seems peculiar that Cooling and Smith should think that the approach is religiously barren. Whittle's position simply locates the distinctiveness of a Catholic education in the "mysterious imagination" or *habitus*. Thus, at a classroom level, the theory would require that teachers consider how the activities they undertake will simultaneously develop rationality and reveal mystery. While it is clear this kind of approach could appeal both to those with and without a Catholic faith—it is *distinctively* but not "*uniquely* or *explicitly*" Catholic (Cooling et al., 2016, p.171) — it is not obvious that it is predicated on a purely secular pedagogy.[488] It seems to me, Cooling's real objection is what he considers to be Whittle's removal of certain "theological specifics" (Cooling and Smith, 2014, p.215) from a Catholic education. According to this argument, WIL is able to lay claim to being distinctively Christian because:

> The pedagogical design is an attempt to be faithful to *the Christian way of life* and is constructed in response to a Christian vision of what it means to be human. (Cooling et al., 2016, p.172, my italics)

Whittle's theory of Catholic education keeps the substantive question of how one should live at arm's length and instead suggests a curriculum which guides pupils "to the

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[488] If indeed there is such a thing.

threshold of theology" without attempting to (directly) influence either their decision or desire to pass across; the success of this approach is determined by the extent to which pupils seriously consider the ultimate "unsolvable mystery," not whether they go on to choose a particular (religious) response to that mystery.

But is a position like Whittle's —where, while there is a distinctive religious imagination at work, the specific responses to questions of human flourishing a faith tradition offers have little influence on curriculum content —the most religiously minded educators can hope for? Although a school based on a faith-inspired theory like this would be able to avoid the charge of indoctrination and comprehensive enrolment, our discussion of Hand's version of the theory enabled me to demonstrate a way in which schools could select configurations of activities *based on* more substantive religious conceptions of flourishing without violating the autonomy pre-condition circumscribing comprehensive enrolment. Here I argued that, as long as the set of activities from which those on the curriculum were initially drawn could be justified by appeal to public reason, then decisions about which of the activities from that sub-set to select could legitimately be made by an appeal to a comprehensive view of flourishing. This kind of approach may also offer a way to adapt the WIL method so that it retains part of its distinctively Christian flavour but avoids "conscription".

§6.5.6 What If Learning Redeemed?

Whittle's key concern regarding the WIL approach to Christian education is that it appears to exploit opportunities to surreptitiously insert theological themes (and, by extension, specific theological answers to the questions raised by those themes) into the curriculum. In a somewhat scathing response to this assertion, Cooling and Smith argue that Whittle

has conflated "offering a substantive theological frame with feeding theological answers to students" (Cooling and Smith, 2014, p.214). The WIL approach is not, they assert, about inculcating Christian belief, but providing a Christian environment "where people of all faiths and none can all flourish" (Cooling et al., 2016, p.174). Nevertheless, while Whittle does seem to have slightly mischaracterised the position with respect to Christian *belief*,[489] not all illegitimate manipulation occurs at a cognitive level; if WIL involves habituating children into comprehensive religious practices with a view to making it easier to recruit them at a later stage, this practice would also be morally dubious.

I am persuaded that, while Cooling et al. make use of the recruitment metaphor, they do not consciously intend that the WIL approach should function as a shortcut for enlisting children and young people into the Christian faith. Their emphasis is on the idea of Christian "formation" which, they argue, "entails some form of induction into a religious way of life" (Cooling et al, 2016, p.165) but is nevertheless distinct from other approaches because it leaves "room for agency, questioning and criticism by pupils" (Clarke and Woodhead, 2015, p.34). However, while the pre-condition view of autonomy can permit distinctively religious activities if they enable pupils "to experience the traditions and practices of the church," at least insofar as they occur in a context where pupils are also permitted to familiarise themselves with other traditions (Clayton, 2006, p.110), the concept of "formation" may still give us pause. Formative influence is unavoidable, but using pedagogical practices to *intentionally* influence children in a manner which can foreseeably foreclose the possibility that they pursue other reasonable ways of life is

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[489] The example given in footnote 481 certainly appears to involve the illegitimate "smuggling" of religious answers Whittle is worried about. However, since others, such as the push pass lesson cited in footnote 482, do not involve confessionalism of any kind, this is not a necessary consequence of the WIL approach but of the way the teacher engages with it.

neither unavoidable nor desirable. Since the goal to produce a distinctively Christian (or distinctively religious) *individual* would transgress the boundary between legitimate educational practice and comprehensive enrolment, schools must carefully consider the kinds of activities they offer and be scrupulously honest about their reasons for offering them.

Recall that, for Cooling and Smith, the fault with Whittle's theory of Catholic education was that it was too far removed from the "Christian way of life" and, by focusing predominantly on the concept of unsolvable mystery, had excised the "theological specifics" necessary to make it distinctively Christian. As I am not a Christian theologian, I confess I am unable to settle the question of which position most adequately reflects Catholic doctrine with respect to education. But, while I am sanguine with respect to the idea of ignoring appeals to religious authenticity if the actions they sanction will contravene the moral and political rights of children, there does appear to be room to make concessions here. True, the WIL approach will only be defensible to the extent that it is the activity (and not the child) which is ultimately expected to "be faithful" to the Christian way of life. However, in circumstances where the teaching pertaining to the activity is non-confessional and the activity itself is justifiable on the grounds of public reason, I see no reason why participation should violate that child's autonomy. In cases where an activity cannot be so justified; when it is tied too tightly to more controversial "theological specifics," such as 'communal worship' or evangelism, it must be avoided. Now, this may still mean that my theory proscribes activities that Cooling and Smith would prefer to include. But, if this is the case, I believe that we must now stand our ground because we have reached the outer limits of what may be accommodated.

§6.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to establish whether a range of recent approaches to faith education — approaches I call 'priming pedagogies' and which eschew (or claim to eschew) the traditional (indoctrinatory) mission associated with faith schools — are able to make good on their promise to offer a morally permissible form of distinctively religious schooling. In order to do this, it was first necessary to provide an account of permissible conditioning. Unlike indoctrination, both behavioural and attitudinal conditioning are an unavoidable part of upbringing and our social lives together. However, owing to the similarities between the parent/child relationship[490] and the political relationship (between the state and its citizens), parents and teachers have a duty to respect the autonomy of children by ensuring that they only consciously facilitate the adoption of pro-attitudes and behaviours which, such as generosity or kindness (see Clayton, 2006, p.109), can be justified by appeal to public reason. This necessitates that conditioning (priming) practices aimed at comprehensive enrolment are off limits and this is the case whether those practices target beliefs (like indoctrination) or behaviours and/or pro-attitudes (like conditioning).

Although it might be assumed that faith schools necessarily seek to enrol their pupils in comprehensive doctrines, my argument demonstrated that this need not be the case. While some newer models of faith education— such as Thiessen's Teaching for Committed Openness— simply amount to slightly less restrictive versions of confessionalism and thus, as well as violating the comprehensive enrolment restriction, constitute indoctrination *simpliciter*, others, like What If Learning and Whittle's model of Catholic education,

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[490] And, by extension, the teacher/pupil relationship.

represent genuine attempts to provide religiously distinctive, indoctrination-free faith schooling. What's more, when adapted to take account of the public reason restriction on curriculum selection I proposed to ensure Hand's faith-*based* curriculum respects both the rationality *and* the autonomy of pupils, it seems plausible to think that such models may also be successful in these attempts. I conclude that, while not all religiously-minded educators will be easily persuaded to abandon either their confessional or enrolment mission, this transformative model represents the best way to accommodate faith schools in liberal democratic societies.

CONCLUSION

At the start of this thesis, I set out to address the vexed question of whether faith schooling has a morally legitimate role to play in the education systems of liberal democratic societies. I conclude that, as traditionally conceived, faith schools are indoctrinatory and should be prohibited. Nevertheless, suitably justified 'priming pedagogies'— those which select and are, therefore, able to defend the configuration of activities on the curriculum by appeal to public reason— offer religiously-minded educators a way to provide morally permissible, religiously distinctive schools which avoid the dual ills of indoctrination and comprehensive enrolment. To finish, I shall briefly summarise the key arguments that drew me to this conclusion.

I began Chapter I by exploring five possible senses in which the term 'faith school' might be used. Although each of these senses raises interesting questions with respect to various aspects of faith schooling, I determined that only (S4a) — *Schools which attempt to initiate children into a particular faith via the transmission of religious beliefs, values and/or practices*— would enable us to address the core philosophical objections to these institutions whilst retaining a close (or close enough) resemblance to common use.

Given that one of the most prevalent objections against faith schools defined (at least in part) by the intention to transmit religious beliefs is that they are indoctrinatory, Chapter II was dedicated to establishing the most feasible account of indoctrination. Via an analysis of the four most common criteria considered to be characteristic of the practice — method, intention, content and outcome— I argued that indoctrination is best defined as:

> *A teaching process, pertaining to the transmission of beliefs, which directly results in the construction of an illegitimate barrier between the beliefs a pupil holds and*

the reasons she has for holding them; a barrier which causes her to be closed-minded.

The purpose of Chapter II was to construct a descriptive theory of indoctrination which did not (initially) make any appeal to the normative impermissibility of the practice. However, one of the explanatory tools which enabled me to do this, the argument from analogy with delusion, also suggested a *prima facie* moral objection to indoctrination. In Chapter III, I used the similarities between the indoctrinated and the delusional mind-set to address the question of what is wrong with indoctrination and concluded that the practice harms pupils in two distinct ways. First, by ensuring that the beliefs of the indoctrinated person are impervious to truth and justification, it circumvents or "bypasses" her rationality. Second, by interfering with that same individual's ability to determine her own convictions, it violates her autonomy.

In Chapter IV, I rejected Hand's claim that no account of autonomy is able to meet the dual demands of desirability and teachability necessary for us to be able to adopt it as a legitimate aim of education. If this were true, the rationality barring features of indoctrination would still give us good reason to prevent the practice, but the case against them (as well as against schools which seek to mould their pupils in other ways) would be significantly diminished. However, the Colburnian conception — according to which autonomy is "an ideal of people deciding for themselves what defines a valuable life and living their lives in accordance with that decision" (Colburn, 2010, p.21)— *is* able to provide us with the kind of account Hand demands. Autonomy is desirable because it enables the individual to be substantively responsible for the direction her life takes and this is part of what it means to be a moral agent. This responsibility requires certain skills — the "skills of agency" — which are eminently teachable. We should, therefore, reject all

educational practices which, like indoctrination, violate or stymie autonomy and the skills which give rise to it.

In Chapters V and VI, I returned to the specific issue of faith schools. In Chapter V, I defended the argument that the traditional model of confessional religious education is indoctrinatory and maintained that, to the extent faith schools are bound to teach for religious belief, we have good reason to prohibit them. However, given the importance of autonomy, I also wondered whether a range of newer faith-based pedagogies might legitimately be able to provide an alternative form of morally permissible religious schooling. This was the subject of Chapter VI.

In the introduction of this thesis, I noted that the question of whether faith schools are morally permissible and should, therefore, form part of the educational landscape in liberal democratic societies has attracted a great deal of philosophical attention. Nevertheless, as we have seen, these analyses have tended to focus on the inculcation of religious belief and the threats posed by indoctrination. While these issues are central to any comprehensive treatment of the subject, and the contention that schools which teach for belief in religious propositions are, when successful, indoctrinatory, is accurate, this focus has meant that, thus far, the philosophical debate about faith schools has been somewhat incomplete. My final argument demonstrates that the tendency to over-emphasise the mission of belief inculcation in critical analyses of faith schooling is problematic. It has caused even those theorists who view autonomy as a fundamental aim of the educational enterprise (and who argue that indoctrination ought to be viewed as antithetical to education partly *because* of the harm it poses to autonomy) to neglect the possibility that religious schools in which teachers both recognise the importance of critical rationality and refrain from teaching for religious beliefs may still, if those teachers and/or schools are ultimately guided by an

intention to recruit children into a religious group (or ensure pupils participate in that group's practices) before they are in a position to give informed consent to this enrolment, violate the autonomy of pupils.

But, while this position may initially look threatening to the prospect of schools which are both religiously distinctive and morally permissible, I have shown that this need not be the case. Although 'priming' practices which aim at comprehensive enrolment are, as Clayton's argument demonstrates, beyond the moral pale, religiously-minded educators may legitimately design the curriculum of the religious school using a configuration of activities drawn from a religious conception of flourishing as long as the activities themselves are justifiable by appeal to public reason. This suggests that, while there is no fail-safe way to guarantee that *any* school avoids indoctrination and illegitimate forms of conditioning, morally justifiable forms of faith-based schooling are, at the very least, a live possibility.

APPENDIX 1

THE TEACHING CONTINUUM
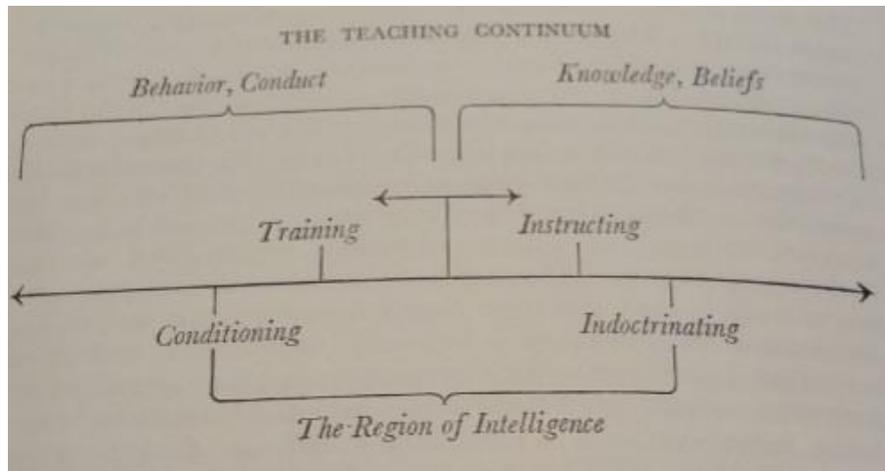
Green (1972, p.26)

APPENDIX 2

THE TEACHING CONTINUUM EXPANDED
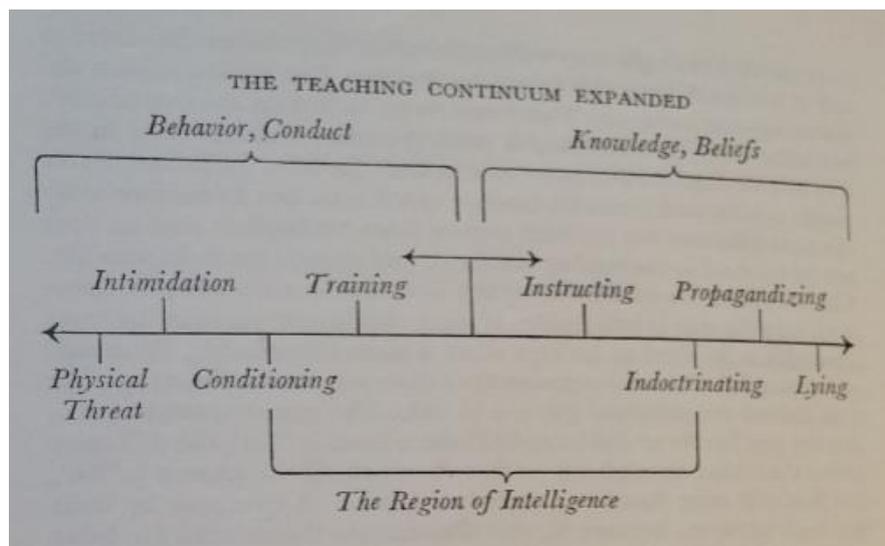
Green (1972, p.28)

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