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Indoctrination in education: Offering an alternative conception

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INDOCTRINATION IN EDUCATION:
OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION

BY

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DISSERTATION

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in

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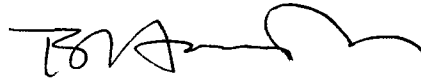
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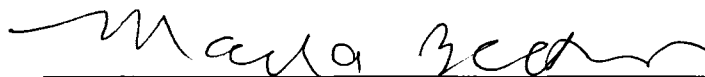
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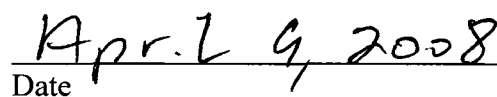
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ABSTRACT

INDOCTRINATION IN EDUCATION:
OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION

by

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University of New Hampshire, May, 2008

Peace Education courses, as well as others that teach marginalized values and beliefs (e.g., race relations, queer studies, and feminist studies) are particularly vulnerable to the charge of indoctrination. This allegation is political rather than scholarly and it is not clear what precisely teachers of such subjects are being accused of doing or trying to do. However, the charge is powerful enough to prevent such courses from being offered at public schools and universities and to remove them when they are already part of the curriculum. To provide teachers and schools the confidence to take on these marginalized and controversial courses, we need a conception of indoctrination that meets the following purposes: (1) allows us to better understand and respond to the persistent pejorative connotation of the word, (2) enables us to identify indoctrinary endeavors when they occur, and (3) guides us in developing educational programs that help avoid it.

Existing conceptions of indoctrination are critically examined. It is argued that, while I.A. Snook's intentional analysis is the most promising in meeting the purposes of this work as stated above, his analysis does not go far enough to encourage teachers to, not only reflect on what student outcomes they *hope* to achieve, but what outcomes they are *likely* to achieve given their efforts in class and the particular school context in which they work. Further, it is argued that none of the prior conceptions address the possibility that *schools* (i.e., the policies, practices, traditions, goals, curriculum, decision-making structures, etc.) as well as individual teachers may be agents of indoctrination.

Cheryl Misak's pragmatic conception of truth is examined for its usefulness in providing a notion of indoctrination that prompts teachers and schools to seriously consider how their educational endeavors shape the manner in which students come to hold their beliefs. It is concluded that an intentional analysis of indoctrination, defined in terms of a Misakian notion of truth-seeking inquiry, allows us to adequately respond to charges of indoctrination and know what steps to take to diminish the likelihood of engaging in indoctrination.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem of Indoctrination

My interest in indoctrination comes from my experiences as a peace educator. I developed a Peace Studies course and taught it for years at a local high school. At the beginning of my course and for each year thereafter, I encountered a great deal of criticism which generally took the form of a charge of indoctrination. I was not *personally* criticized; their indictment was against the assumed nature of the class. The disapproval was expressed by persons who knew nothing of the content of this class, my teaching methods, or my educational aims in general. The implication in their charge was that teaching peace is inherently indoctrinary.

I found the charge intriguing and looked into it further. After a good deal of investigation, I found myself agreeing with a professor who encountered similar criticisms when he tried to institute a peace studies major at the university where he teaches. He claimed that the charge of indoctrination against peace education is “political” rather than scholarly (Ferber, 2003). Though I searched for a scholarly indictment against

peace education, the only things I was able to find were newspaper reports about certain groups charging peace studies courses at local public schools with indoctrination.

The charges of indoctrination reported in printed and on-line newspapers seem to be used more as an expression of condemnation against curricula one dislikes rather than as a specific criticism of any particular wrongdoing. For example, in an October 2001 edition of CNSNEWS.com, critics of the Center for Civic Education (CCE) in Minneapolis, MN, charged the curriculum advanced by the CCE as “taxpayer-funded ‘indoctrination.’” One opponent was quoted saying: “In a nutshell, what this group [the CCE] has done is that it’s redefined education so that it is no longer a system of information; it is now a system of persuasion ... [It is] no longer education; it’s indoctrination.” Their criticism stems from their concern that the curriculum of the CCE promotes a particular political agenda as it “emphasizes values like environmentalism and multiculturalism over national sovereignty, natural rights and the Second Amendment right to bear arms.” In this case (assuming the article is fair and accurate), the criticism seems to come from an objection over the *content* being taught. The critics of the CCE sought to indict the curriculum because it taught subjects, ideas, and values that they did not agree with and therefore did not want taught in their schools.

A similar argument was made in a 1988 online article by Peace and Environmental News out of Ottawa, Canada. Parents Against Propaganda (PAP) tried to get the Ottawa Board of Education to prevent peace studies courses from being offered in the schools. One of the arguments expressed by members of PAP was that peace issues were indoctrinary as they promoted a particular political agenda. They claimed that schools ought to "keep politics out of the classroom ... [and] get 'back to basics.'" Such criticism implies, once again, that the presumed political nature of the course makes it indoctrinary. The assumption in both cases is that mainstream courses and curricula are a-political and objective, and courses that teach ideas and values that lie outside the mainstream, such as peace studies, are by their very nature political and therefore indoctrinary.

Adversaries of peace education, as shown in these two examples, use the word "indoctrination" as a way of attacking courses and criticizing teaching content that they find objectionable. As Gerald H. Paske states: "When a speaker refers to an activity as indoctrination ... he is not advancing an antecedently formulated concept which he claims matches the referent; he is rather making a value claim about the morality or propriety of some particular activity" (Paske, 1972: 93). The charges of indoctrination expressed by critics of the CCE and members of PAP do not clearly specify what is meant by indoctrination; rather they

take the form of condemning course material they do not like and supporting material they personally agree with. As Nancy Glock suggests in her dissertation, "The pejorative connotation of the term [indoctrination] thus lends itself to mere name-calling, permitting the speaker to express his disapproval without having to be at all specific" (Glock, 1975: 4-5).

Though PAP and critics of CCE are clearly against particular material being taught in schools, they are not at all clear about why such material is objectionable other than to say it is "political." Yet, in these cases the word "political" is as vague as "indoctrination." Just what it is that makes peace studies or environmentalism political and "natural sovereignty" or the Second Amendment a-political is left unsaid.

As the charge of indoctrination against peace education is not laid out in any scholarly fashion, I looked to peace educators to see if they defend their curriculum against such indictments and if their defense helps give substance to them. Peace educators, such as Peter Dale Scott (1982) and Betty Reardon (1988), have responded to accusations of indoctrination. Yet their responses are too terse and vague to provide an understanding of what the charges entail. Furthermore, they themselves do not offer a clear argument for why peace educators do not indoctrinate. Scott, for example, claims that the allegation of indoctrination launched against the peace education curriculum offered at his university is hypocritical. He contends that the critics who claim that

teaching peace is akin to promoting a particular political agenda, and is therefore indoctrinary, are the very same persons who support the current political agenda of increasing military spending and proliferation. He makes it clear that there is no way to avoid politics in education; to call one curriculum “indoctrinary” and not others is to ignore the inherent political nature of *all* curricula.

Peace educator Betty Reardon also takes on the accusation of indoctrination. Unlike Scott, who defends peace education against allegations of *political* advocacy, Reardon defends it against charges of promoting a particular set of values. She writes:

The values and action dimensions of peace education have been a significant source of controversy – controversy that needs to be confronted head-on by peace educators. When the purposes include persuasion, then the questions of indoctrination and bias must be addressed. Accusations of bias have been leveled at peace education and peace studies from many sides, by academics as well as by professional unions and school administrations. (Reardon, 1988: 22)

She first defends peace education by contending that it promotes the *same* values all educators seek to teach, namely: “competence, empowerment, efficacy, fairness, nonjudgmentalism, inquiry, open-mindedness [and] responsibility” (Reardon, 1988: 81). She later admits, however, that peace educators promote different values as well, including those of cooperation rather than competition, and nurturance rather than dominance. Though Reardon admits that peace educators promote a particular set of values, some of which differ from those

advanced by mainstream courses, she defends the teaching of values by arguing that *all* educators advance *some* set of values. Her argument here is similar to Scott's defense of promoting a particular political agenda by asserting that *all* educators promote a particular political agenda. Thus, both Reardon and Scott defend peace education by arguing that peace educators do the same sorts of things that their critics do or support doing in more mainstream and accepted courses.

If we agree with Scott and Reardon, the problem then is not whether one *should* promote values or a particular political ideology (because all education is inherently value-laden and political) but *which* values and ideology one ought to promote. Yet, neither Reardon nor Scott defends the particular values and ideology taught in peace education courses against the charge of indoctrination. Instead, they simply claim that a crucial feature of peace education is to promote and advocate for peace and to oppose violence. Indeed, Scott states that a fundamental part of peace education is to "advocate peace, and deplore war as a social evil to be brought increasingly under control by the proper application of our intelligence and human feelings" (Scott, 1982: 13). Similarly, Reardon notes that the "primary value goals" (Reardon, 1988: 23) of peace education are to help reduce violence and oppose war.

From their arguments, it seems reasonable to suppose that both Reardon and Scott assume the charge of indoctrination stems from the act of advocating, promoting, and persuading *any* particular set of values and ideals. Thus, their defense against the charge of indoctrination lies in their argument that all education inherently promotes some set of values and ideals. Therefore, they argue that because peace educators do nothing different from educators of more mainstream courses (who are *not* targets of the charge of indoctrination), peace education is *no more* indoctrinary than other types of education.

Yet, being “no more” indoctrinary does not, necessarily, mean that peace educators do not indoctrinate. It seems to imply that they do, but so do *all* educators. Reardon (1988), however, takes her defense of peace education one step further. She asserts that, though peace educators do, in fact, attempt to persuade students to accept certain values, they also seek to develop in their students the capacities of “critical consciousness.” Similarly, Scott (1982) claims that one of the fundamental tasks of peace educators is to teach students to be “objective.” For Reardon, “critical consciousness” seems to involve raising questions about the value of war and violence within a “critical context” (Reardon, 1988: 23), yet she gives no clear indication of what a “critical context” is. Scott is a bit clearer about the meaning of “objective.” He states that it involves “striving to overcome the limitations of one’s social

perspective and to present opposing arguments as fairly as possible" (Scott, 1982: 13). How one does this, however, while *advocating* for a particular political ideology (Scott, 1982: 12), and *persuading* students to adopt a certain set of values, (Reardon, 1988: 22) is not made clear. Scott and Reardon seem to ignore the tension that arises when one's educational goals are to advance, promote, persuade, and advocate a particular set of values and political beliefs while at the same time claiming to develop in students the capacities to critically examine their own as well as others' perspectives, assumptions, and beliefs.

Although we can see that some peace educators do, in fact, respond to the charge of indoctrination, I have shown that their responses are far too brief to give an adequate account of what the charge entails and precisely how peace educators are to avoid indoctrination. While the charge can be referred to as "merely" political, it nevertheless carries with it the very real threat that peace studies courses, as well as other areas of study that appear to teach ideas, values and perspectives that run counter to mainstream ideology (such as queer studies, women's studies and environmental education), will be prevented from being offered at schools and universities or will be removed from the curriculum if they are already being offered. What is needed, therefore, is a more thorough and substantive account of the charge of indoctrination as well

as some further clarity as to how such a charge can be, at least in principle, successfully rebutted.

Making the charge of “indoctrination” more than a vague political accusation or mere name-calling, and making clearer what is required to avoid indoctrination prompted me to take on the challenge of developing a conception of indoctrination that explains the persistent pejorative connotation of the word, allows educators to identify its occurrence with consistency and effectively avoid it, and enables educators to effectively respond to the charge of indoctrination. As Luise Prior McCarty and David Charles McCarty note, charges of indoctrination are serious but to know how to avoid it or effectively respond to charges of indoctrination we must “draw the face” (McCarty and McCarty, 1991: 257) of indoctrination so we can better see what it looks like. A conception of indoctrination should aid educators as well as the general public in determining when indoctrination is taking place, not just in peace education course and curriculum but also in more mainstream and generally accepted courses. My purposes, then, in developing a conception of indoctrination are to: (1) assist educators and others to better understand the charge of indoctrination and know what can count as an appropriate response to such a charge, (2) help educators and others identify indoctrination in all educational settings with accuracy and

consistency, and (3) help teachers and schools know how to develop educational programs that avoid indoctrination.

Definitional Criteria

I propose a set of definitional criteria that must be met for a conception of indoctrination to meet these purposes. I first list these criteria then explain what each means and why each is important as a standard for a strong and useful conception of indoctrination. The criteria are as follows:

1. The conception must not depart radically from ordinary usage of the term.
2. It must not reduce "indoctrination" to something else.
3. It must explain why we find indoctrination in education within a pluralistic democratic society objectionable even when it is used to pursue worthy goals.
4. It must clearly characterize what it is for teachers (and possibly also schools) to indoctrinate and what it is required for them to avoid indoctrination.

The first and second criteria are important as they permit us to exclude stipulative definitions and require a conception that has explicatory distinctiveness. As we have seen, often the "ordinary" usage of the term indoctrination is unclear or inconsistent as it is used in a variety of contexts.

At times its usage is political as when public groups seek to condemn particular educational curricula. At other times the term is used by educational theorists as a means of criticizing either a particular style of teaching or the teaching of particular content. I will have more to say later about how the term is used, but for now it is important to understand that the first criterion guards against developing a purely stipulative definition and ensures that our discussion of indoctrination joins the ongoing conversation.

The term "indoctrination" needs to be defined in a way that distinguishes it from similar notions that are sometimes conflated with "indoctrination," notions such as promoting or advocating, brainwashing, conditioning, and lazy or poor teaching. Developing a conception of indoctrination that explicates how it is distinct from other similar notions further refines our understanding of indoctrination. Generating a lucid account of a concept requires that we not only expound upon what sort of features characterize the concept; it also helps to draw as clear a border around the concept as possible by explicating what indoctrination is *not*. For example, demarcating indoctrination as distinct from poor teaching helps create a more defined picture of indoctrination by making plain what sort of features and characteristics distinguish it from merely poor teaching. Thus, the second criterion helps ensure that the

conception developed here will be distinct from other notions that are quite similar to indoctrination and are often erroneously conflated with it.

The third criterion ensures that the definition developed in this dissertation explicates the pejorative nature of indoctrination. Because, as we have seen, critics of peace education use the term “indoctrination” in a strictly pejorative sense, and in the last fifty years educational theorists have used the term primarily as an indictment against a particular type of teaching, a definition that maintains this pejorative sense accomplishes three tasks. First, it helps give substance and clarity to the charge of indoctrination launched against innovative curricula such as queer studies, women’s studies, and peace education, and a substantive claim is necessary if educators are to have an opportunity to adequately defend themselves against such a charge. Secondly, it provides a definition that does not radically depart from ordinary usage of the term by political action groups as well as by educators and educational philosophers. Finally, it provides a clearer understanding of what sort of harm we risk or incur with indoctrination.

Criterion four – ensuring that the definition provides a lucid picture of what it looks like for teachers (and schools) to indoctrinate and what is required to avoid indoctrination - is necessary because we need to develop a conception of indoctrination that will be useful to us for: (a) making sense of the charge of indoctrination, (b) helping educators and

schools identify indoctrination where it occurs, and (c) developing educational programs that avoid it. Prior conceptions sought only to hold individual teachers accountable for indoctrination. It has, in my view, been a weakness of such conceptions that they have occluded much miseducation that deservedly belongs under the rubric of “indoctrination.” In chapters six and seven I argue that there are times when the school context plays such a significant role in determining how students come to hold their beliefs that it is reasonable to hold schools as a whole responsible for indoctrination instead of, or in addition to, teachers.

I offer an alternative conception of indoctrination that is better than prior analyses and conceptions at meeting the purposes laid out in this dissertation. In what follows, I illustrate the organization of my conceptual analysis by providing a brief overview of the chapters in this dissertation. In chapters two and three, I introduce and critique conceptions of indoctrination developed by prior analytic philosophers. In chapter four, I defend an intentional analysis of indoctrination, borrowing a good deal from I.A. Snook (1972a, 1972b). Chapter analyzes the notion of “truth” offered by Cheryl Misak (2000, 2004) and argues that such a notion is useful in developing my conception of indoctrination. In chapters six and seven, I defend an alternative conception of indoctrination that can *in principle* be useful in the ways I have described above. Finally, in chapter

six I offer a demonstration of how *in practice* this alternative conception is useful.

Outline of the Chapters

Chapter II

The central tasks I take on in chapter two are a detailed articulation and critique of the conceptions of indoctrination developed primarily by analytic philosophers in the 1970s and early 1980s. Although there has been a resurgence of interest in the topic in more recent years, much of that work uses a conception of indoctrination offered by earlier analytic philosophers to examine the educational value of teaching religion in schools. Thus, as most of the conceptual analytic work was done in the 1970s and early 1980s, this chapter focuses primarily on the work of that time.

I begin chapter two with a critical look at indoctrination defined in terms of content. Here I draw upon Tasos Kazepides (1982, 1982, 1987), Gregory and Woods (1972), Antony Flew (1972) and Barrow and Woods (1988), each of whom claim that indoctrination can not occur unless a particular content is taught, namely doctrines. Each of these theorists argues that indoctrination involves the inculcation of doctrines which leads to students holding doctrinal beliefs in a non-rational manner. A content analysis, then, differs from analyses of methods, intention, and consequences. Defining indoctrination in terms of content presupposes

that not just any sort of claim can be indoctrinated. According to those who define indoctrination in terms of content, claims such as “Langston Hughes was a prominent writer of the Harlem Renaissance” and “The U.S. Cuban Missile Crisis occurred during the Kennedy Administration” can not be indoctrinated. Only claims that are part of a larger ideological system of beliefs (that is, claims that are doctrinal) are able to be indoctrinated. Thus, according to a content analysis of indoctrination, tenets of the Catholic faith or Marxist ideology can be indoctrinated while true claims that are not seemingly part of an ideology cannot.

Criticisms of a content analysis of indoctrination center on the contention that “doctrine” has not been adequately clarified. Although each of the theorists named above tries to define “doctrine,” none provides a definition that clearly indicates what sorts of claims count as doctrines and what sorts do not. Because we can not be sure when a teacher is instructing her students in doctrines or other kinds of beliefs, I conclude that a content analysis of indoctrination fails to provide a sufficiently clear understanding of indoctrination.

Following a critical examination of content analyses of indoctrination, I look at method analyses of indoctrination offered by Willis Moore (1972), John Wilson (1972), Gregory and Woods (1972), and James McClellan (1976). Those who define indoctrination in terms of method all agree that indoctrination occurs only when teachers employ non-rational

instructional methods. In other words, each of the theorists named above asserts that students come to hold beliefs in a non-rational or non-evidential manner only when they are taught with non-rational instructional methods.

Critics of methods analyses claim that it is sometimes unavoidable and even desirable to use non-rational teaching methods as in the case of rote memorization of math tables. Defining such teaching as indoctrination, they argue, risks losing the strictly pejorative sense of the concept. In addition, critics assert that the aforementioned conceptions have failed to provide a sufficiently clear understanding of what constitutes "non-rational teaching methods." Thus, defining indoctrination in terms of method, critics argue, does not enable educators to identify indoctrination with consistent accuracy. Analyses fail to make clear precisely what non-rational teaching methods look like.

After developing a critical appraisal of the methods analyses, I examine conceptions of indoctrination defined in terms of a teacher's intentions. Here I look primarily at the account of I. A. Snook (1972a, 1972b) as his intentional analysis is the one most often referenced by others. Snook contends that if we want to hold teachers morally accountable for indoctrination we must show that indoctrination is an *intentional* act. For him, then, one indoctrinates when one *intends* to get

students to hold beliefs non-rationally or, as he puts it, "regardless of the evidence" (Snook, 1972a, 154).

Critics of an intention analysis claim that such an account makes it too difficult to assign moral blame because we can not ever be sure what a teacher intends. Thus, if we can not know what it is that any given teacher intends, we can not know with any sort of assurance of accuracy whether she is indoctrinating. Also, critics point out that teachers can and do *unintentionally* get students to hold beliefs non-evidentially and this should also be of concern to us.

After examining Snook's conception of indoctrination defined in terms of intent and the criticisms launched against his analysis, I examine definitions of indoctrination in terms of consequences. Those who develop a consequences analysis of indoctrination, such as Barrow and Woods (1988), assert that indoctrination only occurs when teachers have been successful at getting students to hold beliefs non-rationally. Such conceptions claim that indoctrination is best understood in both the task and achievement senses. In other words, one does not indoctrinate unless one both engages in certain activities and one achieves certain outcomes. Critics of a consequences analysis contend that one can never be sure whether the fact that students hold beliefs non-rationally is due to something their teacher did or due to something else entirely. They insist that simply because a teacher has students who end up holding

beliefs non-evidentially we cannot claim that the teacher *caused* beliefs to be held in this manner; thus, according to these critics a definition of indoctrination in terms of consequences is a non-starter.

At the end of this chapter I conclude that analyses of indoctrination developed thus far in the literature offer valuable insight for educators to examine their practice, intentions, and educational responsibilities. However, each of these accounts fails to provide an account of indoctrination sufficiently lucid to enable educators to know when they are indoctrinating, how they can avoid doing it, and how they can effectively respond to accusations of doing it.

Chapter III

In chapter three I take a closer and more critical look at the conceptions discussed in chapter two. First I examine the various purposes that helped shape each of the accounts of indoctrination. Then I take Alfred Neiman's (1989) suggestion seriously that to further the debate on indoctrination one needs to offer an alternative reason for developing a conception of indoctrination. It is my contention that the definitional criteria outlined in the introduction are standards that must be met for a definition of indoctrination to fulfill the purposes I have set out. Thus, in chapter three, after laying out my own purposes, I reiterate my definitional criteria outlined earlier in the introduction and examine each

of the prior conceptions of indoctrination to determine the extent to which each of these accounts meets my criteria. In other words, I look at how well prior conceptions of indoctrination defined in terms of method, of content, of intent, and of consequences meet each of the four criteria I develop.

I argue that prior accounts of indoctrination meet the first criterion; they do not depart radically from ordinary usage. They do not, however, meet the second criterion, that is, with the exception of intentional analyses, prior accounts of indoctrination reduce “indoctrination” to something else. In addition, although I show that prior conceptions are able to explain why indoctrination is objectionable, I argue that their conceptions show indoctrination to be objectionable only to persons who value rational autonomy over other educational goals, such as, for example, unquestioned acceptance of a particular faith or obedience to a particular set of tenets and beliefs. In other words, I argue that they are not able to show why indoctrination is or ought to be objectionable to some schools that exist within a pluralistic democratic society, schools that care more about their students being faithful followers than rationally autonomous individuals.

In regards to criterion three, I contend that although some of these educational institutions, such as parochial schools, place importance on teaching their students a particular faith, they are nevertheless part of a

democratic society. Therefore, we expect them to develop in their students some of what we consider to be fundamental capacities of democratic citizenship: capacities which allow students to participate in the marketplace of ideas, seek the truth behind political rhetoric, gain access to important information relevant to decisions that affect their daily lives and the lives of others, and form their own notions of what constitutes the good life and the good society. In short, given that one of the basic rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship is independent critical deliberation in the pursuit of truth, there is an expectation that even parochial schools must not infringe on this right and can reasonably be expected to cultivate the capacity in their students to take on this responsibility. If this is undermined, students are at risk of being inadequately prepared for effective participation in a democratic society. Thus, a conception of indoctrination that appeals to the interests of parochial schools and articulates a sense of what is objectionable about indoctrination will have an advantage over other conceptions which such schools would find alienating. An advantage of my proposed conception of indoctrination, I argue, is that it can open up rather than prematurely foreclose conversations with the alternative schools a democratic society allows about what it means to pursue truth and what goals of education should be considered important.

Finally, in the last section of chapter three I argue that prior accounts of indoctrination fail to meet my fourth criterion of providing a sufficiently clear characterization of what it is for teachers (and schools) to indoctrinate and what is required to avoid it. I therefore conclude chapter three with the claim that previous accounts of indoctrination cannot meet the purposes of a conception of indoctrination set out in this introduction.

Chapter IV

Chapter four begins with an argument for defining indoctrination in terms of intention, an argument that builds on Snook's (1972a, 1972b) claim that indoctrination be defined in such a way that those responsible for indoctrination can be held morally accountable for it. I defend an intentional analysis by first summarizing the weaknesses of the content, method, and consequences' analyses I discussed in chapter three.

In this chapter, I adopt much of Snook's intentional analysis of indoctrination, arguing that it best serves the purposes set forth in this work. However, there are some significant differences. First, I take issue with Snook's notion of "intent," claiming that it is unnecessarily narrow in its account of who can be charged appropriately with indoctrination. While Snook claims that an intentional outcome is characterized as either a desired outcome or a foreseen one, I expand on this notion to include in

the notion of intentional outcomes those that are foreseeable. Snook claims that including the foreseeable in the notion of "intention" will render all teachers as indoctrinators because it is foreseeable that, at some point, some students will inevitably come to hold beliefs taught them in a non-rational manner. I argue, on the other hand, that it is not foreseeable that students will come to hold a belief in a non-evidential manner *as a result of what a teacher does or fails to do*. If teachers understand the various factors that are likely to lead to students holding beliefs non-rationally and do what they can to avoid such endeavors, it is not foreseeable that their efforts in the classroom will result in students holding beliefs non-rationally.

Chapter V

In chapter five I, I draw upon Cheryl Misak (2000, 2004), a contemporary Peircian, to analyze key notions embedded in this alternative conception, notions which includes: truth, truth-seeking, and what it means to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner. I argue that a pragmatic notion of "truth" provides a conception of indoctrination that assists us in identifying indoctrination, clarifies what is required to avoid it, and helps effectively respond to charges of indoctrination.

Also in this chapter I alter Snook's definition of indoctrination as the intention to get students to hold beliefs *regardless of the evidence* to

intending to get students to hold beliefs in a *non-truth-seeking manner*. Holding beliefs “regardless of the evidence,” I argue, does not provide an adequately clear understanding of whether indoctrinated beliefs are held based on bad evidence, no evidence, or in spite of good counter-posing evidence. In addition, characterizing indoctrinated beliefs as those held “non-evidentially” or “non-rationally” does not clearly show how indoctrination jeopardizes students from continually being open to assess the epistemic worth of a belief, particularly in the face of opposing evidence and arguments. A feature, according to Elmer J. Thiessen (1993), Thomas Green (1972) and Harvey Siegel (1988, 1996), we typically regard as characteristic of indoctrination. Defining indoctrination in terms of truth as defined by Misak, I argue, makes lucid how indoctrination puts at risk students seeking the truth of a given belief because her notion of truth is defined by the method employed to arrive at truth.

In this final section of this chapter, I analyze some important concepts that are integral to Misak's notion of truth. I look at what counts as “truth-apt” beliefs – beliefs for which we ought to inquire into their truth. In addition, I draw upon Maughn Rollins Gregory (2002), Harvey Siegel (1995, 1997), and Kathryn Pauly Morgan (1995) to help clarify who belongs in what Misak calls the “community of inquiry.” Gregory claims that the community of inquiry includes those who are considered “experts” in a given field. Similarly, Siegel claims that we can justifiably, on epistemic

grounds, exclude some persons – those who cannot contribute meaningfully to a conversation – from participating in a particular discussion. Morgan questions Siegel's argument and claims that we must be wary of allowing bias into our understanding of any given topic by excluding persons who do not meet our particular epistemological framework. I argue that we are best served to not exclude any perspective from consideration until we have first given it a fair hearing. In short, I support Misak's Piercian dictum that we should "let nothing stand in the way of inquiry."

Chapter VI

Chapter six looks at the role that the school context plays in shaping and influencing teachers' intentions and how students come to hold beliefs. I argue that for indoctrinary outcomes to be foreseeable, we must show how understanding the various contextual elements in a school affect teacher intentionality and student learning. In the first part of this chapter, I revisit the arguments made by those who define indoctrination in terms of method, in terms of content, and in terms of consequences. I claim that, while such definitions do not provide an adequate notion of indoctrination to serve our purposes here, each of these analyses helps us see that teachers ought to pay attention to and reflect on their methods, the content they teach, and the manner in which their students come to

hold their beliefs for them to best understand how they can effectively avoid indoctrination.

In the next section of this chapter, I argue that, as education does not occur within a vacuum, outside influences such as the ideological beliefs taught and maintained in the school and the community, the expectations and demands of community members, the attitudes and dispositions of the students, and the pedagogical habits mandated by the school district play a significant role in what and how students learn in their classrooms and in the school as a whole. Teachers, then, ought to not only examine their own teaching methods, content, and student outcomes; they should also look closely at the context in which their teaching occurs.

To support the claim that the school context significantly affects teacher intentionality, I first examine how we can understand the context. I describe it under three main headings: the pedagogical, the structural, and the ideological. I first explain what I mean by each context. I then support the claim that each one plays an important role in influencing teacher intentionality and student learning, I provide arguments from critical theorists. Primarily, I draw upon Scott Fletcher (2000), Paulo Friere (1970, 1973), Michael Apple (1996), and Ira Shor (1992) to show that the school context importantly shapes the goals teachers adopts and the manner in which students come to hold beliefs taught them. I conclude

that, by understanding how each type of context effects teachers' intentions and students' learning, we are in a good position to develop educational programs that avoid indoctrination.

Chapter VII

In chapter seven I open up my analysis of indoctrination to explore the possibility of including schools in our notion of it. Put another way, I examine whether it makes sense to define indoctrination as the intention of teachers and/or schools to get students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner. The idea that it is possible to hold institutions as well as teachers responsible for indoctrination requires a complex philosophical analysis. Chapter seven takes on such an analysis.

In the first section of this chapter, I analyze the argument made by Larry May (1987) and Peter French (1991) that we can attribute intentionality to institutions. Both May and French claim that corporations act intentionally when the policies, rules, and expectations of the corporation significantly influence an employee's intentions. Their work highlights the important role that the school context plays in shaping teacher intentionality, yet I argue that while schools may influence teacher's intentions, it does not replace them with school intentionality.

In the next section of this chapter, I look at Peter Velasquez's (1991) claim that attributing intentionality to corporations is merely an elliptical

way of assigning blame to persons. I argue that while he makes the important point that corporations – and schools – do not have minds or bodies to which we can ascribe intentionality as we do with persons, unlike corporations, sometimes there are no identifiable persons for whom we can ascribe responsibility for indoctrination. When the various factors of the school context, for example, encourage students to adopt beliefs in a non-truth-seeking fashion, it is quite difficult to determine who is responsible for such a context as there are so many contributing factors that continually mold and create such a context. Thus, as we cannot always find any person or group that is responsible for indoctrination that occurs due largely to the school's context, it makes sense to attribute the intentionality to the context, or the school, itself.

Following this analysis, I look to provide an argument by analogy to attributing intentionality to schools. Here I look at some prominent legal cases involving Title IX and the Fourteenth Amendment in which the courts hold the schools and not individual persons responsible for harassment. While I cannot offer an unambiguous theory of school intentionality, I argue that it is reasonable to characterize schools as intentional agents as it supports the legal practice of holding schools responsible, and it provides a conception of indoctrination that helps us identify and avoid indoctrination when it occurs because of factors that lie outside the control of any given teacher.

Chapter VIII

Whereas chapters four and five examine how the alternative conception of indoctrination *in principle* allows us to identify indoctrination with consistency, respond appropriately to charges of indoctrination and know how to avoid indoctrination, the final chapter, chapter eight, considers how *in practice* my definition enables us to do all of this. In this chapter, I examine to what extent we can make sense of charges of indoctrination launched against peace educators and how peace educators can best respond to them. In short, the idea is to see how well my conception of indoctrination allows us to work with the charge of indoctrination and in particular, how such a definition can help us conceptualize what is needed to avoid having the study of a controversial topic in education fall prey to a reasonable, substantive charge of indoctrination. My hope is that this proposed alternative conception of indoctrination will enable educational administrators and teachers to be more confident in taking on the teaching of topics they know to be controversial.

One of the goals of this chapter is to demonstrate how the alternative conception of indoctrination offered in this dissertation allows us to identify indoctrination or underwrite suspicion of indoctrination when we encounter (new) curricula; to know how to respond to charges of indoctrination when made to peace education *in general*; and to know

what a proposed curriculum needs to include to avoid indoctrination.

More specifically, I look at what it would mean for peace educators to intend to get students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner as well as what is required for peace educators to develop and promote truth-seeking.

CHAPTER II

EXAMINING CONTENT, METHOD, INTENT AND CONSEQUENCES AS FEATURES OF INDOCTRINATION

In this chapter I present and critique the various arguments for defining indoctrination in terms of content, method, intention, and consequences. For each of these suggested criteria, I first present the contention that it *alone* is sufficient to define indoctrination. I then analyze the criticisms of these conceptions which are found in the literature and I conclude that none of the criteria listed above is sufficient in and of itself for characterizing a clear and useful definition of indoctrination. Following this discussion, for each criterion, I critically review the arguments offered in the literature that the criterion under discussion is *one* necessary feature of indoctrination. I consider the criticisms given of each of these arguments and offer a response to the criticisms. I conclude by suggesting that the conceptions of indoctrination found thus far in the literature are inadequate for the purposes set out in this dissertation: of providing a definition that (a) gives substance to the charge of indoctrination launched against peace education, (b) allows educators to clearly and accurately identify and address indoctrination

when it occurs, and (c) aids educators in developing educational endeavors that avoid indoctrination.

Defining Indoctrination in Terms of Content

In this section I discuss the claim proposed by Tasos Kazepides (1983b) that content *alone* is a sufficient criterion for defining indoctrination. I show that Kazepides' claim is weak as there are legitimate educational ways to teach what might be otherwise considered indoctrinary content. I proceed to lay out the arguments offered by Gregory and Woods (1972), Antony Flew (1972) and Barrow and Woods (1988) that content is but *one* feature of indoctrination. Here again I suggest that the claims offered are weak. I therefore propose an alternative way of looking at the role content plays in indoctrination.

Tasos Kazepides argues that indoctrination ought to be defined *primarily* in terms of content. He does this by first discounting the usefulness of method and intent as criteria of indoctrination. So, for example, he states that “[n]one of the other criteria that have been proposed [i.e., intention and method] will allow us to talk of indoctrination” (Kazepides, 1983b: 337) at the level of teaching young students foundational or “river-bed” propositions. He claims that certain “river-bed” propositions, such as, “automobiles do not grow out of the earth, I have a father and a mother, and I am a human being”

(Kazepides, 1983b: 336-337), are inculcated, even in some cases *intentionally* inculcated, into the minds of young children without providing them any supporting evidence or reasons. Acceptance of these river-bed propositions, according to Kazepides, constitutes the necessary foundation for persons' later more rational beliefs.

If we are to label this early inculcation as indoctrination, then we have broadened the definition of indoctrination to include the sort of teaching that virtually every parent and teacher of young students engages in and so risk losing the pejorative sense of the term. If, on the other hand, we limit indoctrination to the teaching of certain content, namely doctrines, then, according to Kazepides, we are able to distinguish the sort of teaching that leads persons to adopt these foundational beliefs as true from teaching that instructs students to hold particular *doctrines* as unquestionably true.

Thus far, Kazepides (1983b) has argued for *including* content as a necessary feature of indoctrination. However, he does not stop with this claim that content is a necessary feature of indoctrination. Although it is not entirely clear, he seems to argue that indoctrination ought to be defined in terms of content *alone*. To begin with, Kazepides posits that those who teach doctrines limit their arguments against doctrinal propositions to claims and assertions that can be made within the doctrinal belief system itself. For example, if one teaches the proposition,

"The Pope is infallible," the only arguments against such a claim that will be allowed into the classroom discussion are those that fall within the Catholic system of beliefs. Kazepides claims that those who teach other sorts of content, such as scientific propositions, are required to hold themselves and their students to a generally accepted standard of rational inquiry and "must point out the possibilities as well as the limitations that exist within each inquiry" (Kazepides, 1983b: 338). Thus it seems that Kazepides contends that the teaching of doctrines, in and of itself, constitutes indoctrination as he claims that teaching doctrines puts constraints on what sorts of objections students can make about the truth of the propositions being offered in class.

Although he does not state outright that content ought to be the sole criterion of indoctrination, he does assert that it ought to be the "central criterion of indoctrination" (Kazepides, 1983b: 337). In addition, in a later article he states that content is a "necessary and sufficient criterion" (Kazepides, 1987: 233) for determining whether one has been indoctrinated. This statement, more than any other he makes, indicates that he is, in fact, arguing that indoctrination ought to be defined in terms of content alone. Thus, according to Kazepides' statement, the only thing required for a student to be indoctrinated is that she be taught doctrines.

Whether Kazepides does, in fact, posit that indoctrination is best defined in terms of content alone, we can proceed to examine such a

claim to determine its merits and weaknesses. Defining indoctrination in terms of content alone seems to deny that there are legitimate educational ways to teach doctrinal propositions. To illustrate, consider two different cases. In case one, teacher A teaches a certain doctrinal proposition (say, that the Pope is infallible) as if his proposition were unquestionably true, offers reasons for accepting the proposition as true, and allows students to question the proposition only if their questions stay within the confines of the doctrinal belief system (i.e., Roman Catholicism). In the second case, teacher B teaches students *about* this same proposition (i.e., the Pope is infallible) by explaining what this belief means to various persons inside and outside of the Catholic faith, discussing why persons may believe it and why they may not, and engaging in a class discussion about what believing this proposition may mean to some people, how it may affect their lives, their values, and their perspectives. In the second case, students of teacher B can not be said to have been indoctrinated as they were not being lead or even encouraged to believe or disbelieve that the Pope is infallible. In fact, they were instructed to look at this belief from different perspectives in order to *understand* it rather than accept it as either true or false. Thus, Kazepides' argument trades on the ambiguity associated with the phrase "teaching doctrines." In one sense, the phrase can mean teaching students to *believe* the doctrines; in another it can mean simply teaching students

about the doctrines. Thus, contrary to Kazepides, it seems reasonable to conclude that the teaching of doctrines is not a sufficient criterion for determining the presence of indoctrination.

Yet, what if we interpret Kazepides' argument to mean that teaching students to *believe* doctrines is inherently indoctrinary? If we accept this interpretation, we must then add intention as a feature of indoctrination. The mere presence of doctrines does not, in and of itself, indicate that doctrines are being taught for belief. Teaching students to believe doctrines implies that a teacher has a particular aim or intention in mind. In other words, teaching students to *understand* the belief that democracy helps create equality of opportunity is different than teaching them to *believe* such a claim. Teaching for belief means that one is not satisfied with merely providing students with information *about* democracy and equality so that they may arrive at their own conclusions. When one teaches for belief, one is concerned with getting students to accept that it is true that democracy promotes equality. This concern points to the intention of the teacher; she is concerned with, or has the aim of, getting students to believe what they are taught about democracy. Thus, teaching students to *believe* doctrines does not allow indoctrination to be defined in terms of content alone.

Although indoctrination cannot be defined solely in terms of content, it remains to be seen whether content is an important and

necessary feature of indoctrination. One of the major claims made by proponents of a content analysis of indoctrination, as we saw with Kazepides, is that indoctrination can not occur without the teaching of doctrines. Antony Flew, for example, contends that the "reiteration of the root word *doctrine* may suggest ... the notion of a limitation on the possible content" (Flew, 1972: 70). For Flew, the etymological derivation of the word suggests how the term is ordinarily used. He argues that teaching the math tables or other such factual information, even if done via non-rational methods, does not constitute indoctrination because to accuse one of indoctrination who teaches such content violates ordinary usage of the term. One would not "naturally" call such teaching indoctrination, according to Flew, thus such teaching should be exempt definitionally from the charge of indoctrination.

Here Flew relies upon the criterion that a definition of indoctrination must not violate ordinary usage. While I have no problem with this in the abstract, he does not make it clear just how we determine the ordinary usage of the term. He seems to argue that ordinary usage can be ascertained by how persons use the term "naturally." However, precisely what he means by a "natural" use of the term needs clarifying. As we have seen, "indoctrination" is sometimes used quite differently by lay persons than by educational theorists. Which use is more "natural" or, indeed, "ordinary" is difficult to determine. One interpretation of what

Flew may mean by the "natural" use of indoctrination is that which parallels the use in a paradigmatic case, that is, a case which "virtually everybody would concede is an example of indoctrination" (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 70). Looking at a paradigmatic case may provide some insight into the ordinary use of "indoctrination."

If a paradigmatic case indicates that indoctrination necessarily involves the teaching of doctrines, Flew's contention that its natural use is limited to the inculcation of doctrines is well founded. Thus, I proceed to examine an often cited case of indoctrination offered by Barrow and Woods.

a Catholic school in which all the teachers are committed Catholics and where all the children come from Catholic homes and have parents who want them to be brought up as Catholics ... Imagine also that the teachers ... deliberately attempt to inculcate in their pupils an unshakable commitment to the truth of Catholicism and of the various claims or propositions associated with it. They thus bring up the pupils ... to believe in these and similar propositions in such a way that the pupils come to regard those who do not accept them as true propositions as being simply mistaken. (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 70)

This indeed appears to be a paradigmatic case of indoctrination as it seems highly unlikely given such content, teaching methods, educational aims, and outcomes - as described in this example - that one would label such an endeavor anything but indoctrination. What needs to be determined, as Barrow and Woods suggest, is whether or not *all* the features described in the above case are necessary features of

indoctrination. As we are currently addressing the necessity of content, we need to determine whether the teaching of doctrines must be present for the above example to be a case of indoctrination. In other words, can indoctrination take place without the presence of doctrines?

According to Barrow and Woods (1988), the teaching of doctrines is a necessary feature of their paradigmatic case of indoctrination. Their argument is similar to Flew's in that they appeal to ordinary usage. Yet, they differ from Flew (1972) in a subtle but important way. Flew refers to how persons ordinarily use the term – that is, he makes reference to etymology and to persons' language. Barrow and Woods, on the other hand, refer to the underlying concern persons seem to have about indoctrination which can be *inferred* from its use in ordinary language. Referring to persons' underlying concerns calls attention to indoctrination's pejorative connotation. Limiting the conception of indoctrination to the teaching of doctrines because that fits with its etymological derivation and its ordinary usage does not, by itself, necessarily imply that indoctrination is something widely considered an objectionable endeavor in education. However, when one argues, as do Barrow and Woods, that indoctrination involves the inculcation of doctrines because it is the non-rational holding of *doctrinal* beliefs that causes persons to be concerned, one is insisting on developing a conception that shows indoctrination to be something persons generally

object to, something that perhaps jeopardizes or violates an established and widely held ideal of education. Only this criterion gives us a conception of indoctrination that allows it to retain a pejorative meaning. Thus, Barrow and Woods' do a better job than Flew of developing a conception that maintains the pejorative sense of the term.

Before we can accept this claim that indoctrination must involve the teaching of doctrines, however, we have to be clear about what constitutes a doctrine. As Gregory and Woods point out: "If the term 'doctrine' does not delimit a particular range of content, then clearly indoctrination will be marked off from, say, teaching, by reference to the intention and method components" (Gregory and Woods, 1972: 166). Thus, the acceptance of Flew's or Gregory and Woods' claim that content is a necessary criterion of indoctrination rests on showing there is a plausible definition of doctrine which enables us to clearly demarcate it from other sorts of material.

Antony Flew tries to pin point what sort of material counts as doctrines. He suggests that doctrines express an ideology. This does not do much to clarify, however, as Flew does not tell us what he means by ideology. As a further clarification, Flew claims that doctrines are "if not false, at least not by any ordinary standards known to be true" (Flew, 1972, 75). Religious doctrines serve as the best examples of doctrines, asserts Flew, and the fact that such doctrines are characterized by many

religious teachers as "articles of faith" supports the contention that they are taken to be neither false nor known to be true. Yet, he is far from making it clear what demarcates certain propositions as doctrines from those that are not. It is not enough to define doctrines as merely statements not known to be true or false. To use J. P. White's example, the statement that "Mr. Gladstone sneezed ten times on 10th August, 1886" (White, 1972: 193) can not be shown to be true or false. And, as White points out, there is nothing particularly doctrinal about it. Thus Flew fails to provide a clear definition of "doctrine." In fact, he admits: "I have not been able to offer any satisfactory specification of the sort of belief which has to be involved" (Flew, 1972: 85) in making a belief doctrinal.

Barrow and Woods offer an alternative definition which is better able to handle the sort of claim White provides above. They assert that doctrines are not simply propositions not known to be true or false. Rather, doctrines are statements for which "there is no disagreement as to the sort of evidence that would count to show whether they were true or false" (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 71). Looking at the statement, "Mr. Gladstone sneezed ten times on 10th August," Barrow and Woods do not have the difficulty that Flew does as they do not rest their identification of doctrines on knowing whether such a statement is true or false. Whether he did or did not sneeze ten times on that day is not at issue with Barrow and

Woods' definition. What is at issue is that there is no dispute about what sort of evidence is required to show such a statement to be true or false.

To clarify further, Barrow and Woods assert that doctrines outline a particular world view and way of living one's life. Like Flew, they believe that religious decrees are an excellent example of doctrine as they prescribe a very particular way of seeing the world and living one's life, and there is significant disagreement about what ought to count as evidence to the truth or falseness of the decrees. Scientific claims, on the other hand, if they are made as a result of scientific methods, are not doctrinal because, according to Barrow and Woods, the scientific method *by its very nature* "precludes the possibility of indoctrination" (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 76). They contend that experimentation tests hypothesis and, if future alterations are warranted because of new evidence, such alterations will be made. If alterations are not made when necessary, that is, if one refuses to consider opposing evidence, then one is not doing science. For Barrow and Woods, then, scientific claims are not doctrines as their truth is shown by uncontested types of evidence. In contrast, religious, political and moral propositions, according to Barrow and Woods, are doctrinal because there are "no generally agreed criteria for establishing ... [their] truth or falsity" (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 72).

The problem with arguing that the sort of evidence which supports scientific claims as true or false is uncontested is that it does not take into account the strong influence scientific paradigms have on scientists' willingness to openly consider alternative evidence to firmly established scientific theories. Thomas S. Kuhn (1962) asserts that scientists typically conduct inquiry within a specified set of beliefs and assumptions about what is real. These "paradigms" limit what the scientist looks for, sees, and how s/he interprets the findings. He states:

No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena; indeed those that will not fit the box are often not seen at all. Nor do scientists normally aim to invent new theories, and they are often intolerant of those invented by others. Instead, normal-scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies. (Kuhn, 1962: 24)

Scientific inquiry, according to Kuhn, is not an open-minded search for the nature of reality. It is rather the seeking of a more detailed understanding of some particular part of reality, a part largely defined by the paradigm within which one is operating.

Karen Warren (1994) supports Kuhn's (1962) assertions. Though she uses the words "conceptual framework" instead of "paradigm," like Kuhn she contends that our beliefs, even those that are scientific, are formed within a particular way of looking at the world. Conceptual frameworks, she claims, shape and limit the views, assumptions and perspectives one adopts, openly considers, or even notices. To illustrate her point, she

discusses an example of how a “patriarchal conceptual framework” prevents primatologists from seeing any counter evidence to their assumption that primates are socially organized in male-dominated hierarchies. Evidence, for example, that it is typically the female that selects her partner and that there exists some primate species which are matrilineal rather than patrilineal is overlooked or ignored because it does not fit within the firmly held beliefs of the patriarchal worldview. She states that what a scientist “notices or fails to notice, what she takes as ‘given’ in what she observes, or what she considers relevant or credible or a reason is ultimately affected by the conceptual framework through which she does the observing and assessing” (Warren, 1994: 164). Thus, a scientific “conceptual framework” or “paradigm” shapes one’s understanding of not only what is true but of what counts as supporting evidence.

The important point for the purposes of this dissertation is not to determine whether or not science is or can be doctrinal but to notice the difficulty in making any definite judgments about what counts as a doctrine. Barrow and Woods admit that one can be completely rational when operating *within* a system of beliefs. That is, within the Catholic doctrinal system, “an adherent of that doctrine may behave, argue and generally proceed in an entirely rational manner” (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 72). It is when persons *outside* the system raise objections to claims made within the system that a sort of closed-minded, perhaps irrational

response is made from one who is a strong adherent to Catholic beliefs. Such responses, argue Barrow and Woods, characterize indoctrinated views. Yet the same sort of response, according to Kuhn and Warren, can be made by strong adherents to a particular scientific paradigm or conceptual framework. Hence, on Barrow and Woods' own criterion, scientific claims could count as doctrinal, the very beliefs they explicitly mean to rule out. Thus it is fair to say, despite their efforts, it is still not sufficiently clear what demarcates doctrinal beliefs from other sorts of beliefs. Gregory and Woods (1972), however, may offer some clarification.

Gregory and Woods present four defining characteristics of doctrines in their attempt to make a clear distinction between doctrines and other types of beliefs. These four characteristics are as follows. (1) Doctrines have a wide scope of influence in that they shape how we live our lives; they influence how we educate our children, what kinds of work artists, musicians and writers will produce, and how to structure our industry and agriculture. (2) They can not be proven true or false as they stand as something "against which nothing can count" (Gregory and Woods, 1972: 168). (3) Doctrines are "intimately related to ... purposive activity in a way in which other beliefs are not" (Gregory and Woods, 1972: 168). (4) Finally, doctrines are the type of beliefs that prompt believers to convince others of their "truth."

Believing the milkman will deliver our milk the next morning influences our actions by prompting us to put out the bottles the previous night. Yet, this example offered by Gregory and Woods is not, they argue, an example of doctrine because of its limited scope of influence. Believing one's milk will be delivered only influences our beliefs and actions in regards to the delivery of that milk. It has no effect on one's general world view. The belief that persons ought to seek nonviolent solutions to unjust acts, on the other hand, *would* seem to be a doctrine according to Gregory and Woods' definition. Unlike the belief about the milk delivery, it has a wide scope of influence. In addition, it has a very definite connection to action (it prompts believers to nonviolent action, oppose violence, etc.), and it urges believers to convince others of its truth (as we see in the case of peace rallies, vigils, etc.). Yet, whether such a claim can be demonstrated as either true or false is debatable. To say that it can not is to argue that moral claims can not be proven either true or false. In fact, because moral claims seem to fit all of the other defining characteristics of doctrine, we would have to conclude, if we agree with Barrow and Woods, that *all* moral utterances are doctrinal.

It seems odd, however, to say that the truth of a moral claim is something "against which nothing can count," or if we borrow from Barrow and Woods (1988), against which nothing *that is generally agreed upon* can count. It seems safe to say that sometimes persons make errors

in their reasoning. At the very least, persons can support a moral claim by factual claims which are false. For example, one can argue that the death penalty is economically advantageous as it virtually always saves the taxpayers money on housing and feeding them after they have deceased. If this sort of reasoning occurs, it is generally agreed that the moral reasoning ought to be reconsidered. In addition, there is agreement among moral philosophers that moral propositions can be supported by reasons. If the supporting reasons are shown to be faulty or better reasons are provided for an alternative proposition, they would agree that the original moral proposition ought to be altered or at least seriously questioned. Moral claims, it seems, are of the type against which something *can* stand both within the field of moral philosophy and outside of it.

To further refine our understanding of doctrine, in particular, to understand how doctrines are distinct from moral or scientific claims, Gregory and Woods (1972) compare it with the notion of “theory,” a notion they claim to be quite similar to doctrine and yet distinct from it. Take, for example, Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection. It has a wide scope of influence; many believe this theory to be true, and it shapes our schools’ science curriculum and our perception of humans’ place in the world. In addition, it is intimately related to action in that our values and academic inquiry are heavily influenced by it. Finally, people

are moved to convince others of its truth. It differs from doctrines, argue Gregory and Woods, in that its truth or falseness is known. They write:

The logical status of such theories is not on a par with that of facts, for they are not simply seen to be the case. But nor are they simply not known to be true in the way in which doctrines are not known to be true. For they function as part of a very complex theoretical system designed to explain facts of a certain kind and their success to this end gives them a kind of guarantee that is something more than a grudgingly conceded, 'There may be something in this.' (Gregory and Woods, 1972: 172)

Unlike doctrines, according to Gregory and Woods, many scientific theories, such as the quantum theories of radiation, can be known and are therefore rightly called *theories* and not *doctrines*. The line between theory and doctrine begins to blur, argue Gregory and Woods, when the theory contains conjecture and speculation. They claim that this type of theory can be found in the human sciences and is therefore not what they would call "pure theory" or "pure doctrine."

Gregory and Woods see the distinction between theory and doctrine as lying on a continuum. Pure doctrine is on one end where religion is; pure theory is on the other end where physics and other so called "hard" sciences are; in the middle lies questionable material in which the only way to determine whether or not it is doctrinal or theoretical is to examine it on a case by case basis. Gregory and Woods contend that the "concept of doctrine may be fuzzy round the edges but it is not so fuzzy as to render impossible the demarcation of a limited

content with respect to which the notion of indoctrination alone makes sense" (Gregory and Woods, 1972: 173). If we accept Gregory and Woods' notion of doctrine, the job of educators who seek to avoid indoctrination, presumably, is to look at their content and determine whether or not it is doctrinal by examining its scope of influence, its relation to action, its propensity to induce believers to convince others, and its epistemological status, that is, whether or not it is known what would show the claim to be true or false. If the content being taught contains doctrines, then the teaching of it raises the possibility of indoctrination. If, on the other hand, the content does not contain doctrines, then, according to Gregory and Woods, it can not be indoctrinated.

Though Gregory and Woods claim this "fuzzy" notion of doctrine can still be identified on a case by case basis, they have not adequately addressed the distinction between scientific theories and moral propositions. While they make a good point that scientific claims can be supported by an entire theoretical system, it is not clear that moral propositions are not in the same position. Immanuel Kant's ([1785]/1949) claim, for example, that a person should not be used as a means only can be supported by a complex system of philosophical reasoning. To assert that moral theories are more doctrinal than scientific theories is to assert that philosophical reasoning is somehow less credible than scientific

inquiry; it is to contend that while science can lead to truth, moral philosophy cannot. However, it is philosophy itself which deals with the questions of the adequacy of claims and to what can determine the truth or falsity of scientific claims, indeed what it means to say any claims are true (or false) at all.

Although the scope of this dissertation does not allow for a thorough analysis of the epistemological status of scientific and philosophical claims, it is important to point out that the debate over what qualifies as doctrine and what does not is still very much alive. Tasos Kazepides (1987) does not see the lack of clarity over the notion of doctrine as a problem, however. He claims that, even if it were true that the “word doctrine is vague then that makes ‘indoctrination’ a vague concept – it does not constitute a good reason for abandoning the criterion” (Kazepides, 1987: 234). Yet, Kazepides himself belies this claim in his argument against defining indoctrination in terms of intention. He states that an intentional analysis of indoctrination “is of little use for educational planning” (Kazepides, 1987: 232) as it is nearly impossible to control a teacher’s intentions. What he seems to be claiming here is that a notion of indoctrination must be useful by providing educators with a clear direction for opposing it or addressing it where it occurs. Leaving aside for the moment the dubious nature of Kazepides’ claim that we can not influence a teacher’s intentions, he argues that because educators can

not alter a teacher's intention (assuming we can even know what they are), defining indoctrination in terms of intention does not afford educators a useful tool for abolishing it in their schools. However, if the term "doctrine" is vague, and thus the term "indoctrination" is vague, it would seem that defining indoctrination as teaching doctrines does not provide any clearer a picture of indoctrination than Kazepides' claims an intention account does. Thus far, then, a content analysis does not allow educators to recognize, address, and attempt to abolish indoctrination.

One other way of handling the definitional problem of "doctrine" is to call it a "world-view." Brian S. Crittenden (1968), who also argues for the necessity of a content condition in defining indoctrination, avoids the difficulty of having to define "doctrine" by using the term "world-view" (Crittenden, 1968: 249). He argues that there are not any particular types of belief that "*intrinsically* belong to, or are excluded from, the activity of indoctrinating. The crucial condition ... is that they be part of a world-view or comprehensive 'philosophy' of life" (Crittenden, 1968: 249). According to Crittenden, the teaching of science is not exempt from the charge of indoctrination if it is done, for example, "in the context of Comte's positivism" (Crittenden, 1968: 249) as this way of thinking constitutes a worldview or a general philosophical way of seeing the world.

Although the word “world-view” is not as heavily disputed as is “doctrine,” it is still not entirely clear what constitutes a worldview. For example, does the claim, “*The US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is justified because it ended the war quickly and thus saved lives in the long run,*” qualify as part of a “comprehensive philosophy of life”? Such a view is commonly taught in our nation's schools; it is a view generally accepted as true in our society, and it is typically a claim that goes unchallenged in our schools as alternative views are often not taught. Yet, it may or may not be part of a comprehensive philosophy of life. Some teachers, for instance, may teach and believe such a claim because it supports their philosophical view that the US government always acts with moral integrity and therefore the US would never cause the deaths of non-combatant civilians unless absolutely necessary. In this case, it seems, the claim, “The US bombing in Japan is justified,” qualifies as being part of a comprehensive philosophy of life. Yet, another teacher may teach such a claim simply because he is completely unaware that alternative and opposing views exist. He holds no particular beliefs about the morality of US policies; his belief, then, about the US bombings in Japan is not part of any comprehensive philosophical view.

We may be able to determine if a teacher is teaching a worldview if we ask her why she holds such a view as true. However, not all teachers (or any other person for that matter) recognize where their beliefs come

from, nor do they always know why they hold their beliefs as true. Thus, asking teachers about their beliefs may not tell us whether they are teaching claims that are part of a comprehensive philosophical outlook.

As the notion “worldview” does not seem to be much clearer than “doctrine” – that is, we can not be sure in any given situation whether one is teaching doctrines, worldviews, or other sorts of content – defining indoctrination in terms of worldviews does not adequately indicate when one is and is not indoctrinating. Thus, I conclude that, given the lack of a sufficiently clear account of the notion of doctrines, we should reject the claims of Kazepides (1983b) that we can define indoctrination solely in terms of content.

We may, at this point, also be tempted to drop content as a necessary feature of indoctrination as it is not clear how we can distinguish indoctrinary content from non-indoctrinary content. Yet, Crittenden’s claim that indoctrination occurs when one teaches a view that mirrors the ideology held in society deserves further examination. He writes: “When the world-view being represented in the school is, in fact, the official ideology of the social order to which both teacher and student belong I think we have the paradigm situation for the use of indoctrination” (Crittenden, 1968: 249). It is worth noting that his claim supports the paradigm case Barrow and Woods (1988) use to illustrate indoctrination. Their example does not just talk about students being

inculcated in Catholic doctrines, it also states that these students are taught in a Catholic school where commitment to these doctrines is nurtured and repeated throughout the school. In addition, the students live in a community whose members are strong adherents of Catholicism and wish to have the students join them in their commitment to their system of beliefs. What Barrow and Woods are describing is a situation in which students are not only being inculcated in these beliefs – or worldview – they are being inculcated in these beliefs *within a context* that supports the very same beliefs. This “content-in-context” (Crittenden, 1968: 249), Crittenden suggests, is an important feature of indoctrination and it will be more closely examined in chapters six and seven of this dissertation. For now, I suggest that content, despite the arguments I have just reviewed, may play an important role in determining when indoctrination occurs. More specifically, I agree with Crittenden that when students are taught to accept the official ideology of their society in an unquestioning and uncritical manner, we do have a paradigm case of indoctrination. But more of this later.

What needs to be examined now is whether method, intent, and consequences play a role in indoctrination and if so, what role. What follows immediately is a critical analysis and discussion of the major arguments put forth by those who define indoctrination in terms of method. I then examine the arguments made for an intentional analysis

and a consequences analysis. Finally, I conclude by suggesting an alternative way in which to view the role that content, method, intention and consequences play in indoctrination.

Defining Indoctrination in Terms of Method

In this section, I analyze the arguments of those who claim that method alone is a sufficient criterion for defining indoctrination and consider the criticisms given in the literature to such arguments, concluding that definitions of indoctrination in terms of method alone are inadequate for the purpose set forth in this dissertation. Following this, I examine the claim that method is needed as one criterion of indoctrination and weigh the arguments against this assertion. Finally, I suggest that, although method is an important feature of indoctrination and content is also a relevant consideration, the conceptions offered thus far in the literature fail to meet the criteria for an adequate conception of indoctrination established in the introduction.

Willis Moore (1972) argues that indoctrination is best defined in terms of method alone. He offers two reasons in support of his claim. First, he asserts that Dewey's influence on American educational philosophy in regards to espousing liberal democratic teaching practices has "so permeated American educational thinking that we automatically deal with this concept in terms of method only" (Moore, 1972: 95). Yet, he

admits that this usage, though prevalent in US educational circles, does not by its mere popularity make it more plausible than, say, a content or intention usage. Thus he offers his second reason for a methods only definition. He writes:

Since modes or techniques of teaching are a central concern of the profession of education key terms so defined as to call attention to real differences in the area have great instrumental value for philosophers of education. Moreover, since the two modes thus singled out for contrast may be shown to have evolved from and to reflect the nature of two sharply conflicting political philosophies, one of which British and Americans join in supporting and one of which they abhor, the current American usage would seem to have much in its favor. (Moore, 1972: 95)

For Moore, then, defining indoctrination in terms of method provides the most useful definition in focusing educators' attention on creating better teaching practices. The type of methods Moore claims are indoctrinary are *non-rational* methods. In other words, he contends that indoctrination necessarily occurs when teachers employ non-rational teaching methods.

John Wilson (1972) also asserts that indoctrination involves the employment of non-rational teaching methods. He, along with Gregory and Woods (1972), argues that method is logically necessary to the concept of indoctrination. Wilson states that it is "logically necessary to the concept of indoctrination that the indoctrinated person arrives at the belief by non-rational methods ... The indoctrinator must be using such a method, thereby implanting a belief which is causally motivated (by a desire to obey authority for instance) rather than rationally motivated"

(Wilson, 1972: 19). According to Wilson, indoctrinated beliefs are not believed because of any supporting evidence or reasons. He acknowledges that a student who has been indoctrinated may be able to provide reasons for her beliefs but he claims she does not hold these beliefs *because* of the reasons. Rather, she holds them for considerations other than the supporting reasons or evidence. She may, for example, hold such beliefs because of her conviction that her teacher is always correct and because she likes and wants to please her teacher. Thus, if the teacher were to change his mind and espouse an alternative belief, the student would also change her mind to align her beliefs with those of her teacher.

To hold a belief rationally, according to Wilson, is to hold it in such a way that when the evidence changes or the supporting reasons are found to be in error, the belief will alter. Non-rationally held beliefs, on the other hand, are those which are unaffected by any change in the evidence or reasons. Wilson asserts that “part of what we mean by a rationally-held belief is that it is causally based on the real world, and will change only if the world changes (as opposed to if some authority changes its mind, or if the believer’s inner feelings change)” (Wilson, 1972: 20). Thus, for Wilson, beliefs held non-rationally are those held for considerations other than supporting reasons or evidence.

The problem with defining indoctrination in terms of method alone is that it casts too wide a net on what constitutes indoctrination. If all instances of non-rational teaching are instances of indoctrination, then it must always be indoctrination when one teaches very young children to accept that certain beliefs are true before they are able to understand the rational merits of such beliefs. Both Moore (1972) and Wilson (1972) admit that all teaching inevitably involves the passing on of some information without providing reasons. In fact, they even admit that such teaching constitutes indoctrination. Wilson and Moore assert that indoctrination is in some cases unavoidable and even desirable.

According to Moore, when teaching very young children to adopt certain values and standards of behavior we as a society deem appropriate and even necessary for the promotion of proper and decent conduct, non-rational methods are employed because young children are not mature enough for teachers to engage their reasoning capacities in justifying or understanding why certain norms and behavior are desirable. He claims that:

we frankly admit that learning necessarily begins with an authoritative and indoctrinative situation, and that for lack of time, native capacity or the requisite training to think everything out for oneself, learning even for the rationally mature individual must continue to include an ingredient of the unreasoned, the merely accepted. (Moore, 1972: 97)

Indoctrination, according to Moore, is necessary for inculcating very young children, too young to be "motivated by reason" (Moore, 1972: 96),

to adopt values and “behavior patterns presumably tested and adopted by more mature persons” (Moore, 1972: 97). In addition, he claims that indoctrination is also sometimes necessary for mature, rational persons. This is not to say, however, that Moore is a proponent of authoritarian methods of education. He is careful to point out that, although indoctrination is sometimes necessary, it is not ideal. The job of teachers should always be to strive toward the ideal which is to engage students’ rational capacities in formulating their own beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Those teachers who employ indoctrinary practices in situations where rational methods are warranted, argues Moore (1972), ought to be criticized for such practices. He rejects the view that indoctrination can be justified by an argument that certain values or beliefs are too important to be left to the individual to choose to adopt. Moore claims that indoctrination is only justifiable in those classroom situations where students’ lack the ability or teachers truly lack the time to reason through the supporting evidence. Even when certain values and attitudes are seen as extremely important by the teacher or society, when teaching those to persons capable of rationally considering their merits, educators are obligated to employ rational rather than indoctrinary methods.

Wilson (1972) too asserts that indoctrination is not always wrong. As an example, he states that when our children believe they are safe because we have said that we will always protect them, we are

inculcating this belief non-rationally. Yet, this is hardly immoral, according to Wilson, because this is what is required for them to have a sense of security and it is morally right to make children feel safe and secure. Like Moore, Wilson argues that indoctrination is certainly not a method to be employed in any case or situation where it can be avoided. He points out that while indoctrination is sometimes necessary, it runs the risk of impeding students' capacities for rationality. It is his contention that, while it is important to tell a child she will be protected so she will feel safe, to maintain this belief puts the child at risk.

For here we have taken over, or put to sleep, a central part of the child's personality – his ability to think rationally in a certain area. To put it dramatically: there is always hope so long as the mind remains free, however much our behaviour may be forced or our feeling conditioned. But if we occupy the inner citadel of thought and language, then it is difficult to see how a person can develop or regain rationality except by a very lengthy and arduous course of treatment. To indoctrinate is to take over his personality in a much more radical way than anything we do by way of force or conditioning: it is, in effect, to take over his consciousness. (Wilson, 1972: 22)

Wilson claims that indoctrination, while it may sometimes appear to be necessary, can take away a students' ability to formulate their own views and decide for themselves which values to adopt and which beliefs to accept. The very way they perceive ideas and think about issues will be largely dictated by others. This, according to Wilson (1972) and Moore (1972), is the reason indoctrination should be avoided in all cases except when absolutely necessary.

Both Wilson's and Moore's arguments are problematic, even if we ignore the ambiguity of the notions associated with the phrases, "thinking rationally" and "providing reasons." If we accept Wilson's and Moore's analyses, we must concede that all instances of teaching young children to accept certain beliefs without the proper reasons for them, beliefs that are taught for their well-being, are instances of indoctrination. We are thus compelled to agree that indoctrination is acceptable in many teaching situations, especially when teaching very young children. This, it seems, puts us in the awkward position when we are charged with indoctrination of having to not only admit that we are indoctrinating, but demonstrate that we are indoctrinating *under acceptable circumstances*. New arguments will be needed about what determines acceptable and unacceptable circumstances. It seems far easier to *not* label as indoctrination teaching persons to hold beliefs non-rationally in circumstances where persons are unable to rationally understand the reason for the beliefs.

Harvey Siegel (1988) does just this. He contends that "we may grant the unavoidability of early inculcation of beliefs and habits in the absence of rational justification" (Siegel, 1988: 87) without calling such inculcation "indoctrination." According to Siegel, one indoctrinates when one teaches students to hold a belief in such a way that evidence and reasons will have no power to influence students holding the belief. Thus,

indoctrination is not simply inculcating unjustified beliefs; rather, it is the inculcation of beliefs in such a way that they can not be (or *will* not be, Siegel is not clear on this point) justified later by reasons and evidence.

If we accept a methods analysis of indoctrination as discussed by Moore (1972), Wilson (1972) and others, and we agree with Siegel (1988) that the inculcation of unjustified beliefs does not necessarily count as indoctrination, then it seems we must define indoctrination as the teaching of certain beliefs to students in such a way that the students hold these beliefs in a manner that will not allow them to reconsider the beliefs in the face of evidence and reasons. While this definition addresses the concern that it is impractical to insist that teachers always avoid non-rational teaching methods, it does not clearly show what type of methods are indoctrinary. In other words, there does not seem to be any particular type of method that necessarily gets students to hold beliefs in a way that evidence and reasons have no power to influence. Thus, defining indoctrination in terms solely of method does not provide us an adequately clear notion of what precisely constitutes indoctrination.

Although indoctrination may not be defined best in terms of method alone, we have yet to determine whether method is a useful or perhaps even necessary feature of indoctrination. Gregory and Woods (1972) assert that indoctrination is best defined in terms of method *and* content. As we have already considered the arguments for a content

analysis, I only examine here their arguments for including method as a criterion of indoctrination.

According to Gregory and Woods, there is a logical necessity of defining indoctrination in terms of method. They state: "Somewhere along the line non-rational methods must, logically, have been employed, even though they cannot be specified. It is in this sense that we hold that method is logically necessary to the concept of indoctrination" (Gregory and Woods, 1972: 171). For Gregory and Woods, an indoctrinated belief is one that rational processes would not have led one to accept. Thus, non-rational methods, according to Gregory and Woods, are a necessary component of indoctrination because of the *nature of the indoctrinated beliefs*. In other words, their contention that there is a conceptual tie between indoctrination and non-rational teaching methods hinges upon their characterization of indoctrinated beliefs – that they, by definition, are non-rational. This is an interesting claim and one that is linked with their argument laid out earlier in this chapter that only *doctrines* can be indoctrinated because they claim that doctrines are beliefs which can not be shown to be either true or false. To accept any doctrine as true, they posit, one must have been taught in a manner where one's rationality was ignored or avoided. The assumption here seems to be that rationality requires acceptance of beliefs based on some sort of critical deliberation of supporting reasons and evidence. If there can be no

reasons or evidence to “prove” a belief, then one's acceptance of such a belief as true is necessarily non-rational, that is, one has accepted it for considerations other than those associated with a rational assessment of supporting evidence or reasons.

It seems, then, for Wilson (1972) as well as Gregory and Woods (1972), the worry over indoctrination is that it leads to students holding beliefs in a non-rational manner. According to them, the only way students come to hold beliefs in such a manner as a direct result of their instructor's teaching is if their instructor uses non-rational methods. Put another way, they argue that *only* non-rational teaching methods lead to students holding beliefs in a non-rational manner.

James E. McClellan (1976) also claims that indoctrinated beliefs require the employment of non-rational teaching methods, although he does not go so far as to assert that method is *logically* necessary to the concept of indoctrination. He argues that a good indoctrinator is one who teaches students to hold their beliefs

with great flexibility and apparent (only) openness to criticism and refutation. The believer has been taught to defend his doctrines in depth [in] a world in which his beliefs are always threatened, in which contrary beliefs are seen not as possible truths to enlarge and enrich the mental life but as dangers to be overcome. (McClellan, 1976: 141)

According to McClellan, such efforts require that the beliefs be “implanted.” Though he does not state outright that implanting is necessarily a non-rational process, he does imply it. He claims that to

implant a belief is akin to planting a seed in the ground. When we implant beliefs, we plant the seed of a belief into the mind of a student. For such a belief to grow into a healthy and strong “organic structure,” as McClellan puts it, the belief must be nurtured with supporting claims, with statements that make it clear that to believe otherwise is to be foolish or unreasonable. (Religious beliefs, for example, may be nurtured by statements that to believe otherwise is to be unfaithful. Similarly, beliefs about one’s government or nation may be supported by statements that to believe otherwise is to be unpatriotic.) For such beliefs to grow, in other words, they must be taught and supported using methods that side-step the students’ rational processes.

To review: Both Moore (1972) and Wilson (1972) claim that an indoctrinated belief is one which is held for considerations other than good reasons or evidence. Gregory and Woods (1972) contend that an indoctrinated belief is one held non-rationally as it is the sort of belief that rational processes would not allow one to either support or reject. Finally, McClellan (1976) argues that an indoctrinated belief is one held as unquestionably true because to question it is to risk feeling unreasonable or foolish. Though they all have slightly different claims about why certain beliefs are held non-rationally, they all agree that an indoctrinated belief is one held apart from considerations of relevant reasons and/or evidence. In addition, they all agree that indoctrinated beliefs are the

result of non-rational teaching methods. In other words, they all argue that in order for students to hold beliefs as true apart from good reasons or evidence they must have been taught in a manner that side-stepped their rational processes.

It is important to point out here that in all these cases, the notion of indoctrinated beliefs is one that implies the beliefs are held *as a result of teaching*. In other words, the fact that a group of students holds non-rational beliefs from a desire to please others does not mean necessarily that they were indoctrinated into those beliefs. On the other hand, if the students hold non-rational beliefs as a result of the non-rational instructional methods employed in teaching them, then according to Wilson, McClellan, and Gregory and Woods, they were indoctrinated. Thus, while other factors may cause students to hold non-rational beliefs, if the cause of these beliefs is non-rational teaching methods, then indoctrination has taken place.

One argument that has been raised against the method's analysis is that the notion of "non-rational teaching methods" is unclear. Both Wilson (1972) and Moore (1972) define such methods as the inculcation of beliefs without providing reasons. According to Moore, non-rational methods are believed, not because of supporting reasons, but because of an "authoritative pronouncement" (Moore, 1972: 97) from one whom we consider to be an expert. This raises the question of what Moore would

count as "reasons." For surely, even as Moore admits, we must all depend to some extent upon the pronouncements of experts. Yet, he seems to contend that such *pronouncements* can never be considered "reasons."

Wilson (1972) claims that a rationally held belief is one based on the "real world" so that if the world changes, the belief will change with it (Wilson, 1972: 20). Thus, for Wilson, reasons derive from the world. What Wilson appears to assume here is that "reasons" come from some sort of neutral, entirely objective perspective on the world or from reality itself. Some theorists, such as Elmer J. Thiessen (1993), argue that our understanding of the world develops from persons with a particular psychology and history who live in a particular time and place. In short, there is no entirely objective perspective in the world, a "view from nowhere" as it is sometimes called. Nor do we have independent access to reality – that is, no access without a situated perspective.

My point is that it is not adequately clear what sorts of reasons rationally held beliefs are based on. Can *any* reason count, so long as it derives from the real world? For example, do I hold the belief rationally that the world is flat if it is based on my experiences and others? My reasons come from the real world but they are, of course, inadequate as there is considerable evidence and good reasons which exist to serve as counter evidence to my reasons. Must we insist, then, that rationally held beliefs be beliefs based on *all* relevant reasons? If so, then do teachers

employ non-rational teaching methods if they do not provide *all* the relevant reasons for the claims they make in class?

As teachers cannot be expected to always provide all relevant reasons for believing the propositions they teach in their classrooms due to practical considerations such as time, insisting on such an account of a rationally held belief to avoid indoctrination would encompass much too much teaching within the definition of indoctrination. We can well ask, are non-rational methods, for example, beliefs taught with *no* supporting reasons, an *inadequate number* of reasons, or as Barbara Houston puts it, “the wrong sorts of reasons” (Houston, 1977: 61), that is, reasons that are perhaps irrelevant, false or illogical. Moore (1972), Gregory and Woods (1972), and Wilson (1972) all claim that non-rationally held beliefs are those held for considerations other than good reasons, and that beliefs held in this manner are the result of non-rational teaching methods. What they do *not* say, however, is what sort or amount of reasons teachers must supply to avoid teaching non-rationally.

According to Thiessen, the notion of rationality which underlies prior analytic conceptions of indoctrination “is fundamentally concerned with providing reasons and evidence for beliefs” (Thiessen, 1993: 105). Mavrodes, who claims that this notion of rationality falls into the “proved-premise principle” (Mavrodes, 1970: 26; Thiessen, 1993: 105) argues that it is highly problematic. Thiessen points out that, in justifying a belief,

Mavrodes claims that there is an inherent difficulty in providing enough reasons to prove a belief true or false, as each belief “demands the construction of an infinite series of arguments, each one of which embodies a proof of the premises of the succeeding argument” (Thiessen, 1993: 106). This account of rationality would make virtually all teachers indoctrinators as it is impossible in any one, or indeed even in countless teaching episodes, to fulfill the infinite regression of reasons needed to prove each succeeding premise upon which a belief is based.

Thiessen’s answer to this difficulty is to make a distinction between the sort of rationality defined above and what he calls “normal rationality” (Thiessen, 1993: 106). He argues that *normal* rationality recognizes the natural and inherent limitations in persons’ ability to be completely unbiased and objective. He states:

Normal rationality recognizes that the justification of beliefs is an ongoing process conducted by human beings who have a psychology and a history and are part of a larger society with traditions ... Normal rationality, while very conscious of its subjectivity and fallibility, nevertheless seeks to be as objective as *is possible*, always being open to reassessing what is presently claimed to be the “truth,” and always searching for more adequate expressions of truth. (Thiessen, 1993: 110)

To be rational, then, is to base beliefs on reasons and evidence from as unbiased and objective a stance as possible. Certain beliefs must be taken as true if we are ever to justify beliefs and get on with the business of the day. These certain beliefs are those that are generally agreed upon within our community or society, according to Thiessen. Thus, we can

presume that a claim such as "It is good to try and be kind" can be taken as true in our society. Yet, if we agree with Thiessen's account of rationality, even this belief must be open to reassessment should new evidence become available.

Even if we were able to determine when teaching is non-rational, Thiessen asks how often one must teach in such a manner before we consider them to be indoctrinating. He also suggests "that all teaching contains elements of emotional appeal, rhetoric, and force of personality ... When these elements dominate the teaching situation, it might be possible to say that indoctrination is occurring" (Thiessen, 1988: 102). But, as he points out, it is too difficult to determine at what point we call such teaching indoctrination. Thus, a conception of indoctrination that defines it as the employment of non-rational teaching methods does not allow us to have a sufficiently clear guide for identifying when indoctrination is taking place.

A methods analysis, then, seems inadequate. Yet, as Moore (1972) points out, much of the work done to improve teaching is aimed at improving *how* one teaches rather than what one teaches or even what one's educational aims are. In short, determining the quality of one's teaching is often based in large part by looking at the methods one employs. If we agree that indoctrination is a form of miseducation, and we agree that one of our tasks as educators is to improve the quality of

our teaching, then defining indoctrination in terms of method will help focus educators' attention on teacher practice in watching out for and addressing occurrences of indoctrination. The problem, as we have seen, is that there is no identifiable type of method that we can claim are indoctrinary; that is, there is no type of practice that has been shown to necessarily lead students to hold beliefs non-rationally.

It seems it would be useful if we could define indoctrination in terms of method for it would allow us to improve teacher practice. Thus, I return to this question in chapter six of this dissertation where I suggest that those methods which one could foresee would lead to indoctrinary outcomes constitutes indoctrination. Whether such a claim would constitute a methods analysis or an intentional analysis will be discussed later. For now, I proceed to present an intentional analysis of indoctrination to determine whether a teacher's intentions are a possible defining feature of indoctrination.

Defining Indoctrination in Terms of Intention

Those who argue that indoctrination ought to be defined in terms of intention alone claim that if one intends to hold beliefs in a non-rational and uncritical manner and one acts with that intent, then one indoctrinates. To understand this sort of conception of indoctrination I draw primarily upon I. A. Snook (1972a, 1972b) as his writings on the

subject are well cited and to my knowledge he provides the strongest argument for this type of analysis. Following my discussion of Snook's claim that intention is the sole criterion of indoctrination, I consider the claim that intention is but one necessary feature of indoctrination, that is, the claim that indoctrination cannot occur unless a teacher intends to indoctrinate her students. In appraising the arguments for and the criticisms of an intentional analysis of indoctrination, I also discuss Snook's response to such criticisms. I conclude this section with the argument that intention is indeed a very important feature of indoctrination as it is the only criterion discussed thus far that allows us to hold teachers morally culpable for indoctrination and encourages teachers to reflect on their desired outcomes as well as the likely outcomes of their educational efforts.

Snook's argument that indoctrination is best defined in terms of intention alone rests on two premises. First, he asserts that none of the usually considered criteria (i.e., method, content, and consequences) are necessary features of indoctrination. His arguments against defining indoctrination in terms of method and in terms of content are similar to the criticisms of such accounts set out earlier in this chapter. That is, Snook argues that it is unclear what constitutes a rational and non-rational teaching method. Furthermore, he asserts that one can teach doctrines without indoctrinating and that the notion of doctrine has not been

clearly defined. The second premise upon which Snook's argument rests is that if we agree that indoctrination causes harm to students, and we therefore agree that indoctrinators ought to be held morally accountable for causing such harm, then we must include an intentional criterion in the definition of indoctrination because, morally speaking, we can not hold persons accountable for something they did not intend to do.

According to Snook, "indoctrination" belongs to a family of words which describe acts for which we assign moral criticism. He uses "murdering, lying, stealing, wasting time, [and] being unfaithful" (Snook, 1972a: 157) as examples of other terms that belong in this word family. To hold one morally accountable for an act, Snook reminds us, we must first show intent. For example, if A says to B, "My mother is not home" when, in fact, A's mother *is* home, we would only call such an utterance "lying" if A *intends* to deceive B. If A tells B his mother isn't home because A honestly believes his mother to be away, it is more accurate to describe A's utterance as a "mistake" rather than a lie. Similarly, if A kills B, we would only call it "murder" if A acted with the intention of ending B's life. Otherwise, we would call it an accident, manslaughter, or by the more generic term "killing." For something to be "murder," there must be at least an *intention* to kill an innocent person (as well as other things such as malice).

The words in this family also share another feature in common, according to Snook. They are all both task and achievement words but the task sense is more important. For example, if A sets out to murder B but fails in his attempts, it is true that A has not, in fact, murdered B. However, we would still want to hold A morally culpable for attempting to murder B. Also, if A fails to be unfaithful to B, we would still want to assign moral blame for A's efforts to be unfaithful (Snook, 1972b).

Let me now relate this to the notion of indoctrination. We could argue that if A intends to indoctrinate B, makes every effort to do so, but fails at it, then A has not indoctrinated B. Thus, we might be tempted to claim that such a failed effort should not be called indoctrination as it did not manage to achieve the goal of indoctrinating B. Yet, as Snook points out, there are some acts for which we find persons morally blame worthy that are such that when a person even *attempts* to engage in such acts, we want to be able to hold them morally accountable. We morally criticize persons who intentionally attempt to murder someone, steal something, lie, or are unfaithful, even if such attempts fail to meet their intended outcomes. The same should hold true for indoctrination, according to Snook, because the outcome of indoctrination can cause persons serious harm.

If we agree that we ought to be concerned about students who are being inculcated into certain beliefs such that they hold the beliefs

non-evidentially, then we also ought to be concerned about teachers trying to get students to hold beliefs in such a manner. Michael Hand and Harvey Siegel assert that “teaching which would constitute indoctrination if successful is objectionable whether it is successful or not” (Hand, 2003: 96; Siegel, 2004: 80). Or, to put a finer point on it, Siegel states: “It is better to highlight rather than downplay the basic point that if indoctrinating is wrong, so is *trying* to indoctrinate” (Siegel, 2004: 81). Thus, according to Snook, Siegel, and Hand, we ought to hold persons morally accountable for even attempting to indoctrinate, regardless of whether they succeed or fail.

One’s intention, then, if we accept Snook’s line of reasoning, is a necessary feature of indoctrination. Yet, Snook’s conception has its critics. In what follows, I first lay out what I consider to be the strongest objections to an intentional analysis of indoctrination and I then show how one can satisfactorily respond to them using Snook’s arguments and line of reasoning.

Kazepides (1987) disputes the analysis of indoctrination defined in terms of intention. He asserts that a notion of indoctrination ought to be useful in helping educators identify and abolish indoctrination when it occurs. While it is fairly easy for educators to control the sort of content taught in a school, he states that “no policy maker can control the intentions of teachers” (Kazepides, 1987: 232). Community members who

object to the indoctrination of certain doctrines, according to Kazepides, must have recourse to stop this. If indoctrination is defined solely in terms of intentions, members of the community would be unable to put an end to the indoctrination unless they forbid the inclusion of the doctrines in the curriculum. Going after the teachers' intentions would be fruitless as one can not control what another intends.

It seems odd to assert that one's intentions can not be controlled or influenced. While it is probably true that one's intentions can never be under the complete control of another, it is reasonable to assume that persons have *influence* over another's intentions. Educators can, for example, counsel a teacher on his intentions, ask him to pay closer attention to them, and even ask him to alter them if it is seen that such intentions will lead to harmful consequences. However, Kazepides' criticism that a conception of indoctrination in terms of intent is not helpful in *identifying* indoctrination is still valid because it cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty what a teacher intends.

Snook answers Kazepides' criticism by arguing that those accused of indoctrination are typically not the finest authority on their own behavior. He asserts that, generally, persons who commit acts which are open to moral criticism are not in the best position to judge their intentions. For example, he claims that one who lied may say he "gave an excuse," or one who was unfaithful may say he "had a fling" (Snook,

1972b: 54). While indoctrinators certainly act intentionally, Snook informs us, they often do not say that their intention is to indoctrinate. He posits that by looking at their teaching methods and possibly also the content, outside agents may be able to determine their intentions. Snook is careful to point out that this does not mean that method or content are necessary criteria of indoctrination. Rather, he insists that method and content are only possible *indicators* of intention. Thus, according to Snook, a teacher's intentions can be known.

Another problem Kazepides has with Snook's intentional analysis is that it only allows us to hold persons responsible for harm they caused intentionally; we can not object to those acts which lead to unintended, but harmful outcomes. He posits that words like "insult, embarrass, infuriate, or intimidate" (Kazepides, 1987: 232) serve as examples for how persons often behave in ways that lead to unintended harmful consequences. Persons often say things to others and insult, embarrass, infuriate, or intimidate them without ever having any intention of doing so. If such persons' intentions are pure, and yet they cause others to be embarrassed, insulted, and so on, according to Kazepides, we could not hold them accountable for such acts if we must judge them solely on their intentions. It would follow from what Kazepides is saying here that if a teacher unintentionally causes students to be indoctrinated, we can not hold that teacher accountable because her intentions were pure.

Snook's (1972b) response to this criticism is to agree that we should not hold teachers morally responsible for outcomes they caused unintentionally. He asserts that holding a teacher accountable for an unintentional act is akin to holding one morally responsible for lying when one had no intent to deceive. Or, to use Kazepides' group of words, it would seem that Snook would argue that we should not hold a person morally responsible for saying something that inadvertently embarrasses her listener because it was said with the intention of being friendly. Here, it seems, Snook is correct. We have all been in the unfortunate situation of saying something that embarrassed or insulted or even infuriated someone when we had no intention of causing such a reaction. People make mistakes and cause others harm as a result of such mistakes. To hold them morally accountable for making such mistakes, when the harm is relatively minor in degree, seems unjustifiably harsh. Thus, Snook's answer to Kazepides is to agree with Kazepides and assert that defining indoctrination in terms of intention alone does not allow us to hold teachers accountable for mistakes, and that is, as Snook says, how it should be.

Another criticism against defining indoctrination in terms of intention is offered by Walter Feinberg (1975). He argues that, "given two teachers using essentially the same methods, teaching the same content and achieving essentially the same results, that one could rightly be accused

of indoctrination and the other not depending only upon their aims” (Feinberg, 1975: 214) seems unreasonable. This criticism, I argue, gets at the fundamental problem of defining indoctrination in terms of intention. It seems unfair to hold only one of the teachers in the above example morally accountable for the harm she caused her students. For Snook, our responsibility as educators would be to inform the teacher that her actions lead to indoctrinary consequences and she should, therefore, alter her teaching methods. If she does not do so, according to Snook, although she may *claim* that she does not intend to get students to hold beliefs non-rationally, we can observe by her methods and consequences that, in fact, it is her intention to effect such consequences and therefore we ought to hold her morally accountable. Snook’s intentional analysis still needs work in clarifying how we can accurately and consistently identify and therefore hold teachers morally accountable for indoctrination.

Defining Indoctrination in Terms of Consequences

In the last section of this chapter I critically examine accounts of indoctrination defined in terms of consequences. No one suggests that indoctrination be defined solely in terms of consequences; there seems to be a general recognition that many things other than one’s teaching may cause students to hold beliefs non-rationally. So, I consider only the claim that consequence is a *necessary* feature of indoctrination; that is, I

examine the contention that if a student or students have not been successfully indoctrinated, then indoctrination did not take place.

Earlier in this chapter, I showed that although we do not call an act “murder” unless someone has been successfully murdered, we do want to hold persons morally accountable (as we do hold them legally accountable) for *attempting* to murder someone. Similarly, Snook (1972a, 1972b) argues that we also want to hold persons morally accountable for attempting to indoctrinate. Yet, trying to murder someone and failing to do so is called “attempted murder,” not “murder.” Why not, then, call failed efforts to indoctrinate “attempted indoctrination” and keep the term “indoctrination” solely for those efforts that succeed?

Barrow and Woods (1988) agree that indoctrination ought to be reserved for those cases in which students have been successfully indoctrinated. They claim that if teachers attempt to indoctrinate but fail, “they manifestly have not indoctrinated” (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 74). Barrow and Woods take consequences to be a necessary criterion of indoctrination. Michael Hand (2003), who uses Barrow and Woods’ notion of indoctrination, agrees that indoctrination only occurs when students have *successfully* been indoctrinated. In his article, he takes on the question of whether or not faith schools indoctrinate. He concludes that they do not because religious educators too often fail to induce their students to accept uncritically the beliefs taught them. If the religious

educators were successful, according to Hand, then such teaching would indeed constitute indoctrination.

One possible response to this argument is that “indoctrination” is a word similar to “education” in that both words have both a task and achievement sense. But, as Snook (1972b) asserts, rightly I think, for the term “indoctrination,” the *task* sense ought to take precedence. Just as we want to morally censure persons who attempt but fail to cheat or steal, we ought to hold accountable those persons who attempt but fail to indoctrinate. The consequences of indoctrination, just as the consequences of cheating and stealing, are morally reprehensible. Thus the risk of harm associated with attempting to get students to hold beliefs non-rationally, to use one description, is dire enough to assign moral blame to persons making such an attempt. Although at this point it has not been clearly demonstrated what it means to indoctrinate and precisely what harm indoctrination incurs, we can argue that *if* indoctrination causes students serious harm, *then* the risk in merely attempting it ought to be morally censured.

Another problem with a consequences analysis is that it puts educators in the position of having to determine whether a student's indoctrinated beliefs were caused by a particular teacher, a notoriously difficult causal claim to establish. In other words, even if we determine that students from a particular class hold the beliefs non-rationally that

were taught in that class, we can not be sure that they hold the beliefs in this manner due to any particular actions taken by the teacher. They may, for example, hold such beliefs as true because such beliefs are generally accepted as true in society; or they hold the beliefs this way because they were inattentive or lazy students.

The teacher may have an *influence* on her students' beliefs, but we cannot know to what degree the teacher's influence shaped the students' beliefs and to what degree outside influences shaped their beliefs. Even if we were able to determine this, it is not clear at what point we hold the teacher accountable for indoctrination. We can not pinpoint the degree to which a teacher's influence shaped her students' beliefs, thus it seems we can not define indoctrination in terms of consequences as it is unreasonable to expect that anyone can know whether a student holding beliefs non-rationally is due to the actions taken by any particular teacher.

Summary

In this chapter I have demonstrated that the conceptions we have thus far considered have failed to develop a sufficiently clear account of what constitutes indoctrination. The conceptions considered do not enable educators to identify indoctrination with consistency, know how to appropriately answer a charge of indoctrination, or know how to develop

curricula that avoids it. The content analysis falls short because of the vagueness and ambiguity in the terms "doctrine" and "worldview." Defining indoctrination in terms of method is not satisfactory because there is no particular set of methods that have been adequately identified as being indoctrinary. The intentional analysis forces us to guess what a teacher desires or foresees. Finally, the consequences criterion places an unreasonable requirement on persons to determine whether or not or to what degree students hold beliefs non-rationally due to the actions of their teacher.

In the following chapter I adopt a more detailed lens in examining the conceptions of indoctrination we have considered here. More specifically, I look at how well each of them is able to meet the purposes set earlier by analyzing the extent to which they satisfy my four definitional criteria presented in the introduction. Thus far, the reader will have detected, my sympathies lie with an intentional account of indoctrination. However, it is only after a more detailed consideration of our purposes that it will be ascertainable whether some intentional analysis will remain the most promising.

CHAPTER III

ADOPTING A MORE CRITICAL LENS: EXAMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH PRIOR CONCEPTIONS OF INDOCTRINATION MEET THE NEW PURPOSES

The preceding chapter critically reviews prior conceptual analyses of “indoctrination.” In this chapter I adopt a more detailed critical lens in examining these prior conceptions. Specifically, I adopt Alven M. Neiman’s (1989) suggestion that to further the debate on indoctrination, we ought to proffer an alternative purpose or purposes for our conception as a way to further the discussion and understanding of indoctrination. Taking Neiman’s proposal seriously, I offer as alternative purposes or objectives for an analysis of indoctrination the following: Develop a clear conception of indoctrination that will allow us to better understand the charge of indoctrination and one that enable teachers to improve their educational endeavors and avoid indoctrination.

What follows is an examination of the extent to which prior conceptions of indoctrination meet my purposes. As I argued in my introduction, my definitional criteria explicate four different standards which a conception of indoctrination must satisfy for it to be useful to educators in the ways I suggest above. Thus, I reiterate my definitional

criteria below and proceed to examine how well prior conceptions meet each of the criteria.

The criteria I suggest for defining “indoctrination” are as follows:

1. The conception must not depart radically from ordinary usage of the term.
2. It must not reduce “indoctrination” to something else.
3. It must explain why we find indoctrination in education within pluralistic democratic societies so objectionable even in pursuit of worthy goals.
4. It must clearly characterize what it is for teachers (and, we may possibly add, schools) to indoctrinate and what it is for them to avoid indoctrination.

The First Definitional Criterion

As stated above, I believe that the content, method, and intentional analyses meet the first criterion. That is to say, they do not depart radically from ordinary usage. Snook (1972a, 1972b), for example, adopts a sort of topographical method in developing his definition. He lays out a series of cases, some of which he claims most persons would label as indoctrinary, others most persons would claim are not indoctrinary, and still others for which it is unclear as to whether they are or are not indoctrinary. For example, he argues that teaching an ideology

as if it were indisputably true is a clear case of indoctrination, and teaching very young students to behave in a socially acceptable manner is clearly not a case of indoctrination. A good definition of indoctrination, according to Snook, is one that adequately deals with these cases which he posits reflect ordinary usage of the term. Furthermore, he claims a good definition must help educators determine whether some more dubious cases, such as, teaching any subject in an authoritarian manner, constitute indoctrination.

Willis Moore (1972) and John Wilson (1972) also rely on ordinary usage in crafting their methods analyses of indoctrination. As stated earlier, Moore claims that defining indoctrination in terms of method best coincides with how the term is used, particularly in the United States. Wilson develops his methods analysis by examining what he calls the "logical geography" (Moore, 1972: 105) of the term. He seeks to map out the various uses of the word to determine commonly agreed upon features of indoctrination. He then develops his definition based on these common features.

Antony Flew (1972), who offers a content and intentional analysis, criticizes Wilson for his attempts to map out this term claiming that Wilson moves from merely *describing* various meanings and uses of "indoctrination" to *prescribing* how it ought to be used. Flew admits, however, that some level of prescription is necessary to "straighten out"

(Flew, 1972: 72) the multiple and even conflicting meanings of the term. Thus, both Wilson and Flew seek to develop a conception of indoctrination that does not violate ordinary usage of the term even as they recognize that ordinary usage may entail inconsistent or contradictory usage.

Barrow and Woods (1988) also rely on ordinary usage in developing their definition. They provide what they claim is a paradigmatic case of indoctrination: A case in which students are inculcated in Catholic doctrines at a Catholic school situated within a Catholic community. They argue that those features present in the case (namely, method, content, intention and consequences) are necessary features of indoctrination.

The conceptions of indoctrination considered here are quite different; yet they share one very important feature. All accounts of indoctrination in the literature assert that indoctrination gets or attempts to get students to hold taught beliefs in a non-rational manner. This shared belief is a fundamental and commonly held notion about indoctrination. Thus, although each one of the conceptions are distinct from the others, none violate ordinary usage as they all agree that the worry over indoctrination is that it leads (or is quite likely to lead) to students holding beliefs in a non-rational, non-evidential manner. Because these disparate accounts all agree about how indoctrinated beliefs are held, they are

similar enough to one another for all of them to meet the first definitional criterion of not radically departing from ordinary usage.

The Second Definitional Criterion

Cheshire Calhoun (1995), in her article "Standing for Something," provides an excellent example of the importance of developing conceptions that do not reduce the concept to anything else. In her analysis, she shows how prior conceptions of "integrity" conflate it with the similar notions of: "unified agency," "continuing as the same-self" (Calhoun, 1995: 252) and "weakness of will" (Calhoun, 1995: 250). Her work develops an analysis that achieves explicatory distinctiveness; that is, her definition clearly explicates how the notion "integrity" is conceptually distinct from the similar notions named above. By distinguishing "integrity" from similar notions, Calhoun provides a clearly defined depiction of integrity. In a manner of speaking, she sketches a picture with clearly defined lines that depict what belongs inside the picture and what belongs outside of it. Put another way, by explicating what integrity is *not*, Calhoun helps us to see what it *is*.

Following Calhoun's example, in examining prior accounts of indoctrination, it is important to determine whether any of these accounts reduce "indoctrination" to similar notions such as: promoting or advocating for, brainwashing, conditioning, and lazy, ineffectual

teaching. In what immediately follows, I show that conceptions of indoctrination discussed in the literature do not conflate indoctrination with promoting, advocating and brainwashing. Furthermore, I argue that the notion of conditioning as defined by B. F. Skinner (1965) is so broad that comparing it with the notion of indoctrination does nothing to further and better refine our understanding of indoctrination. Finally, I argue that, with the exception of the intentional analyses, all prior accounts reduce indoctrination to poor teaching.

To advocate for or promote a particular belief means to try and convince others of the truth of that belief. This can be accomplished through either rational or non-rational methods. Thus, advocating and promoting are different from indoctrination as defined in terms of method because one *can* use rational methods to advocate for and promote a particular idea. For example, I can promote the idea that the death penalty ought to be repealed in New Hampshire by providing a rational argument based on honest and open-minded critical assessment of all available and relevant evidence. Whereas a methods analysis defines indoctrination strictly in terms of non-rational teaching methods, promoting and advocating allow that rational *and* non-rational methods can be used.

Accounts of indoctrination defined in terms of content also distinguish indoctrination from promoting and advocating. One *can*

advocate for and promote ideas that are not generally considered to be doctrines. For example, I can advocate for and promote the belief that air fresheners in all our school's bathrooms would improve the air quality in those rooms. Such a belief is not typically viewed as doctrinary. Thus, according to a content analysis of indoctrination, this sort of belief cannot be indoctrinated. Yet, it can be promoted and advocated for. Thus, because indoctrination, according to a content analysis, can only advance doctrinary claims, it is distinct from advocating and promoting which can advance *both* doctrinary and non-doctrinary claims.

Intentional and consequences analyses also succeed in distinguishing indoctrination from promoting and advocating. One can advocate for the belief that the death penalty is wrong without intending to or succeeding in getting students to hold these beliefs non-rationally. I can, for example, intend to get students to hold rationally the belief that the death penalty ought to be repealed when I advocate and promote such a belief. To indoctrinate such a belief, on the other hand, according to an intentional analysis, I must intend to get students to hold such a belief *non-rationally*. Also, according to a consequences analysis of indoctrination, one does not indoctrinate if one has failed to get students to hold the belief non-rationally whereas one can advocate for and promote such a belief regardless of the outcomes.

Brainwashing, too, is distinct from all considered accounts of indoctrination if we accept J. P. White's definition of brainwashing. White defines brainwashing as an "all-out assault of one's beliefs" (White, 1972: 127). Methods, intention, content, and consequences analyses all define indoctrination in terms of getting students to hold a *particular* belief or set of beliefs non-rationally. The notion of brainwashing, unlike these accounts of indoctrination which focus only on a particular set of beliefs, connotes an attempt to wash one's brain, as it were, or cleanse one of existing beliefs and replace them with others that the brainwasher seeks to inculcate.

Considered accounts of indoctrination, then, have succeeded in drawing clear distinctions between "indoctrination" and the notions of "promoting," "advocating," and "brainwashing." Drawing a distinction between "conditioning" and "indoctrination," however, is a bit trickier. Noted behaviorist B. F. Skinner (1965) defines conditioning as the implementation of rewards and punishments to influence future behavior. Moreover, he puts all actions, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs under the rubric of "behavior." For Skinner, observable actions are called "public behavior" and thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are called "private behavior." Thus, John Wilson's (1972) attempt to distinguish indoctrination from conditioning by claiming that indoctrination is the manipulation of

beliefs whereas conditioning is the manipulation of behavior is unsuccessful as Skinner considers beliefs a type of behavior.

The problem with Skinner's notion of conditioning is that it renders all teaching as conditioning. In fact, according to Skinner, all "learned" behavior (including all beliefs we have) is the result of conditioning or "learning." For Skinner, learned behavior is that which occurs as result of a series of punishments and rewards. It is different from instinct, or behavior that results from natural or inherent reactions to certain environmental stimuli. If we accept this notion of conditioning, then indoctrination is one form of conditioning, educative teaching another, compliments a third, and even accidental incidents such as car accidents a fourth form of conditioning. Any time rewards and punishments are issued (intentionally or unintentionally) and they influence future behavior, according to Skinner, it is considered conditioning.

With such a notion of conditioning, it is not helpful to distinguish it from indoctrination except to note that indoctrination is only one small subset of conditioning. In other words, if conditioning constitutes all forms of education – good, bad, or otherwise – distinguishing it from indoctrination does not help differentiate indoctrination from other forms of miseducation or even from other forms of educative teaching. Thus, I leave the notion of conditioning as it does not further our understanding of indoctrination.

Poor and lazy teaching is a form of miseducation where we do not typically assign moral blame. Although such teachers fail to provide their students with a socially agreed upon acceptable level of education, their failure is attributed primarily to mistakes, lack of effort or inability. An ineffective teacher is not accused of committing a moral wrong.

Indoctrination, on the other hand, at least taken in its strictly pejorative sense, is characterized by most concepts of indoctrination discussed thus far as an endeavor that warrants moral censure as the harm it causes is of moral concern. Thus, the distinction between poor teaching and indoctrination as defined in terms of intention is clear as an intentional analysis attributes a specific intention to those who indoctrinate, an intention for which one can be accountable. In addition, one can be a poor and lazy teacher without intending to be so. In fact, one can imagine that poor teachers usually intend to be good teachers. There is, then, a clear distinction between inept teaching and indoctrination defined in terms of intention. The distinction between poor teaching and indoctrination as defined in terms of method, content, or consequences, however, is not so clear.

Lazy and poor teaching is not limited to any one type of teaching. Although a methods analysis does not specify which particular methods are indoctrinary, it does state that indoctrination occurs only with the employment of non-rational teaching methods. The problem in

distinguishing poor or lackadaisical teaching and indoctrination defined in terms of method is that it is not clear that, when a teacher uses non-rational methods, she does so out of laziness or because of some intention to get her students to hold beliefs in a non-rational manner. For example, it would seem odd to label as an indoctrinator a teacher who, because she does not want to spend the time required to teach them about historical information, uses rote memorization techniques to get her students to commit to memory the information written in the text book. Such a teacher is lazy or has a poor grasp of what is involved in good teaching. Being ineffective or making mistakes does not always warrant moral censure; we do not typically hold teachers morally accountable for making mistakes of this nature. We would not want to label as indoctrination, in other words, *all* instances of non-rational teaching.

Without bringing in the qualification of intention in a methods analysis, there is nothing to demarcate indoctrination from lazy teaching. That is, unless we claim that indoctrination only occurs when teachers employ non-rational methods with the intention to get students to hold beliefs non-rationally, we cannot know when one's non-rational teaching methods are better characterized as indoctrination or ineptitude.

A consequences analysis of indoctrination also fails to make clear whether students come to hold beliefs non-rationally as a result of indoctrination or poor teaching (or, for that matter, as a result of other

reasons entirely). Even if we argue that indoctrination occurs when students hold beliefs non-evidentially as a result of something their teacher did, we cannot determine whether that something was indoctrination or inept teaching. Consider the inept history teacher from the prior example. Just as it would seem odd to claim that her *methods* were necessarily indoctrinary, it would also seem odd, based simply on consequences, to say that she indoctrinates because we cannot know why her students hold beliefs non-rationally.

A content analysis of indoctrination fares no better. Ineffective teachers as well as indoctrinators can inculcate doctrines. There is no way on a content analysis to ascertain whether a teacher who is teaching dubious claims as if they were unquestionably true is attempting to inculcate such claims or is exhibiting poor teaching skills.

Laziness and ineptitude should not be conflated with indoctrination. The history teacher in our example is best characterized as a poor teacher not an indoctrinator. Defining indoctrination, then, in terms of either method, content, or consequences, or even any combination of these three does not provide any clear indication of how to distinguish indoctrination from low quality (but not necessarily immoral) teaching. Only an intentional analysis provides a sufficiently clear distinction between poor teaching and indoctrination.

In sum, conceptions of indoctrination defined in terms of method, content, intention or consequences all succeed in demarcating indoctrination from promoting, advocating, and brainwashing. The notion of conditioning, as defined by Skinner (1965), is too broadly construed to further our understanding of precisely what distinguishes indoctrination – regardless of how it's defined – from any other form of teaching. Finally, methods, content, and consequences analyses of indoctrination fail to provide an adequate distinction between indoctrination and poor quality or incompetent teaching. Only when indoctrination is defined in terms of intention can we see the distinction between indoctrination and inept teaching. Thus, with the exception of an intentional analysis, prior accounts of indoctrination fail to fully meet the second definitional criterion of providing a conception that does not reduce indoctrination to anything else.

The Third Definitional Criterion

My third criterion, that a definition of indoctrination should show why indoctrination is objectionable even when the goals in whose service it is enjoined are considered worthy, is met by prior conceptions to a certain degree. The competing analyses of indoctrination discussed earlier in this dissertation all presuppose that indoctrination causes a specific harm; more specifically, they all claim indoctrination diminishes students' rational

capacities. However, as I argued in chapter two, the notion of rationality they employ, or the ideas they advance of holding beliefs in a rational manner are too vague and ambiguous. In other words, none of them make it sufficiently clear what it means to hold beliefs rationally.

In this chapter, I take another look at notions of rationality in regards to why impeding rational capacities constitutes a significant moral harm. Jeopardizing the search for truth is of central concern here. I argue that prior analyses of indoctrination do not make it adequately clear how indoctrination significantly risks the likelihood that students will arrive at true beliefs or will have the capacities to search for true beliefs. Moreover, I claim that while rationality is a primary goal of education for *many* educators, particularly those who uphold the ideology of pluralistic democratic societies, it is not held by *all* educators. Thus, it is not wholly clear that the accounts of indoctrination we have considered thus far do meet the third criterion: they do not make clear why indoctrination is objectionable even when used in pursuit of admirable ends.

Before determining how prior analyses argue that impeding rationality impairs one's ability to seek for and arrive at true beliefs, we must first show that considered analyses do, in fact, contend that the harm of indoctrination is that it puts at risk students' rational capacities. According to Thiessen (1993), those who define indoctrination in terms of content assert that certain content – i.e., doctrines – are a necessary

feature of indoctrination because doctrines can not be held rationally. Gregory and Woods (1972), too, posit that doctrinal beliefs are those for which there is no general agreement about what can prove or disprove them, thus they rationally cannot be accepted as true.

Thiessen goes on to assert that those who define indoctrination in terms of intention claim that one indoctrinates when one intends that her students hold beliefs non-rationally. We see this with Snook (1972a, 1972b), for example, who asserts that indoctrination occurs when a teacher intends to get students to hold a belief "regardless of the evidence." In other words, according to Snook, one indoctrinates when one teaches with the intention that one's students will come to hold a particular belief in such a way that evidence has no power to shake that belief.

For those who define indoctrination in terms of method, Thiessen contends, the methods which ignore, disregard or side-step students' rationality are indoctrinary. John Wilson, who advances a methods analysis of indoctrination, states: "The important point here, in my view, is not so much whether we call something 'indoctrination' or not, but whether a particular process increases or diminishes rationality" (Wilson, 1972: 21). Willis Moore agrees with Wilson that the harm of indoctrination is that it impairs persons' rationality. The distinction between teaching that is educative and teaching that is indoctrinary, according to Wilson, is that

educative teaching helps students “behave rationally” (Moore, 1972: 20) whereas indoctrination encourages students to hold beliefs non-rationally. Barrow and Woods mirror Wilson’s contention when they claim indoctrination occurs when “rationality never supersedes authority” (Barrow and Woods, 1988: 78). They assert, in other words, that if a teacher always uses her authority to impose her beliefs and such authoritarian engagements never allow students to rationally consider the epistemological merits of such beliefs, that teacher indoctrinates.

Thus, it seems, Thiessen rightly surmises that the worry over indoctrination derives from a liberal educational ideal where rationality is held as an important educational goal. In support of this assertion, Thiessen recounts that R.S. Peters’ notion of education centers around developing a “rational mind” (Thiessen, 1993: 105) and Hollins “suggests that each of the contributors to his *Aims of Education* ‘puts forward as his chief aim of education the development of rationality” (Thiessen, 1993: 105). It is apparent, then, that rationality is a widely held goal of education among liberal educationists and educational philosophers. Furthermore, it seems reasonable, on the surface, to define indoctrination in terms of rationality – or, more specifically, as a process which impedes students’ rational capacities. The problem is, however, as Thiessen points out and as we saw in the previous chapter, it is not clear what “rationality”

means. A further problem is that it has not been made sufficiently clear how impairing one's rationality jeopardizes one's ability to find truth.

The defining characteristic of Thiessen's account of rationality (both the more traditional notions of rationality and his *normal* rationality) is that rationality uses the best available evidence to determine truth. Indeed, Thiessen states that "[i]n seeking to be rational, our aim is, of course, to arrive at the truth" (Thiessen, 1993: 106). The problem Thiessen points out in defining rationality as a means of determining truth is that we do not know what the truth will look like when we see it. According to Thiessen, we cannot know when we arrive at truth and thus it is not helpful to define rationality in terms of truth. For Thiessen, the most we can hope for with rationality is our very finest efforts to develop and maintain beliefs based on the best reasons and evidence available.

Francis Shrag (2003), who agrees with Thiessen in his contention that the aim of rationality is truth, points out the difficulties in determining whether or not a belief is held rationally. In his article, Shrag provides hypothetical examples of students discussing the usefulness of rationality with their professors. His examples are instructive here as they highlight the important distinction between having *rational* beliefs versus holding *true* beliefs. 'Thomas,' Shrag's hypothetical student, chooses to believe in the existence of God even though he admits that he cannot support such a belief rationally. Thomas' professor concludes that, for Thomas, "the costs

of an incoherent set of beliefs are outweighed by the benefits of participation in religious life” (Shrag, 2003: 181). Shrag asserts that Thomas’ belief is rational because it is based on an analysis of the costs and benefits of holding such a belief and a judgment that the benefits outweigh the costs. Thomas’ belief, then, according to Shrag, is based on a rational consideration of reasons.

Does Shrag let Thomas off too easily here? Suppose Thomas’ belief was in white supremacy instead of God, and suppose he wished to continue to participate in the Ku Klux Klan instead of his religious practices? If we agree with Shrag and Thiessen that the aim of rationality is truth, we can not be satisfied to believe that Thomas’ conviction in white supremacy is rational unless we are ready to say (as I expect most educators are not) that such a belief is true or could ever be demonstrated to be true after examining all available evidence, arguments and reasons. Yet Shrag argues that we can not require or expect persons to always take the time necessary to “get all our beliefs in order and to hold only beliefs we can fully justify” (Shrag, 2003: 181). Thus, it’s unclear, at least on Shrag’s account of rationality (and many of these conceptions of indoctrination), whether we can expect the call for rationality to require or prompt Thomas to reconsider his views.

The problem, it seems, with determining whether one’s beliefs are held rationally is that there are different views regarding what sort of

reasons or evidence ought to count as rational justification. I agree with Shrag that we would want to call Thomas' belief in God reasonable as Thomas did base his belief on a thoughtful consideration of the relevant reasons available to him. On the other hand, it would be difficult to make the case that the aim of rationality is truth if we allow such reasons to count as rational justification because such reasons do little to further Thomas' inquiry about the existence of God. Rather they only support his choice to hold the "non-rational" belief in God. Rationality, on this analysis, seems to promote *reason* seeking rather than *truth* seeking.

Let's look at another hypothetical example. Susan believes that the US bombing in Japan during WWII was justified and she believes this because of the reasons given to her by her teacher – that the bombing ended the war early thereby saving lives in the long run. Because Susan's belief is based on reasons, we would call such a belief rational. But what if such a belief is not true? Does the call for rationality require that Susan question the worth of the supporting reasons? If so, to what extent must Susan question the reasons? Thiessen (1993) reminds us that to not fall into what Mavrodes (1970) calls the "proved-premise principle" we must accept those claims as true that society generally agrees upon. Yet, what if some of these claims that society generally agrees upon are false and ought to be questioned? While Thiessen points out that even well accepted beliefs ought to be questioned if new evidence arises, he does

not discuss what students should do if they are taught widely accepted claims and are never exposed to any counter evidence because such evidence is rarely expressed in mainstream society.

Let us assume, for example, that Susan was made aware of the claim that the US bombings were *not* necessary to end the war because Japan would have surrendered prior to the bombings, and as a result of this new evidence she altered or even just questioned her prior belief. In this case we would want to say she holds her belief about the bombing rationally. But what if Susan never encounters any opposing claims to her initial belief? This is not merely a theoretical supposition; it occurs quite often that students accept views taught them in school which they never question because such views are repeated, maintained and supported by mainstream ideology. So many of the beliefs we have remain unquestioned because it never occurs to us that such beliefs *ought* to be or *can* be questioned. Crittenden (1968), for example, asserts that the paradigmatic case of indoctrination involves the teaching of beliefs that are part of the accepted cultural ideology and held as true by mainstream society. He seems to recognize that mainstream notions often go unquestioned thereby making better fodder for indoctrination than, perhaps, beliefs that run counter to generally accepted views. There are often ample reasons given in society for accepting mainstream

beliefs and it is not uncommon that counter evidence remains marginalized, hidden and unheard by a large portion of the populace.

Rationality, in and of itself, does not seem a stringent enough criterion to encourage students into critically deliberating on the epistemic worth of beliefs that are taught them in schools, particularly if the beliefs taught fit with (some) mainstream thought. In other words, believing the US was justified in bombing Japan, if believed by students because of the reasons given them, is a rational belief. Yet, it is not a belief held in a way that encourages students to discover whether or not it is supported by *all* available and relevant evidence. Rationality, as thus far defined in these accounts, requires students to have good reasons for their beliefs. It does not require that they search for opposing reasons or counter views in order that they may adequately test the epistemological merits of their beliefs against those that oppose it or in light of *all* reasonably available evidence.

If we accept prior conceptions of indoctrination, we accept the concern that prompted them, that indoctrination undermines rationality, that is, it undermines students forming evidential beliefs. This is, indeed, a bad thing, at least to those committed to liberal pluralistic ideals governing public education. However, with Thiessen's concept of rationality, avoiding indoctrination as defined in this way, as we have seen, does not mean that we will have discouraged students from forming

false beliefs based on faulty or inadequate reasons. Nor will it discourage students from holding beliefs as incontestably true when, in fact, such beliefs are highly contested.

If rationality can not be justified by claiming that it is the best avenue to truth, what is the justification for rationality? Harvey Siegel (2003) would say that the very question itself speaks to the importance of rationality – that is, by asking “Why rationality?” we are asking for reasons and evidence that would support an answer. Even to argue against rationality requires rational deliberation as one would give reasons in support of her claim against the importance of rationality. But is rationality good *for its own sake*, or is it good, as Thiessen (1993) and Shrag (2003) contend, because it is the way to achieve truth? If we accept the latter view, then we must have some account of “truth” to make a case for the necessity of rational processes to reach it. In other words, how can we be sure that rationality is the best way to truth if we can not be sure what we mean by “truth”?

Shrag (2003) very well may have an account of truth. In fact, prior conceptions of indoctrination may also assume a particular notion of truth. It seems that considered accounts of indoctrination hold a correspondence theory of truth. Simply put, correspondence theories characterize “true” statements as statements which correspond to facts about the world. Thus, the claim “The U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki ended WWII early" would be true if and only if the war would have continued longer in the absence of the bombing. To prove such a claim is difficult. We could, however, point to evidence that shows projected life loss would be greater if the U.S. did not bomb Japan.

I do not wish to argue against or defend the correspondence theory of truth. However, it is worth noting one concern that arises with this theory: If truth is that which accurately describes something in the world or a particular state of affairs, how can we be sure that rationality is the best way to find truth? If we hold a correspondence theory of truth, we need a separate argument to establish the plausibility of the claim that rationality is the best means to discover truth. It may be, for example, that spiritual meditation is the best way of perceiving and knowing reality. The simple point I wish to make here is that, without a clearly explicated notion of truth, we cannot make sense of rationality, but more importantly, even with *some* conceptions of truth, we still need an argument to show that rationality is the best route to truth.

I will have much more to say about truth and its role in understanding indoctrination in the next chapter when I offer the alternative goal of education. This alternative goal, I argue, is one that is equally undermined by indoctrination but better explains why we find indoctrination objectionable even when used in the service of (other) admirable goals. For now, however, it is enough to conclude that

defining indoctrination as the inculcation of non-rationally held beliefs leaves too many questions unanswered about what precisely it means to hold a belief non-rationally and how we can justify the importance of rationality without a clearly defined notion of "truth."

Even if we were clear about what it means to hold a belief non-rationally, there is another problem with defining indoctrination in terms of rationality. If indoctrination is defined as something that impedes rationality, it fails to maintain its strictly pejorative connotation for persons who do not hold rationality as a primary goal of education. Some sectarian schools as well as some non-sectarian schools do not subscribe to the ideology of education that insists that education's central task is to produce rationally autonomous persons. The Amish (2005), for example, believe that it is more important students learn to comply with the Amish ideology and traditions than learn to be rationally deliberative and critically appraising persons. Similarly, some more traditional Christian schools see strong adherence to Christian teachings as more important than rational autonomy. To persons who hold to more authoritarian models of education, indoctrination would fail to concern them if it is defined as that which jeopardizes students' rational autonomy. While it is true that rationality is an ideal of education for many persons, particularly those living in and subscribing to a liberal pluralistic democratic society, it is not an ideal shared by all educators living in a pluralistic democracy.

Thus, although defining indoctrination in terms of rationality does provide a conception that violates an important goal of education for *many*, we could perhaps do better by developing a conception of indoctrination that holds a strictly pejorative meaning for far more persons.

To sum up this section, we can note that my third definitional criterion is met *to a certain extent*, that is, the considered conceptions of indoctrination explain for some why indoctrination is objectionable even when it is used to pursue worthy goals. However, we have also seen that it is a valuable endeavor to develop a conception of indoctrination that will be of interest to and useable for those sectors of a pluralistic democratic society which have decidedly minority views about education, both public and private education, and its purposes.

The Fourth Definitional Criterion

The fourth definitional criterion of indoctrination which calls for a lucid illustration of what characterizes indoctrination and what is required to teach without indoctrinating is not met by any of the considered accounts. Indoctrination defined in terms of teaching methods, for example, does not clearly explain what constitutes non-rational teaching methods; that is, there are no identifiable methods that, by their nature, cause students to hold beliefs non-rationally. Education is a complex and multilayered interaction between the students and the multiplicity of

persons, policies and structures by which they are influenced. As I show in chapters six and seven, to determine where indoctrination occurs, we must consider the context in which teaching takes place. Students are greatly affected by the beliefs accepted as true by persons in their school community, the pedagogical philosophy adopted by the school, the methods employed by their teachers, and the hidden as well as the explicit curriculum.

In addition, students do not come into school as blank slates, waiting to be acted upon rather than interacted with. Students bring to the teaching interaction certain attitudes, dispositions, habits of mind, beliefs, and values. All of this effects how vulnerable they are to indoctrination. Some students will be more prone to holding beliefs non-rationally than others and different students will respond differently to a given teaching method. Considering the complexity involved in teaching endeavors, we can not identify any particular method or set of methods that run a serious and substantial risk of getting students to hold beliefs in an unquestioning and non-deliberative manner. Therefore, defining indoctrination in terms of method does not afford us a sufficiently lucid portrayal of indoctrination to allow us to identify it with consistency.

Similarly, content analyses do not provide a lucid portrayal of indoctrination because such analyses rest on the vague and ambiguous notion of doctrine. Even if we could know what demarcates "doctrines"

from other sorts of material, however, defining indoctrination in terms of content leaves us with an analysis that does not take into account certain educational endeavors that ought to be construed as indoctrination. Let us return to the example of the teacher who told her students that Betsy Ross sewed the first U.S. flag. As this claim is patently false and it does not have a wide scope of influence on our perspectives or our actions, it would not be considered a doctrine by any ordinary usage of the term. If a teacher intentionally got her students to hold this belief non-rationally, we could not call such teaching indoctrination if we insist that content be a required criterion of indoctrination. However, such teaching *ought* to be characterized as indoctrination because it is harmful to teach students demonstrably false claims as if they are unquestionably true even when they are not obviously “doctrines.” The reasons for this follow.

What we learn shapes the type of beliefs we hold, how we perceive the world around us, and influences the sort of ideology we maintain and thus the type of person we become. Furthermore, although the erroneous statement about Betsy Ross may not be considered a doctrine, it *could* be adopted into one’s worldview about their country. For example, when I use Betsy Ross as an example to my students of how a story repeated often enough can come to be seen as “fact,” many of my students get very upset with me for even suggesting that Betsy Ross did not sew the first U.S. flag. These students respond as if I killed an American hero or

dispelled a cherished childhood belief. Other students grow angry that they had been “lied to,” and they wonder what other false beliefs they hold as a result of their schooling.

Getting students to hold non-doctrinal beliefs in a non-rational manner runs the substantial risk of getting them to hold as unquestionably true beliefs that *ought* to be questioned. To make the best possible choices in our lives, we need to have as accurate and reliable information as it is reasonably possible to attain. Holding on to incorrect or dubious claims as if they were true undermines our ability to make the most informed decisions possible. Indoctrinating students into non-doctrinal claims, then, causes harm to students by jeopardizing their ability to make the best possible decisions for themselves and others. In addition, indoctrination jeopardizes some basic educational tenets of a pluralistic democratic society – that of educating students to participate meaningfully and effectively in the marketplace of ideas, questioning their own views and those of others, assessing the worth of beliefs based on a wide range of perspectives, and holding beliefs based on a careful consideration of all the available and relevant evidence.

Thus far I have argued that indoctrinating students into doctrinary and non-doctrinary but false claims is harmful. But what about getting students to hold demonstrably *true* claims non-rationally? Those who advocate for a content analysis of indoctrination assert that, by including

the teaching of doctrines as a necessary feature of indoctrination, we exclude from the notion “indoctrination” the teaching of such things as the math tables and French vocabulary, even when taught using such methods as rote memorization. Snook contends that these examples do not count as indoctrination because they are unavoidable, and if we are to hold persons morally accountable for indoctrination, we can not include actions which are unavoidable. (Snook, 1972a: 152). Thus there is general agreement among educational philosophers that teaching things such as the math tables and vocabulary does not constitute indoctrination. I argue, however, that students *can*, in fact, be indoctrinated by such teaching.

Consider a student who goes home and accurately recites her addition tables. At first she delights her parents, but when she shows that she has no concept of what it means to add two numbers together, her parents are no longer as delighted. Their daughter has learned to *recite* the addition tables but has not learned *how to add*. If she does not learn the concept of addition –that is, if she does not learn that addition means putting two or more quantities together and totaling their quantity –she will be hampered in her ability to learn subtraction, multiplication, and other more complex mathematical principles and endeavors. I suggest that we do not typically worry about teaching students their math facts via rote memorization because it is quite rare that teachers do not

correspondingly teach their students the concept of addition. In other words, teachers rarely get students to hold math facts, so to speak, non-rationally. Students are most often cognizant of why, for instance, two threes are six.

Now consider the student who is asked to memorize a list of French words and their English translations. Even if this is done (as it characteristically is done) using rote memorization techniques, we do not typically refer to this as indoctrination. Here, I warrant, we do not generally label such teaching as indoctrination because it is rare that students hold beliefs about French vocabulary non-rationally. Language acquisition is a very rational process. Children learn in one situation that “yes” means that they have agreed to a particular proposal. When they use the word “yes” in another instance and find it does not mean what they thought it did, then they refine their understanding of “yes.” Similarly, when students learn a second language, they memorize vocabulary, use the words they have memorized and, in using the words, continue to refine their understanding of how the word is used and what meanings it takes on in different contexts. A student, then, who is taught to hold the belief that the French word for “pretty” is “*jolie*” in a rigid and uncritical manner will be less likely to openly consider that “pretty” in French is “*belle*.” The student who adopts a more rational stance will more likely ask his teacher about this apparent disparity and learn that, just as there is

more than one word for “pretty” in English, there too is more than one word for it in French. By adopting a non-rational manner of holding beliefs, students of French will be hindered in their ability to develop an understanding of the language through continual usage and reflection of their experiences.

My point here is that students can be taught even such things as math facts and French vocabulary in an indoctrinary manner. Yet, most of us do not ordinarily concern ourselves with students being taught to memorize such material in a rote fashion. I argue, on the other hand, that such a teaching method is *not* unavoidable, regardless of what it is we are teaching, that it is harmful, and that we *can* provide meaningful proof to young students.

Ellen J. Langer (1997) provides a thorough and detailed explication of what she terms “mindful learning.” She argues that when we are taught information in a mindless manner, that is, when we are taught to mindlessly memorize a given set of facts, we tend to hold these facts as true regardless of time, place or context. Additionally, she claims that learning “in a rote, unthinking manner almost ensures mediocrity” (Langer, 1997: 14) as it does not enable us to shift what we learn in the least bit to adopt a more advantageous perspective or understanding in a different context. Memorizing vocabulary words, then, apart from understanding how the words are to be used in conversations and writing does not

adequately prepare students to use the words correctly or effectively in varying contexts and situations.

In her book *The Power of Mindful Learning* (1997), Langer explains that teaching for mindful learning involves: making the information taught relevant to students' lives; teaching them to look for and find distinctive details about what they're taught; teaching them to examine the information from multiple perspectives; creating games and other ways of making the learning more like play than work; and finally it involves introducing novelty into what is taught, into the teaching methods, and into the assessment methods. She provides her readers with the results of several experiments to demonstrate that when students are asked to learn a body of information mindfully, they are more successful in remembering the information and are much better at developing new understandings of what they learned when placed in novel circumstances.

Adopting Langer's theories and conclusions about mindful learning, let us consider how students taught mindfully to learn French vocabulary would fair against students taught the same information mindlessly. Students who are taught mindlessly to memorize the vocabulary words will not remember the information as well as those who were taught mindfully and they will be less successful in using the words in a variety of contexts. Thus, while Snook (1972a, 1972b) claims that rote memorization in teaching such material is unavoidable, Langer provides numerous

examples of alternative teaching methods available to teach such content thus showing we can, in fact, avoid such methods. Furthermore, she shows that more creative and “mindful” learning approaches results in better learning outcomes.

If we accept Langer’s notions about the superiority of mindful learning over mindless learning, we may conclude that rote memorization is *avoidable*. Yet, claiming that rote learning is avoidable, or not unavoidable, does not yet show that it is indoctrinary. To demonstrate that a given teaching practice is indoctrinary, we must first show that it causes harm to students. I contend that we *can* show that teaching students to adopt math facts and to learn French vocabulary translations in a non-critical, non-deliberatory manner does cause students significant harm. True, not being open to learning that there are various French words for “pretty” does not appear to constitute harm. But, my point is that learning habits are generalized and to learn anything by rote, and to learn it only by rote, entrenches the *habit* of doing so and thus when generalized, puts at risk students’ ability to acquire the best information and understandings available in order to make optimal choices in one’s life, choices that have the most potential for improving one’s life and the lives of others.

There is another argument in favor of labeling such seemingly trivial rote learning as indoctrination. If we decide that developing non-critically

held beliefs for some material is acceptable but not for others, we must be very clear about what sorts of material we can develop non-deliberative beliefs for. In looking at the examples of math facts and French vocabulary, we might be inclined to characterize such material as that which is factual or indisputably true. If we do that, however, we run the risk of having teachers defend their harmful teaching by claiming that they are teaching indisputably true facts. In short, we must be able to agree on what counts as unquestionably true, and as we know, this is unlikely. In sum, it is misleading to think that it is unavoidable that some rote learning occurs and that our account of indoctrination must allow for it, not include it in its purview if the term is to retain its pejorative connotation. Such teaching and such learning undermines students' ability to learn as much as they could if they had been taught to hold beliefs in a more "mindful" or critically deliberative manner. Moreover, claiming that it is acceptable to teach students some but not other sorts of material in this manner puts us in the unenviable position of having to decide and agree upon what counts as unquestionably and indisputably true. Content analyses of indoctrination then, are not as useful as they might first appear.

Consequences analyses also fail to illustrate indoctrination in a patent way because we can not know whether students holding beliefs non-rationally (presuming we can even know what it means to hold

beliefs in such a way) is due to something their teacher did or due to some other reason entirely. Finally, because we can not know with any degree of certainty what a teacher intends, an intentional analysis of indoctrination, at least as put forth by Snook (1972a, 1972b), does not provide us with a picture of what indoctrination looks like.

Thus, I contend that none of the accounts offered in the literature clearly indicate what it looks like to indoctrinate nor do they offer a clear account of how we can avoid indoctrination. Moreover, none of the conceptions developed thus far allow us to hold schools accountable for indoctrination which, I argue, is necessary. In this next section I show that prior conceptions of indoctrination enable us to hold only individual teachers accountable and that such conceptions fail to account for some endeavors that we would want to call indoctrination.

Prior work on indoctrination has focused exclusively on the individual teacher. This is true of both the analytic work done primarily in the 1970s and early 1980s as well as of more recent work such as that of Michael Hand (2003) and Michael S. Merry (2005). Each conception developed thus far attempts to show how the particular teaching methods, content offered, intentions, and instructional consequences of an *individual teacher* are indoctrinary. What a teacher does or intends to do, in other words, is the focus of inquiry about indoctrination. There appears to be an assumption here that an individual teacher is entirely

responsible for what she does in her classroom and the school bears no responsibility for what she does. This seems an odd position to take, particularly in this era of increasing standardization where teachers have diminishing opportunities to exercise agency. In fact, even back in 1973, Kazepides asserted that “teachers who work in an indoctrinary education system cannot avoid indoctrinating their students” (Kazepides, 1973: 279). Although Kazepides does not explain what he means by an “indoctrinary educational system,” he seems to presume that if a school’s objectives are the “training of workers in Socialist consciousness and culture” (Kazepides, 1973: 279), for example, teachers of that school cannot help but indoctrinate.

It is not at all certain that teachers who work in a school that has as its stated objective the indoctrination of standards have *no* choice but to indoctrinate. We do generally allow that, even within a fairly strict system, there is room for individual agency with respect to one’s own teaching. Yet, the nature of schooling is such that it is a complex, multilayer institution and there are many influential factors that affect instructional goals and achievements. It seems reasonable to hold teachers in more strictly controlled educational institutions *less* accountable than teachers in more liberal, progressive schools. Teaching, after all, does not occur in a vacuum. The policies and procedures enacted by the school, the ideology held by the community and the larger society, the curriculum

decided upon by the school district, and the pedagogical philosophy of other teachers in the district all influence what goes on inside individual classrooms. If, for example, students are trained to sit in rows, speak only when spoken to, and uncritically accept as true all that their teachers profess in class, it would be unreasonable to expect that an individual teacher within that school will have students who are active and energetic participants in the learning process, committed to and adept at critically deliberating over the epistemological worth of the beliefs discussed in class. Conversely, it would be difficult for a more authoritarian teacher to get her students to accept all that she teaches as unquestionably true if she is in a school dedicated to developing critically minded autonomous thinkers. The *context*, in other words, in which a teacher operates, plays a significant role in the sort of learning environment a teacher can create in her classroom.

Additionally, a school as a whole can promote a particular ideology or worldview. Antony Flew, for example, asserts that indoctrination occurs when libraries and classrooms are inspected to “ensure the removal of all publications which do not reflect the ideology” (Flew, 1972: 71) adopted by the school. We could add here that when an entire school, including the administration, faculty and staff, and the structures, policies and procedures that result from their efforts, all work to inculcate a particular ideology, it seems reasonable to hold the entire

school accountable for indoctrination rather than any given individual teacher.

When I speak of holding schools accountable, I do not mean holding all individual persons who work in schools accountable. Rather, I am speaking of holding the school *as an institution* accountable. There are some obvious difficulties and complexities involved in attempting to hold institutions morally accountable, and these will be addressed in detail in chapter seven. For now, it is sufficient to raise the question of whether a definition of indoctrination that holds only individual teachers accountable for indoctrinating students adequately covers all instances that the term "indoctrination" typically covers, or that we need it to usefully cover. Because there are times when a teacher's agency is restricted by the policies and structural elements of the school, it seems reasonable to look at the school rather than any given teacher as the indoctrinator.

To summarize, I have argued that prior conceptions of indoctrination meet the first definitional criterion of developing conceptions that do not radically alter from ordinary usage. In addition, I show that, with the exception of intentional analyses of indoctrination, considered accounts do not meet the second criterion of developing a conception that does not reduce "indoctrination" to something else. The third criterion –that indoctrination in education within pluralistic

democratic societies is shown to be objectionable even when it occurs in pursuit of admirable ends – is met to a certain extent inasmuch as many of the analyses, if not all of them, construe indoctrination as jeopardizing students' ability to reason and take this to be a harm not easily overridden by other "worthy" goals we might use indoctrination to pursue. However, I have argued that definitions of indoctrination characterized in terms of rationality leave unanswered too many questions about what it means to hold beliefs rationally, but more significantly, such definitions also fail to maintain a strictly pejorative sense of "indoctrination" for persons who do not subscribe to a pluralistic, liberal democratic ideology. The fourth criterion is not met because the definitions offered fail to provide a clear characterization of indoctrination and an explanation of how we can avoid it. Moreover, prior conceptions focus exclusively on holding individual teachers accountable and do not seem to seriously consider the possibility of assigning responsibility for indoctrination to schools. Thus, I conclude that previous analyses of indoctrination are inadequate to the task of providing us with a sufficiently clear conception of indoctrination to assist us in understanding and assessing the charge of indoctrination raised to innovative curricular proposals and in particular to proposals for peace education. A new definition of indoctrination is needed if we are to meet the objective of developing a conception that enables us to

better identify indoctrination with consistency and address charges of indoctrination as well as develop educational programs that avoid it.

CHAPTER IV

DEFENDING AN INTENTIONAL ANALYSIS OF INDOCTRINATION

In this chapter I argue for an intentional analysis of indoctrination. The argument for an intentional analysis primarily rests on three assertions: (1) Indoctrination is something which causes significant harm to students which makes it morally suspect and therefore should be of moral concern; (2) To hold one morally accountable for indoctrination it must be the case that the indoctrination occurred intentionally; (3) There are serious problems with defining indoctrination in terms of method, content, and consequences and, therefore, conceptions that rely on such criteria are inadequate to the purposes set out in this dissertation. These assertions are thoroughly addressed in chapters two and three where it was argued that analyses of indoctrination in terms of methods, content, and consequences failed to provide a conception of indoctrination that meets the described purposes of identifying and leveling the charge of indoctrination, making clear what can count as an appropriate response to the charge, and what is required to avoid indoctrination in teaching.

What follows is a critical look at Snook's (1972) intentional analysis as it offers the most promising conception of indoctrination in meeting the

described purposes. In particular, I examine his notion of "intent" and argue that by expanding on this notion, we can develop an intentional analysis that provides a clearer characterization of indoctrination. In short, I argue that the alternative intentional analysis is better able to meet the purposes set forth in this work.

Snook's Notion of Intent

According to Snook (1972a, b), a teacher intends to get students to hold beliefs regardless of the evidence if either one of the two following conditions are met: (1) one *desires* that students hold propositions regardless of the evidence, or (2) one *foresees* that as a result of his or her teaching, students will hold beliefs regardless of the evidence. While we often think of an intended outcome as that which one desires or consciously hopes will occur, Snook argues that a desired outcome is only one of two ways that a person can intend something to occur. He suggests that in some circumstances, notably ones in which we are concerned with moral or legal accountability, even if one does not desire a particular outcome but does *foresee* that it will occur as a result of one's actions, we can say that the outcomes were intended.

Snook (1972a) argues that there is legal precedence for including the foreseen as well as the desired in defining intent. If a prisoner blasts down a wall with the desire to escape, for example, but foresees that as a

result of blasting down the wall a guard will die, that prisoner will be found guilty of murdering the guard. Snook notes that on the legal definition of murder, one cannot be found guilty of murder unless it is shown that one acted with criminal intent or the intention to unjustifiably take another's life. The prisoner, in this example, is guilty of murder, according to Snook, because he *foresaw* that his actions would result in the guard's death; therefore the prisoner *intended* the guard's death.

One problem with this example is that the prisoner is guilty of murder regardless of his intentions. When one causes the death of another while committing a felony, one can legally be charged with murder. This prisoner would be guilty of murder even if he did not foresee (that is, intend) the death of the guard, because blasting down the wall of a prison is a felony. While this particular example is not the best to demonstrate that the law makes no distinctions between the foreseen and the desired in establishing intent, Snook's claim that one's intention is determined by either what one desires or foresees is still valid for the contexts we have in mind, namely, contexts in which we want to hold someone morally accountable for what we regard as morally dubious activity or morally bad outcomes.

According to Revised Statute 626:2 General Requirements of Culpability (1986), criminal law no longer uses the word "intent" to determine a criminal's guilt. Current legal practice is to use the notion

“culpable mental states.” To accurately determine whether or not one has committed a crime, juries are given instructions about what constitutes a culpable mental state as outlined by the aforementioned statute. Juries are told that a person ought to be held criminally culpable if one or more of the following conditions are met.

1. “Purposely.” A person engages in an act with the purpose or desire to produce a particular criminal outcome.
2. “Knowingly.” A person engages in an act knowing or having foreseen what the particular criminal outcome will be.
3. “Recklessly.” A person engages in an act knowing and disregarding what the particular criminal outcome will be.
4. “Negligently.” A person engages in an act and fails to be aware of the substantial risk that the act will produce a particular criminal outcome when a reasonable person would have foreseen such an outcome.

According to the statute, Snook’s contention appears to be validated that the law includes both the foreseen and the desired in the notion of intent. Although the word “intent” is no longer used, it is reasonable to assume that a “culpable mental state” is akin to intent. Similarly, the condition of acting “purposely” is akin to acting with a certain *desired* outcome. And, acting “knowingly” is akin to acting with a particular *foreseen* outcome.

The statute indicates that a person is not guilty of committing a crime unless he or she physically engages in a criminal act and either desires the criminal outcome, foresees the outcome, or fails to see the outcome that a reasonable person would have foreseen. According to the law then, the desired, the foreseen, and the foreseeable all play a vital role in determining intent or a "culpable state of mind." Before examining the role of the foreseeable however, I wish to stay with Snook's notion and look at the role that the desired and the foreseen play in more ordinary, everyday instances, as well as cases of moral concern, rather than just cases of a primarily legal or criminal nature. Once Snook's notion of "intent" is clarified, I bring in examples from education to illustrate how we can understand the role of intent in indoctrination.

In his discussion of the role of the foreseen in determining intent, Snook (1972a) describes an example of a man who uses an International Business Machines (IBM) typewriter. The man's desire is to type, yet he does foresee that his typing will help IBM's profits. Snook claims that it would seem "odd" to say that the man *intends* to increase IBM's profit. I agree. However, Snook points out that when the act being committed has results that are of moral concern, we do talk of one intending such results if they are foreseen. He offers an example of a pacifist who foresees that her support of a particular company will aid in the manufacturing of weapons. Although she may only *desire* to buy

products that are affordable and convenient, we would typically hold her morally accountable (at least to some degree) for contributing to the manufacturing of weaponry.

Perhaps it would be helpful at this point to look more closely at an example where moral culpability is of primary concern. Snook asks if there is a *moral* rather than merely a legal distinction between what is desired and what is foreseen. Let us look at an example of a person who shoots and kills someone but neither desires nor foresees that someone will be shot as a result (perhaps he or she is cleaning a gun alone in the room and someone sneaks in). Snook, it would seem, would not find the person morally blameworthy because that person did not *intend* such an outcome. Here, I think, Snook's claim that intention be defined in terms of the desired and the foreseen is justified. If the person *did* foresee that the actions would result in killing someone (perhaps he or she saw the person entering the room but did not care) then it seems reasonable to say that the outcome was intended and that blame may be assigned. This example supports Snook's contention that we define "intent" as that which is either desired or foreseen as it allows us to hold the person in the above example morally accountable for the death of the person shot because the other's death could be foreseen as an outcome of cleaning the gun.

For Snook, then, one intends certain outcomes when one either desires them or foresees that they will occur as a result of one's actions. Because I view indoctrination as a morally suspect activity and its outcomes as morally bad, I am interested (as is Snook) in defining indoctrination in a way that we can hold persons morally accountable for indoctrination. Thus, adopting an intentional analysis makes sense. It is not reasonable to hold persons accountable for morally suspect activities and results that they did not intend. Snook, however, also asserts that, while we should include the foreseen consequences as part of our notion of intent, we should not include consequences that are merely *foreseeable*. He argues that defining "intent" as outcomes that are not foreseen but only foreseeable would be to render teachers' jobs impossible. Because it is virtually always foreseeable that some students will come to hold beliefs one teaches as true regardless of the evidence, according to Snook all teaching would be indoctrination if we insist that intent be defined by what is foreseeable. Thus, Snook argues that intent should only be defined in terms of the desired and the foreseen but not the foreseeable.

The distinction Snook makes between the foreseen and the foreseeable, I argue, is problematic. Granted there is a distinction, but it is far less significant than Snook would have us believe. The foreseen is something accomplished whereas the foreseeable expresses a potential, not *necessarily* something someone has done. While all things foreseen

are by definition foreseeable, not all things foreseeable are foreseen — hence the distinction. However, all it would take to make the foreseeable into the foreseen is to simply make teachers aware that their teaching will inevitably result in some students holding taught beliefs as true regardless of the evidence. This foreseeable consequence then becomes foreseen. And, if it is foreseen, Snook would have such a consequence be considered intentional, rendering all teaching (from those teachers who have been made aware) indoctrination. Yet Snook does *not* consider all foreseen outcomes as outcomes that were intended. Rather he states that intended outcomes are those that one foresees "as a result of ... [one's] teaching" (Snook, 1972a: 155) yet he drops this very critical phrase when discussing the foreseeable.

An Alternative Notion of Intent Offered and Defended

I argue that we ought to include the foreseeable in the notion of intent. Although Snook claims that it would render all teaching indoctrination, I disagree. I do not see that students will inevitably accept some beliefs they are taught as unquestionably true *as a result of the teaching*. While I agree with Snook that some students will inevitably accept some taught beliefs as true regardless of the evidence, I do not agree that they will do so because of something their teacher did or said. Students hold non-rational beliefs for a whole variety of reasons (for

instance, it is part of a religious belief system, because they want to fit in with peers, and so on). We ought only to hold teachers accountable for indoctrination if it is foreseeable that students would hold beliefs in a non-rational manner *as a result of their teacher's actions*.

This notion of intent seems in keeping with how the word is typically used. For example, if person A cleans a loaded gun in a crowded café and the gun goes off and shoots someone, we would ordinarily hold A morally responsible for the shooting even if the shooter did not desire that anyone get shot and did not foresee that anyone would get shot. We would hold that person accountable because he or she *ought to have foreseen* that the gun would go off and hit someone. In fact, as stated above in the legal statute, person A would be held legally accountable by virtue of the "negligent" condition of a culpable state of mind. Person A would have failed to recognize foreseeable risk.

A similar standard should be applied to the moral culpability of teachers. Let us say, for example, that a particular teacher did not foresee that, as a result of insisting to his or her seven year-old students that Betsy Ross sewed the first U.S. flag, the students would uncritically accept such a claim as true. We hold the teacher accountable for indoctrination because that teacher *ought to have known* that the students would respond in such a way. Teachers should know that their students will accept what they teach them as true; it is part of students'

training in schools to believe what they are told by their teachers (particularly young students). Thus, to avoid indoctrination, teachers should be careful to explain to their students that historical stories such as that about Betsy Ross are not always true and therefore students should not hold such a belief as a certainty (or, in the case with older students, instruct them to critically assess the relevant and available evidence and reasons of the beliefs discussed in class as far as they are capable of doing). If teachers take these steps to avoid indoctrination, then it seems reasonable to assume that students will not accept taught beliefs as true uncritically *because of something their teacher did*. In other words, if a teacher takes all reasonably possible measures to avoid indoctrination, it is not foreseeable that students will hold taught beliefs non-rationally as a result of something the teacher did. Some students, of course, will likely hold some taught beliefs in a non-rational, non-deliberative manner. However, knowing that some of one's students will hold beliefs non-rationally is not the same thing as knowing they will do so because of one's teaching. If we include foreseeable outcomes as part of what we mean by intent we do not, as Snook suggests, render all teaching indoctrination. Rather, we insist that teachers take reasonable steps to ensure that their students will hold beliefs in an open-minded or critically deliberative manner. If teachers act in such a way, then a reasonable

person could *not* foresee that students will come to hold beliefs non-rationally as a result of their teacher's actions.

Thus far I have tried to show that Snook's objection to including foreseeable consequences as part of the definition of intent is unwarranted. Furthermore, I have attempted to show that we typically hold persons morally accountable for outcomes they *ought* to have foreseen. Finally, I have argued that there is legal precedent in defining indoctrination in terms of desired, foreseen, or foreseeable outcomes. I contend that this alternative conception of "intent," unlike Snook's, provides a definition of indoctrination that allows persons to effectively identify and avoid indoctrination and to accurately level and respond to charges of indoctrination.

Defining indoctrination as Snook does, in terms of outcomes which are either desired or foreseen but not foreseeable, does not allow us to accurately identify indoctrination. We cannot know with any degree of certainty what another person desires or foresees. Although one could ask a teacher what he or she desired or foresaw, he or she could lie to us or deceive him or herself and be unable to give a truthful reply. Snook admits that it may, in fact, be quite difficult to accurately judge another's intention. Yet he claims that such a difficulty should not affect our conception. He states: "It is one thing to determine what constitutes ... [indoctrination], another to show that a certain person committed it"

(Snook, 1972a: 159-160). For my purposes, however, a definition of indoctrination *must* enable persons to show precisely when and where indoctrination occurs and who should be held accountable. Snook himself claims that the key reason for defining indoctrination in terms of intention is to allow persons to be held morally accountable for indoctrination. He does not indicate, however, how we can hold someone accountable if we cannot accurately identify who indoctrinates.

We can determine who indoctrinates if we include the foreseeable as part of the notion of "intent." While we cannot know what another desires or foresees, we *can* know what is foreseeable. To illustrate, I refer again to the example of the teacher insisting to first grade students that Betsy Ross sewed the first American flag. A teacher may not desire or even foresee that students will hold this belief non-rationally (this information may be a required element of the curriculum). However, because students, particularly very young ones, are likely to accept as unquestionably true what their teacher tells them, it is foreseeable that the students will hold the belief non-rationally. Thus, we can accurately identify this as a case of indoctrination. We may *not* be able to identify this as a case of indoctrination, however, if "intent" was only defined in terms of the desired or foreseen, because we cannot accurately judge whether the teacher desired or foresaw that her teaching would lead to

her students accepting unquestionably that Ross sewed the first American flag. Defining "intent" in terms of not only the desired and the foreseen but also the foreseeable allows us to identify with consistency when indoctrination occurs.

Adding the foreseeable to the notion of intent, then, meets my purpose of developing a definition of indoctrination that allows: (1) persons to accurately identify indoctrination when it occurs, (2) persons to respond effectively to a charge of indoctrination, and (3) educators to develop programs that avoid indoctrination. Thus, peace educators and educators of other marginalized curricula (such as queer studies and women's studies), as well as educators of mainstream curriculum, can be judged more accurately about whether they do or do not indoctrinate. In addition, all educators can respond to a charge of indoctrination more effectively. I therefore conclude that this expanded notion of intent is an improvement upon Snook's notion as it provides us with a more useful tool in accurately judging when indoctrination does and does not occur. My hope is that this alternative notion of intent will provide an understanding of indoctrination that will allow educational administrators and teachers to be more confident in taking on the teaching of topics they know to be controversial.

My intentional conception of indoctrination also differs from Snook's in another very important way. Snook (1972a, 1972b) claims that

indoctrination is a matter of intending to get students to hold beliefs *regardless of the evidence*. The problem with this definition is that it is not clear what it means to hold beliefs in such a manner. In other words, Snook's "regardless of the evidence" is fraught with as many problems and ambiguities as the notion of holding beliefs "non-rationally." Paul T. O'Leary (1979) points out that it is unclear what "regardless of the evidence" means as it can be understood in either of two ways: "(1) believing or doubting without evidence, or (2) believing or doubting despite the evidence" (O'Leary, 1972: 297). He goes on to say that each of these interpretations can be understood in either of two ways. He explains as follows:

- (1) S believes or doubts that p without evidence
 - (a) S believes or doubts that p for no reasons at all
 - (b) S believes or doubts that p for certain reasons although there are no good reasons for believing or doubting that p
 - (2) S believes or doubts that p despite the evidence
 - (a) There are good reasons for doubting what S believes and believing what S doubts
 - (b) S believes or doubts that p for bad reasons although there are good reasons for believing or doubting that p.
- (O'Leary, 1972: 297)

To say that indoctrination consists of intending to teach students to hold beliefs "regardless of the evidence" does not clearly indicate how educators expect or should expect students to hold the beliefs they are taught in schools. It is not clear on Snook's analysis whether one indoctrinates if she intends to get students to hold p based on insufficient

reasons, on irrelevant or bad reasons, or on considerations other than reasons even when there are good reasons for believing p.

A useful conception of indoctrination needs to better address this ambiguity about what precisely it is that we are trying to avoid with indoctrination. Put another way, a useful account of indoctrination must clearly indicate what the outcome of indoctrination is or what, exactly, its intended effects are on students. In the next chapter I offer an alternative analysis of indoctrination that addresses this ambiguity and, I believe, provides us with a more practically useful conception of indoctrination.

CHAPTER V

AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF INDOCTRINATION OFFERED

My conception of indoctrination, as indicated in the previous chapter, is defined in terms of intention. Although it borrows a good deal from Snook's (1972a, 1972b) language, the conception I offer has some important and significant differences from that analysis. Snook claims that indoctrination is best defined in the following way: "A person indoctrinates P (a proposition or set of propositions) if he teaches with the intention that the pupil or pupils believe P regardless of the evidence" (Snook, 1972a: 154). I adopt his general way of wording the definition but make some significant alterations.

My definition of indoctrination is as follows: *A teacher indoctrinates p (where p is a belief or set of beliefs) when s/he intends to get students to hold p in a non-truth-seeking manner.* Embedded in this definition are two key concepts. The first concept, a teacher's *intention*, has already been examined in the previous chapter. The second concept, the idea of holding a belief in a "non-truth-seeking" manner, which replaces Snook's phrase "regardless of the evidence," also requires explication. In the section that immediately follows, therefore, I discuss this alternative

wording. I proceed by first defending the use of Cheryl Misak's pragmatic epistemological framework which underwrites the notion of truth-seeking employed here. I then raise and address some of the perceived issues that need further analysis to meet the purposes given in this work. I end this section by clearly stating what it means to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner.

Rationale for Adopting a Misakian Pragmatic Framework

One of our primary concerns with indoctrination, I contend, is that when students are indoctrinated they will come to hold p (a belief or set of beliefs) in such a way that they are unwilling or perhaps, in varying degrees, even unable to engage in any future inquiry with respect to p . When new evidence arises, for example, or recalcitrant experiences come about, students who have been indoctrinated into believing p are not likely to be moved to question or doubt p because of this new evidence or these contrary experiences. What we want, that is, those of us who engage in public education within a pluralistic democratic society, that is, an education which is designed to produce citizens who can adopt the political responsibilities of life in such a society, is for students to hold p in a manner where they will be ever willing and able to critically assess its epistemic worth by scrutinizing *all* available evidence. We don't simply want students to believe p because of what we can all

agree at the time are relevant reasons. We also want students to question *p*, and perhaps also its supporting reasons, when new evidence and arguments arise.

On Misak's (2000, 2004) analysis, *p* does not refer to *all* beliefs. Rather, they only refer to what Misak calls "truth-apt" beliefs. According to Misak (2000, 2004) "truth-apt" beliefs are those which are "constitutively responsive to experience;" (Misak, 2000: 51), i.e. the beliefs are such that experience and evidence can speak to their truth. I will have more to say about this at the end of the chapter when I provide further clarifications of my analysis. For now, however, it is enough to note that truth-apt beliefs exclude those for which no relevant evidence exists. Inquiry into such assertions would not move us any closer to understanding their epistemic worth and thus, according to Misak, they are not truth-apt.

Prior accounts of indoctrination assume that students who hold *p* in a manner where they are not open to future inquiry regarding *p* must be holding *p* "non-rationally." Harvey Siegel (1988) and Thomas F. Green (1972), for example, each contend that an indoctrinated belief *p* is one held in a manner where it is resistant to change or reconsideration in the face of any future counter-evidence. Green, for example, asserts that an indoctrinator aims to get students to hold *p* in such a way that it is "secure against the threat of change by the later introduction of conflicting reasons or conflicting evidence" (Green, 1972: 35). He points out that

indoctrinators try to lead students to hold *p* as *if* evidentially – that is, indoctrinators provide reasons for *p* yet they also aim to get students to disregard any opposing evidence to *p* or be incapable of engaging in any future inquiry regarding the truth of *p*.

Siegel argues that one indoctrinates when she intends to get students to hold *p* in a manner where it is “impervious to negative or contrary evidence” and where students have no “regard to ... [the] truth or justifiability” of *p* (Siegel, 1988: 80). A belief held “non-rationally” or “non-evidentially,” according to these accounts, is not just one held for *no* reasons or for *irrelevant* reasons; it is also one held for *insufficient* reasons. Indoctrination, then, according to Siegel and Green, aims to get students to foreclose on any future inquiry regarding the truth of *p*.

I agree with these accounts of indoctrination – that it is best defined as the intention to get students to hold *p* in a manner where they are either incapable of or resistant to engaging in any future inquiry regarding the truth of *p*. Yet, I am not satisfied with calling this way of holding beliefs “non-evidential” or “non-rational.” I object to these terms when used in regards to indoctrination for two reasons.

The first reason is that there can be some confusion over what it means to hold a belief non-rationally or non-evidentially. For example, as discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation, Francis Shrag (2003) argued that the hypothetical student Thomas’ belief in God is rational because it is

held for relevant reasons although it is not based on *all* available evidence. Similarly, in another example Shrag discusses, "Jack" decides that he will only apply to MIT and Harvard although he has been advised to also apply to BU because his GPA may not be high enough to get into his first two choices. He does not agree to apply to BU and figures that he will pursue other paths if MIT or Harvard does not accept him. If he can't get into the top, most selective schools, he reasons, then it's not worth going for his advanced degree. According to Shrag, Jack's decision may be *foolish*, but it is, nevertheless, *rational* because "he has and can give reasons for what he is doing" (Shrag, 2003: 180).

Both Thomas' and Jack's beliefs are rational according to Shrag because they are supported by reasons that each can provide. Shrag admits that he is not an epistemologist, and thus perhaps we cannot count on him for the best understanding of Siegel's and Green's notion of non-rationally held beliefs. On the other hand, modesty aside, he is an able and distinguished philosopher. Thus, given his view of what it means to hold beliefs rationally, it's not unreasonable to note that the notion of holding beliefs rationally can be understood to mean holding beliefs based on relevant but not necessarily sufficient reasons. Shrag does not say that these reasons must be relevant, true, or sufficient although his examples imply that they must be at least relevant but not necessarily sufficient. Neither Thomas nor Jack bases his views on a close and

thorough analysis of *all* the relevant and available evidence and arguments. For Shrag, few students will spend the time necessary to examine all their beliefs so thoroughly and “failing to do so does not make students irrational” (Shrag, 2003: 181). Nor, we might add, does it make them non-rational.

Shrag's examples do not *in principle* show Siegel's and Greens' analyses to be problematic. Yet, they do provide at least one example of how, *in practice*, the notion of holding beliefs non-evidentially or non-rationally can be understood to mean beliefs held for relevant but not necessarily for *sufficient* reasons. It is not, therefore, that either Siegel or Green provide us with a notion of indoctrination that fails to address an important concern of indoctrination – that is, that it gets students to hold beliefs in a manner whereby they are unwilling or incapable of engaging in future inquiry regarding the truth of such beliefs. Rather, my concern with the use of the terms “non-rational” and “non-evidential” is that they do not make clear what our central concern is with indoctrination, namely, that indoctrination makes it far too unlikely that students will be ever open to inquiring into the truth of p.

Although Shrag's notion of rationally held beliefs differs from Siegel's, he agrees with Siegel's as well as other considered accounts of indoctrination that the justification for rationality is that “beliefs formed rationally have the best chance of being true” (Shrag, 2003: 180). Green,

too, claims that indoctrination aims to get students to hold beliefs without “due regard for truth” (Green, 1972: 34). Similarly, Thiessen (1993), as noted in chapter three, argues that the aim of rationality is to arrive at truth and indoctrination seeks to block this aim. Additionally, Glock contends that indoctrination jeopardizes students’ ability to find truth (Glock, 1975: 156). Finally, as noted earlier, Siegel asserts that indoctrination involves getting students to hold beliefs in a way that they do not have any regard for their truth (Siegel, 1988: 80). Considering that one of the primary uses of rationality, according to these analyses, is to arrive at truth, and remembering that our concern with indoctrination is that students are rendered unwilling, reluctant or unable to engage in future inquiry regarding the truth of their beliefs, a more straightforward way to characterize indoctrination is as an endeavor that seeks to get students to hold truth-apt beliefs in a *non-truth-seeking* manner. In short, describing indoctrinated beliefs as those held in a non-truth-seeking fashion makes clearer that such beliefs are held *without regard to their truth*.

While considered analyses agree that the aim of rationality is to arrive at truth, my second objection to defining indoctrinated beliefs as those held “non-rationally” is that none of these accounts provide an adequately clear notion of “truth.” It is not clear that getting students to hold beliefs non-rationally jeopardizes them from formulating true beliefs if

we do not first have a good understanding of just what true beliefs are and therefore how to arrive at or formulate them. Thiessen (1993), in fact, claims that we cannot know what truth is. He argues that the best we can hope to achieve is “normal rationality,” or holding beliefs based on the best available evidence at the time and with the openness to always reconsider our beliefs in the face of new and opposing reasons and evidence. However, we need some account of why “normal rationality” should be a valued concept. Thiessen (along with other considered accounts) has a couple of options. He can argue that rationality is good in and of itself, which seems difficult to do – why, we continue to ask, should we be rational? Alternatively, Thiessen could argue that rationality is good because it is the best and most efficient method to get at the truth (which is precisely what is being argued). But then we need some reason for thinking so, *and* we need some account of the truth. So, for example, if Thiessen holds a correspondence notion of truth, he must show that rationality is the most promising avenue to achieving truth rather than, say, meditation, prayer or intuition. However, in his account, we see no such justification.

Misak's epistemological framework offers us such a justification. She defines truth in terms of inquiry, in terms of the method employed to reach truth. Her notion of truth provides the justification for rationality because, on Misak's account, there is no gap between the method used to employ

truth and truth itself. Employing her theoretical framework allows us to develop an analysis of indoctrination that is intimately connected to truth-seeking. Adopting her epistemology, then, allows us to define indoctrination in terms of truth-seeking because she provides a lucid and useful notion of truth.

Additionally, and very much to the point, Misak (2000, 2004) offers an account of truth-seeking that can provide practical guidance for teachers who aim to get students to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner. More specifically, I argue that Misak's pragmatic analysis of truth provides a reasonable and useful framework in which to effectively guide teachers in avoiding indoctrination and in helping educators and others engage in fruitful and generative discussions about when and where indoctrination may be occurring. In the section that follows, I provide an analysis of Misak's account of truth and truth-seeking inquiry. My aim here is to illustrate that her analysis is promising with respect to the very practical thing we are seeking, viz helping educators and others identify and eliminate indoctrination in our schools.

Misak's Notion of Truth and Truth-Seeking Inquiry

According to Cheryl Misak, a true belief is one "that could not be improved upon, a belief that would forever meet the challenges of reasons, argument, and evidence" (Misak, 2000: 49). Misak is careful to point out the use of the subjunctive conditional in her pragmatic notion of truth. She states that truth is a belief that *would* forever fit with all experiences and arguments rather than one that *will* fit with all experiences and arguments. The use of the word "would" is important because it indicates that truth is conditional or contingent upon inquiry. Put another way, if inquiry about a belief *p* were to be pursued as far as it could usefully go, *p would* be true if it is sensitive to experience and is supported by all available arguments and evidence. The use of the conditional indicates that truth arrives at the *hypothetical* end of inquiry. Her notion of truth, we see, underscores Peirce's dictum: "Let nothing stand in the way of inquiry." In other words, all "truth-apt" beliefs (i.e., those which are inherently responsive to experience) on this account are required to be forever subject to questioning, re-examination and alteration in the face of new evidence and recalcitrant experience. Defining truth in the subjunctive conditional means that true beliefs are those that, *by their definition*, are ever open to inquiry.

Because on this account we cannot ever know if our beliefs would meet with all evidence at the hypothetical end of the day, Misak argues

that we should not focus on whether “this or that belief is true but focus [instead] on inquiry” (Misak, 2000: 53). For Misak, truth is “internally related to inquiry” such that “when I assert p, I undertake commitments regarding inquiry” (Misak, 2000: 73). This link between truth and inquiry is critical. To claim that the truth of an assertion cannot exist without inquiry is to make very specific demands on, not only the manner in which truth can be found, but on the very nature of truth itself. For Misak, making an assertion entails first, making a truth claim and second, making commitments to providing evidence and arguments in support of the claim.

When one makes assertions, according to Misak, one is claiming that the assertion is true. To use her example, when I say, “Marta is generous,” I am saying that *it is true* that Marta is generous. My assertion, then, according to Misak, is a truth claim. She points out that even if I choose to lie, I would have no hope of deceiving others unless the assumption on the part of my listeners is that assertions are claims about what one believes to be true. (Misak, 2000: 60) If I say that Marta is generous, I assert that she is generous and I commit myself to providing evidence for this claim and considering evidence against it (e.g., Marta gives a good deal to charities, friends and family, she never expects anything in return for her gifts, etc.).

When we inquire about a claim, we aim to arrive at beliefs that are supported by all available evidence and are sensitive to the experiences

of ourselves and others. Additionally, when we ask a question, we assume that there is an answer, one which we suppose will be the best it can be given the available evidence and arguments. As Misak puts it, our inquiry is “regulated” by truth; that is, the manner and aim of inquiry is to get at beliefs that would be supported by all relevant experience at the end of the day. Truth is, she says, a regulative ideal.

Misak explains that a “regulative ideal” is quite distinct from, say, a blueprint. She notes that a blueprint is realizable whereas a regulative ideal is not. The purpose of a regulative ideal, then, is not to realize fully that which is outlined in the ideal. Rather it is to “set direction and provide a focus of criticism for actual arrangements” (Misak, 2000: 98). Thus, for Misak, truth is the light which helps illuminate the manner and direction in which all inquiry should move even while knowing one can never reach that light. Put another way, formulating true beliefs requires that we be sensitive to experience such that when a belief is supported by available evidence and reasons by a community of inquirers, such a belief should prevail. When it meets with recalcitrant experiences, the belief should be questioned, dropped or exchanged for an alternative belief that is better supported by *all* the evidence.

Before we can fully comprehend this particular pragmatic notion of “truth” developed by Misak, we need to discuss her view of “experience” because, for pragmatists, experience plays a central role in the concept

of truth. According to the pragmatic notion advanced by Misak, truth derives from the continual testing and refinement of beliefs through experience. For Misak, experience includes that which we find “compelling, surprising, brute, unchosen, or impinging” (Misak, 2000: 80). She contends that an experience is anything that makes an impression on our senses, our thoughts, and our feelings. Many experiences, she explains, are not rational or even cognitive. When my body touches a hot stove, for example, I experience burning heat without having to think about or even understand heat. I need some level of understanding to know that the sensation I experienced is *called* heat and to know what effect that heat can have on my body, but to actually perceive or experience the heat, thought is not required.

Misak notes that experiences can move us to either affirm or question our beliefs; it is the nature of experiences that we are moved by them. To develop true beliefs we must allow them to be affected by experience. We have a myriad of ideas in our minds and experience can have the effect of casting out the false ones and “letting the truth flow on” (Peirce, 1997/1903: 144). Yet, not all persons are equally sensitive to experience. Some persons are more likely than others to pay attention to, reflect on, and cognitively engage with a wide range of experiences. Such persons are, in a sense, *open* to being “surprised” by experiences which do not fit with their beliefs and are, therefore, quite likely to be

moved by these experiences to question or perhaps even alter their beliefs. Others, however, are not as receptive. They are more apt to shut out, ignore, or immediately discount experiences which do not support or fit with their beliefs. For example, if a person believes that all poems rhyme and he reads a book of poems, many of which do not rhyme, he may discount the non-rhyming poems and tell himself that they are some other form of writing and refuse to think on it any further. Similarly, a person who believes that the U.S. was justified in declaring war in Iraq in 2003 because Saddam Hussein held weapons of mass destruction may hold firmly to her belief despite learning that there were never any such weapons found in Iraq.

Being sensitive to experience, then, is not a given. In other words, persons are not *necessarily* going to be moved by their experiences to reflect on or question their beliefs. However, to seek true beliefs, on Misak's account, persons must work toward becoming more open and receptive to experiences, to ponder them and allow them to move us to question or even change our beliefs. Indeed, being sensitive to experiences is being open to allowing our experiences *and the experiences of others* to influence our reflections on and our thinking about our beliefs. To reiterate then, a true belief, according to this account, is one that would be supported by all relevant evidence and would not be opposed by recalcitrant experiences at the end of inquiry.

Because the end of inquiry is unrealizable, Misak claims that our task is to develop beliefs which are well grounded by available evidence and are sensitive to all our experiences to date. According to Misak, the “fact that [on this account] there can be no proof that any belief is absolutely true is something to be taken for granted and should not cause anxiety” (Misak, 2004: 51). Thus, although we may not have absolute certainty about a belief, practically speaking, there are some beliefs about which we can be “substantially certain” (Misak, 2004: 54). If a belief is supported by all available evidence, experiences and reasons, and we can reasonably assume it will continue to do so, we can be “substantially certain” that such a belief is true. In other words, our practical goal or the goal which we can achieve in our lifetime is to arrive at “the settlement of belief” (Misak, 2004: 57).

For Misak, the “settlement of belief” means arriving at beliefs about which we have no doubt and which are based on critical reflections of the available evidence, experiences, and arguments by a community of inquiry. Settled beliefs, however, are not necessarily true beliefs. In other words, just because one does not doubt that a belief p is true does not mean that p , in fact, is true. In addition, it is important to note the distinction between “settled” beliefs which are based on deliberation over all available evidence, and beliefs which one does not doubt due to brainwashing, indoctrination, or a stubborn and closed-minded

adherence to a belief. Misak illustrates her point with an example of a totalitarian regime that successfully fixes a set of beliefs in their citizens. Such beliefs, she argues, would not be pragmatically settled because they are not "sensitive to evidence or experience, broadly construed" (Misak, 2004: 59). A stubborn commitment to a belief, or a belief formed from a restricted pool of reasons and evidence and one that is not sensitive to experience cannot be a settled belief (and, therefore, can not be true) in the pragmatic sense. Furthermore, while belief *p* may be settled for me, others may *not* consider it settled because they have doubts about the truth of *p*.

Inquiry into the truth of *p* requires that we openly consider opposing views and counter arguments. Even if persons continue to dispute *p* – that is, no agreement has been reached regarding the truth of *p* – it does not mean that some person cannot or should not consider it settled. For example, I do not harbor any doubts that women are of equal worth to men even though there are many persons who doubt the truth of such a belief. My belief, however, is settled because I have considered the opposing arguments and found them to be unconvincing. Settled beliefs, then, are not the same as beliefs universally accepted. In addition, they are not true in the Misakian pragmatic sense. Yet, we aim for settled beliefs because that is the way toward truth and it is the best we can hope to achieve in our lifetimes.

Many of us have a good number of settled beliefs. I believe that I am alive, that I love my children, that the world is round, and that my living room walls are green. I also believe that pornography is oppressive and that women are equal in worth to men. These beliefs are settled. They are supported by the available evidence and I do not harbor any doubts about these beliefs nor do I anticipate that evidence or experiences will cause me to question them. Thus, for all intents and purposes, I consider these beliefs to be true. However, just because I have beliefs which I do not doubt does not mean that I *could* not doubt them or *would* not doubt them if new and opposing evidence should arise.

The important point to take from Misak's notion of truth is that when we make a truth-apt assertion, we recognize our responsibility to support the claim with evidence and reasons. Thus, in schools, when students make truth-apt assertions, they learn of their responsibility to be able to support their claims with evidence, reasons, and arguments and to be open to counter evidence arising from the experiences of others. Similarly, when others make assertions, students learn to question the truth of these assertions by considering the available evidence both in support of and in opposition to them. Putting such responsibility on students may seem unrealistic as time does not allow for the ongoing process of dialogic and critical inquiry into all truth-apt assertions raised in class. It is important to note, however, that there is a definite distinction between

being *willing, open to* and *able* to question and analyze truth-apt views and being *required* to always do so.

Although students cannot possibly thoroughly analyze and discuss *all* truth-apt assertions raised in class, Misak's epistemological framework only requires that persons be *prepared* to defend their beliefs with reasons and evidence and be ever *open* to questioning these beliefs in the face of opposing arguments and evidence. Her analysis, in short, requires not only that students hold beliefs in a manner where the beliefs are supported by reasons and evidence but that students be ever *willing* and *able* to engage in future inquiry with a community of inquirers regarding the truth of their beliefs when they are truth-apt.

It seems, then, that adopting a Misakian framework addresses one of the central concerns we have about indoctrination: it is an endeavor which seeks to get students to stubbornly hold beliefs based on insufficient evidence. Further, Misak's framework puts truth-seeking at the center of our focus in helping teachers (who accept the importance of a democratic exchange of ideas in pursuit of true beliefs) reflect on and understand what their aims are and what the likely outcomes will be of their efforts. By making truth the aim of inquiry, and defining truth in terms of the method employed to achieve this aim, we teach students that their goal is to work toward beliefs that would forever meet the challenge of evidence, reasons, arguments, and experience at the hypothetical end

of the day. Defining truth in this way discourages teachers from instructing their students to uncritically accept beliefs as true and to discount or be closed to future inquiry regarding those beliefs.

Some Further Reflections on Misak's Work as it Relates to Issues of

Indoctrination

There are two critical issues regarding Misak's analysis that need further scrutiny. The first is whether there are any *claims* that can be excluded from inquiry and the second is whether there are any *persons* or *perspectives* that can be excluded. Put another way, it is important to look at precisely what counts as "truth-apt" beliefs and just who it is that belongs in the "community of inquiry." These issues have epistemological importance. Given how truth is defined here, we need to determine if there are any kinds of claims which can be excluded from inquiry of the sort we have described. Moreover, given that our notion of truth urges us to be ever wary of bias, we must pay attention to how a community of inquiry can be a source of bias in the process of truth-seeking inquiry. Truth-seeking, as defined in this dissertation, is characterized by an open-minded assessment of any given belief based on a critical appraisal of all relevant and available evidence. What is not clear, however, is whether we must subject *all* beliefs and assertions, in principle, to such scrutiny to avoid indoctrination. In what immediately follows, I examine what

constitutes truth-aptness by looking at whether there are any claims that are not truth-apt or do not require students to inquire into their truth such as, for example, claims considered *a priori* true and those generally understood to be true by definition. I then raise an important relevant moral issue. I look at whether there are any truth-apt claims which, by the nature of the content of the claim, raise questions about whether they *ought* to be discussed in class. For example, should the following claims be discussed in our classrooms: Women are equal to men; A democratic style of governance is worth fighting for, and; The Nazi-led Holocaust truly did occur. Determining which claims we ought to open for student discussion, then, not only requires that we decide what counts as a “truth-apt” belief, it also urges us to reflect on the moral concern of what sorts of beliefs (even if we agree they are truth-apt) *ought* to be open to inquiry. In short, are there moral considerations which could and perhaps should restrict our guidance of student inquiry in schools?

Following the section of truth-apt beliefs, I more closely examine the notion of a “community of inquiry.” The concern here is that excluding persons from a community of inquiry may unduly limit and narrow our conversations about and understandings of the issue at hand. The chief epistemological questions thus engaged in what follows are: “Are there any beliefs we should not treat as truth apt?” And “Can the community of inquiry itself be a source of bias?”

Truth-Apt Beliefs and Assertions

Misak calls an assertion “truth-apt” when it is inherently responsive to experience. For Misak, virtually all claims are, to some degree, reliant upon experience. Yet, there are some claims Misak herself argues which should not be considered truth-apt. An example she gives of a claim that is not truth-apt is: “[M]y colour spectrum might be inverted from yours” (Misak, 2000: 51). Because there cannot be any experience which can speak for or against this claim, inquiry into its truth “would be misplaced” (Misak, 2000: 52). The role of experience and evidence is paramount in Misak’s notion of truth-apt beliefs. Thus, if no experience can shed light on the truth of a claim or if no evidence exists that is relevant to a particular assertion, inquiry into such claims would be fruitless and these sorts of claims and assertions are therefore, according to Misak, *not* truth-apt.

There are some claims that may arguably be considered true *prior* to experience and therefore experience, one may argue, plays no role in determining their truth. Consider the following assertion: If A is greater than B and B is greater than C, then we know that it is true that A is greater than C. Such an assertion, some say, is true *prior* to experience; its truth is dependent simply upon the meaning of “greater than” and, thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that its truth is not responsive to experience. For Misak, to make the point absolutely clear, truth-apt propositions are those with respect to which experience can speak either

for or against its truth. Claims that are *a priori* true and those that are true by definition would seem *not* to be truth-apt because there does not exist any relevant evidence and inquiry into its truth would be fruitless. Yet; Misak argues that claims which appear to be *a priori* true, such as the one about A being greater than C, do, in fact, rely upon experience to support them even if it is just experience of a diagrammatic nature. To understand why $2 + 2 = 4$, for example, we would need to see some sort of visual representation (or, diagram) illustrating that when two 2s come together, their sum is 4. Additionally, experience within a diagrammatic context is needed to understand the relational nature of the term “greater than” so we can know that A is greater than C given that it is greater than B and B is greater than C.

As further proof of the necessity for diagrammatic experience in helping students understand the truth of claims that are considered logically true, below are two examples of logical argument forms of affirming the consequence which are not as easy for students to understand as the claim about A being greater than B and C. Many of my students do see the error in the following fairly simple argument:

If all grandfathers are men, and
John is a man, then
John is a grandfather.

They *do not*, however, all see the (logical) error in the following:

If all good citizens follow the dictates of their government, and
Jill follows the dictates of her government, then
Jill is a good citizen.

It's possible that my students see the error in the former argument because their experience informs them that not all men are grandfathers. In the latter argument, however, they have to be shown diagrammatically why the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises (putting aside the dispute about the truth of the initial claim about all good citizens following the dictates of their government). Claims that are considered true prior to experience, then, such as mathematical assertions, claims considered true by definition, and logical deductions, according to Misak, are truth-apt because experience, even if it is diagrammatic in nature, informs them of the truth or falsity of such claims.

I adopt Misak's notion of "truth-apt" here because it is useful for the purposes of this dissertation: to develop a conception of indoctrination that helps educators identify it when it occurs and aids educators in their attempts to develop programs that avoid it. Claiming that mathematical assertions, even those considered a priori true, are truth-apt reinforces my argument in chapter 3 that students can be indoctrinated into the math tables; they can, in other words, be taught to hold the belief that $2 + 3 = 5$ without understanding the concept of addition. This does not often

happen, however, as most students are taught the addition tables along with the concept of addition. Yet, the alternative notion of indoctrination I propose supports the view that even logical claims such as mathematical statements ought to be taught “mindfully” as Ellen Langer puts it. (Teaching “mindfully,” we remember, means keeping students aware that there are or may be alternative solutions to the one they hold or the one being taught.) Teaching mathematics mindfully prepares students with the understandings necessary to diagrammatically support the claim that three times two is six and defend such a claim with evidence against someone who comes along and tells them that three 2s is not 6 but, in fact, 7.

Let us consider an example of how students sometimes need diagrammatic evidence and a mindful approach to help them understand a mathematical assertion. A teacher is trying to instruct her class of simple addition. She asks her class what the answer is to $1 + 1$. A little girl confidently answers “1.” The teacher, being somewhat thoughtful, instead of simply telling her that the answer is wrong asks her why she thinks the answer is 1. The girl replies: “One bale of hay added to another bale of hay equals one (big) bale of hay.” In the little girl’s experience, $1 + 1$ is not always 2. Thus, for the teacher in this case to demonstrate that, mathematically, $1 + 1 = 2$, she would need to show her students diagrammatically why this assertion is correct.

In addition to math statements, it is important for our purposes here to define such assertions as A being greater than C as truth-apt because doing so encourages teachers to help their students learn such assertions mindfully. Students need to learn that in order for this kind of assertion to be true, there must be a very specific and consistently used meaning of the term "greater than." It is not accurate to say that A is "greater than" B, meaning A takes up more physical space than B, and B is "greater than" C because B is taller than C, therefore A is greater than C in terms of either physical space or height. When constructing and understanding assertions that are true by definition, students need to learn how to attend to the central concept being used, which in this case is "greater than." By examining these types of statements mindfully, students have the opportunity to learn how to be precise in their use of language. It also aids them in their understandings of such claims, helps students to challenge them effectively and to construct them accurately. Students do not simply *accept* the argument that because A is greater than B and B is greater than C, therefore A is greater than C with respect to *everything*. Rather, they believe it to be true based on the available evidence.

Defining all assertions as truth-apt for which experience (even diagrammatic experience) can speak for or against them helps teachers avoid indoctrination by making it clear that it is to the point to help

students adopt a critically deliberative view toward the truth of the beliefs and statements made in class. Students will not simply accept a given belief or claim as true if they are taught that it is always appropriate to inquire about what makes the belief true and what evidence and experiences could speak against it. Thus, even such assertions as mathematical statements and claims that are considered by many to be true by definition should be considered as truth-apt, not just so students are able and willing to re-asses their truth if counter evidence should arise, but it is also important that students hold such assertions in a manner whereby they have an understanding of why they are considered true. In short, teaching students to hold all beliefs to which experience can speak in a truth-seeking manner helps avoid indoctrination as it equips students to formulate beliefs based on evidentiary grounds rather than because of other forces of persuasion, rhetoric, propoganda, and demagoguery.

Thus we see how our epistemological investigations bring us to the view that (a) all truth-apt assertions (i.e., all assertions that are constitutively responsive to experience), if they are to be true or known to be true, must be open to inquiry and therefore (b) it is always appropriate to inquire about what experience leads us to think an assertion is true and what evidence and experiences could speak against it. From my discussion, it has also become evident that, following Misak and Peirce, I regard as truth-apt many sorts of assertions that others might not (e.g., a

priori claims and statements that are true by definition). Following Misak (2000), I also regard *moral* assertions as truth-apt. So, for example, I regard the moral claims "Abortion is wrong" and "All persons are equal" as truth-apt. According to Misak, a "moral belief and assertion, like any other, must be responsive to experience and to reasons" (Misak, 2000: 102). When persons make moral claims, they mean to have such claims taken seriously by others because they believe them to be true and have reasons for believing so. The truth of their moral beliefs, then, can be deliberated on by considering the relevant reasons, evidence and experience upon which they are based. Misak states that "if you want to have your beliefs governed by reasons, then you will have to expose yourself to different reasons, different perspectives, different arguments. You will have to engage in debate and deliberation" (Misak, 2000: 106). Thus, moral assertions must be held to standards of inquiry similar to those to which we hold other types of assertions.

Misak (2000) admits that moral claims, unlike some other sorts of claims, may not allow, even in principle, for persons to come to some kind of agreement over them. She claims that, like other questions, some moral questions may have more than one right answer. (Misak, 2000: 136) Yet, she argues that irreconcilable differences and ongoing disagreements does not mean that we should not continue to seek out beliefs that are better and better able to stand up to all experience and

evidence at the end of inquiry. Granted, one person's experiences are unique and no two persons share the very same perspectives, feelings, and sensitivities to a given situation or incident. While it is true, Misak says, that I cannot get inside another to experience something completely from the other's perspective, there is enough that I can understand about, say, your experiences to be able to "talk about them, interpret what you say or write about them, and learn something about what it is that you feel" (Misak, 2000: 134). One person's experiences are not so alien to another that one cannot relate to nor have any understanding of what the other has experienced.

I take moral claims to be truth-apt because, as Misak argues, they are claims to which our experiences can speak and upon which we gain valuable insights by hearing from others whose experiences are similar enough that they shed light on our own understandings, thoughts, and feelings. We may never come to any consensus on such assertions as "War is an unjust and immoral way to achieve peace." We may agree that there are different right answers given different circumstances or we may never come to any agreement on this view regarding the morality of war. Regardless of our disagreements, however, I take Misak's position that moral assertions, like all other truth-apt assertions discussed thus far, are inherently sensitive and responsive to experience and, like these other

sorts of assertions, moral claims ought to be open to inquiry regarding their truth.

Taking moral assertions to be truth-apt, as well as assertions that are considered by many to be *a priori* true and true by definition, means that I take a much wider range of assertions to be truth-apt than is sometimes conventionally acknowledged. And this brings me to a central issue that arises in almost all discussions of indoctrination: Are there some truth-apt assertions that *ought* not to be questioned or inquired about? Some moral statements in particular, for moral reasons, it is often thought ought to be out of bounds for inquiry. It is frequently argued that some, often moral, assertions are so (morally) important for students to accept as true that it is unethical to have students inquire into their truth because of the harm such inquiry risks. Different sorts of harm are envisioned. Sometimes it is harm to the student engaged in the inquiry because they may not, in the end, believe what is true about what is morally right. Sometimes, it is harm to others, both those engaged in the inquiry and those not engaged in the inquiry that are of concern. So, I turn our attention to a test case of this sort, a case that for me severely tests the analysis of indoctrination underwritten by the epistemological framework I employ.

Let us consider, for example, allowing students to discuss the claim that women are equally worthy to men. Such an assertion carries with it the assumption that men's worth is unquestioned and women must prove

their worth. This puts women in the position of having to defend their worth as persons, and this can cause undue harm to women or girls as it legitimizes putting their worth into question. Such discussions can make it seem that the following similar kinds of claims: "Whites are superior to blacks," and "Those who engage in gay or lesbian sex are immoral" are, in fact, *possibly* true and are legitimately debatable positions. Yet, many say, the truth of such claims is not debatable and should not be up for discussion. In short, there is great concern for students who are forced to sit in a classroom where their worth as human beings is up for debate.

It may be argued, however, that if we *don't* allow such questions to be raised or discussed in our classrooms then we will have lost a valuable opportunity for such sexist, racist, homophobic and otherwise oppressive views to be systematically, rationally, and thoughtfully challenged. To put it more crudely: Unless we provide space for such claims to be critiqued in the light of rational inquiry, there is little hope such beliefs will be alterable even when there is adequate evidence against them. Although the thought of persons holding such views which question the worth of persons is repugnant to many, they are views that, unfortunately, millions of persons hold as true. Refusing to allow students to voice their doubts about, say, the equality of women, may teach them that such doubts are unwanted and undesirable. It does *not*, however, teach them that the views leading to their doubts can and ought to be questioned or, even

more, can and perhaps ought to be altered. Airing oppressive beliefs in the open space of the classroom where they are subject to rational scrutiny may help diminish oppressive beliefs that are held in a close-minded way.

It may be further argued that we could begin descent down a slippery slope if we allow teachers to forbid any discussion of questions that challenge a person's worth. It is not clear what such questions may look like. The best example, to take some conventional instances in this culture, is when students directly ask whether, say, women are truly equal to men, or blacks to whites, etc. Such questions appear to directly attack the worth of a group of persons. Yet, what of questions that challenge persons' religious or political beliefs, their music tastes and their sports affiliations? It is a common enough feeling for persons to hold such beliefs in a way that questioning the beliefs is experienced as questioning their worth as persons.

Richard Paul (1994) asserts that holding beliefs as "part of one's identity" is characterized by the holding of beliefs in a manner where any challenge to the beliefs is experienced as a challenge to the worth of the person who holds them. He distinguishes three ways that persons can hold their beliefs; they can hold them "loosely," "firmly," or "as part of their identity." To hold a belief loosely, according to Paul, is to have very little reason for one's belief or to have barely reflected at all on the truth of

said belief. A loosely held belief, then, is one easily altered or readily questioned. Holding a belief firmly, on the other hand, is to hold it based on a good deal of thought and consideration of the available evidence and arguments both for and against it. A firmly held belief is not easily overturned, yet it can be questioned and even altered in the face of new and opposing evidence. Finally, beliefs held as part of one's identity are held much more firmly. When one holds a belief as part of his identity, he defines, at least in part, who he is by this belief. Such beliefs are quite resistant to change and, when and if they do change, their alteration results in altering the identity of the person in some significant way. For example, if a person holds the belief that war is immoral as part of her identity, she would, in a sense, become a different person if she started to believe otherwise. Undoubtedly the person herself believes this too.

Paul (2003) claims that a *critical* thinker is not characterized by the beliefs she holds but rather by *how* she holds her beliefs. For Paul, to achieve what he calls "rational confidence" in our beliefs (2003), we must be ever open to re-assessing the epistemic worth of our beliefs from various perspectives and worldviews and in light of all available evidence and arguments. Indeed, he recommends that we seek out and consider the *best* objection to our view. Like Peirce, Paul seems to advocate that nothing should stand in the way of inquiry; that all our beliefs, he claims,

should be held in a manner where they are subject to inquiry, particularly if new evidence presents itself.

The point here is not to argue for Paul's notion of critical thinking. Rather, it is to use his characterization of holding beliefs as part of one's identity to suggest that it may not always be clear what sorts of questions will challenge a person's worth. Different persons hold different kinds of views as part of their identity. Some persons are very committed to their particular political, religious and moral beliefs and some are quite attached to their views regarding the best baseball or hockey team, or the best school. If we tell teachers that they should not allow students to engage in classroom conversations that put into question a person's worth, we run the risk of teachers disallowing any discussion about moral, religious and political beliefs, but also any other beliefs the students hold as part of their identity.

The slippery slope problem, however, may not be as troublesome as it first appears. There seems to be an important distinction between questions about, say, women's equality to men and assertions about whether this or that team is superior, whether a particular decision by the U.S. government is justifiable, and whether God is or is not omnipotent. The former question regarding the equality of women risks violating the conditions of inquiry within a participatory democracy, the framework assumed in this dissertation, whereas the latter questions do not. Within

the framework of participatory democracy, at least the version(s) of it I would want to defend, we are committed to bringing in and valuing perspectives from marginalized groups as well as from dominant groups. If we allow students to question whether or not women are of equal worth to men, we may be allowing students to consider that the male voices and perspectives in the room ought to be given more weight than the views and arguments offered by the females in class. Such questions in themselves could be taken as a legitimization of the structural oppression of women by privileging the patriarchal view that women are subordinate to men and therefore they must prove their worth if they wish to be considered a man's equal and so, perhaps, have any or an equal say in inquiry about the matter.

Although we do not *ensure* that girls' views will be valued equally to boys' by prohibiting questions concerning women's worth to be raised in schools because, as liberal democratic and critical theorists argue, schools often mirror structural inequalities found in society that unfairly privilege male over female voices (Fletcher, 2000: 50-57), nevertheless, allowing such questions to be raised in class would appear to *further entrench* this unjust privileging. In short, if we encourage or even consent to having our students question women's worth, we may help perpetuate the unjust silencing of women's voices and thus help to maintain their oppression in schools and society.

By examining the context in which inquiry occurs we see that allowing students to pose the question of females' worth relative to males' risks entrenching an inequality that already works to keep women from participating fully in the process of inquiry. Yet, questioning one's beliefs about sports, say, or other beliefs one holds as "part of one's identity" does *not* necessarily violate the conditions of inquiry because there are no structural inequalities that mirror one's own privately and individually constructed identity. Even if a particular belief is held as part of one's identity, the belief does not necessarily violate the conditions of inquiry because of these structural issues. There is a distinction, then, between claims that speak to existent structural inequalities from those that do not. This distinction is important because it could be argued that students should not be allowed to inquire into the former type of claim but they should be encouraged to inquire into the latter type.

On the other hand, taking questions about a person's worth out of the domain of school discussions does not permit sexist, racist, homophobic, and otherwise prejudiced views to be challenged. What is needed, it seems, is a way to allow students to engage in inquiry about, say, sex equality, *without* putting women in the position of having to defend their worth as human beings. It may be helpful to note at this point that the question "Are women equal in worth to men" presupposes that men's worth is unquestioned but women's worth is very much up for

debate. Asking “Are women and men equal?” however, does not make any such presuppositions. If we permit students to talk about sexism, gender oppression, and the worth of persons, we do not necessarily put women’s worth into question. Indeed, women’s studies courses engage students in such conversations every day. Inquiring into beliefs about men’s superiority over women, if done skillfully, does not have to cause the further entrenchment of women’s oppression. Educators must be sure to set up class discussion in such a way that students can deliberate over the equality between women and men *without* starting from the assumption that women’s worth is up for debate. In any dialectic inquiry about sex equality, teachers need to ensure that their female students’ contributions are considered as valuable as the contributions made by the male students. The *skillful* handling of classroom conversations about equality (whether it be sex, race, etc.), then, does not unduly jeopardize the value and worth of any student’s contributions to the class discussion. Thus, truth-apt questions about equality and other contextually sensitive matters may be discussed in schools without harm of the sort feared if done mindfully and skillfully.

To summarize: In this section I have argued that students should be taught to inquire into *all* truth-apt claims. In accordance with Misak, I understand truth-apt assertions to include any statement to which experience can speak. Thus, claims such as: “Mr. Gladstone sneezed 10

times in 1867," and "My color spectrum is a direct inversion of yours" are not truth-apt because no evidence exists that can speak for or against either of them. Further, I have argued that all beliefs ought to be open to inquiry, *including the belief that all beliefs ought to be open to inquiry*. Even statements that deal with issues of equality and the worth of humans, about which some democratic educators may have doubts, can be dealt with skillfully to ensure that no student is unjustly excluded from full participation. Thus they too, in principle, must be allowed to be part of the inquiry process in our schools.

Allowing inquiry into all truth-apt assertions clearly communicates to students that true beliefs are those which lie at the hypothetical end of inquiry and that to seek the truth of a given belief, students must be taught to engage in critical inquiry about that belief. Refusing to allow students to discuss particular assertions implies that such assertions cannot be reasoned about and implies that there may be some infallible source of truth somehow beyond them which can easily be thought to be the text, the teacher, or the state, probably whoever has the power to insist on them learning such beliefs as truths. It risks undermining students' capacities to engage in open-minded and critically deliberative inquiry about all truth-apt beliefs. Thus, although there are some issues that need to be handled with great skill and care, to cultivate the sort of truth-

seeking habits of mind discussed here, students should be permitted and even encouraged to be open to inquiry into *all* truth-apt beliefs.

Community of Inquiry: Who Belongs and Whom Can We Exclude?

Remembering that our concern here is in helping educators avoid indoctrination within a pluralistic, democratic society, we have considered how excluding certain types of claims from classroom discussions can jeopardize truth-seeking inquiry. I have argued that teachers risk indoctrination by deciding for their students which claims they ought to question and deliberate over and which ones they ought to accept as true without question. One way in which teachers can do this is by excluding certain assertions and beliefs from student scrutiny, by teaching certain beliefs as if they are irrefutably true and not permitting students to discuss them in class. Another way to prevent the truth of particular beliefs from being challenged is to limit the *persons* who participate in a given inquiry.

As stated at the beginning of this section, we need to not only look at *what* ought to be included in truth-seeking inquiry; we must also look at *who* we ought to include in our inquiry of true beliefs. Because the question of who belongs in such a community is epistemologically important, in this section I examine more closely Misak's notion of a "community of inquiry." Given how truth is defined here, we must

ascertain how the community of inquiry itself may be a source of bias. More specifically, in regards to indoctrination, gaining clarity on who belongs in the "community of inquiry" helps us decide who, if anyone, can be excluded justifiably from a given discourse, excluded that is without running a serious risk of indoctrination.

If we can see that keeping certain persons, perspectives, or views out of a conversation may jeopardize students' capacity to hold a given belief or set of beliefs in a truth-seeking manner, we can see that such exclusions run the risk of indoctrinating our students. Consider a teacher who disallows or discourages his students from looking at arguments made by advocates of non-violence regarding the justifiability and efficacy of the U.S. invading Iraq in 2003. This teacher impairs his students' abilities to engage in the sort of inquiry that critically examines *all* relevant evidence, arguments, and reasons. Similarly, if a teacher does not allow students to consider the views of supporters for the Iraqi war, she impedes her students from engaging in truth-seeing inquiry.

Misak clearly argues that true beliefs cannot be arrived at by an individual sitting alone in a room. She states that a true belief "is more than belief which an individual finds that she cannot doubt." A true belief is a "belief which the *community of inquirers*, at the hypothetical end of the day, would find that they cannot doubt" (Misak, 2004: 81, italics mine). Defining truth as a belief which would be found consistent

with the evidence by a *community* of inquirers instead of by an individual, it seems, allows for an individual's personal biases, prejudices, and limited perspectives to be, respectively, challenged and broadened. Also, if truth were simply defined as beliefs each individual would find confirmed at the end of her or his inquiry, one person's "truth" may be different from another's because each person's experiences are unique. In other words, while person A may undergo recalcitrant experiences to belief p, person B may not, thereby leading person B to accept p as true and person A to reject p.

Defining truth as beliefs that would meet with all experiences, evidence, and reasons found by a *community* of inquirers indicates that no one person's or one group of persons' experiences, perspectives, assumptions, and biases will have a ruling influence on the direction and results of inquiry or at least not in principle. The concern with teaching students that true beliefs can be arrived at through their own individual and sole efforts is that it does not encourage them enough to test their own biases, narrow and contextually constrained assumptions, and erroneous conclusions against other perspectives, arguments, and evidence of which they may be unaware. Misak's notion of truth, then, is not subjective or relative even though it is based on experiences, reasons, and evidence of persons who are fallible and who come from particular backgrounds and have particular psychologies. Misak's notion of true

belief is objective in that truth lies at the hypothetical end of inquiry of a community of inquirers who bring to the table *all* relevant experiences, evidence, reasons, and arguments.

Because Misak says next to nothing about who belongs in a community of inquiry, it is important for our purposes here to be clear on what sort of community is needed to avoid indoctrination, particularly in contexts like schools which closely govern or regulate the community of inquiry and set its terms and purposes. Limiting *who* can be part of an inquiry may unduly limit what evidence is made available for consideration. If we only include experts as part of the community of inquiry, as is suggested by Maughn Rollins Gregory(2002), the question arises as to how we can determine who qualifies as an expert.

Gregory (2002) claims that an expert in a given field or discipline is someone deemed by practitioners in that field to be knowledgeable and adept in the particular accepted procedures of inquiry. Thus, according to Gregory, the community of inquiry regarding an historical question consists of all persons versant in and relatively adept in the procedures of inquiry adopted by historians. An historical claim is subject to scrutiny from historians and must answer criticisms raised regarding rules of evidence and procedures of inquiry that are accepted and practiced by historians. The historical claim that wars have gotten increasingly destructive in the

last one hundred years, for example, must answer any criticisms and questions posed by other historians.

What is not entirely clear from Gregory's analysis is whether anyone outside of the field of history can be considered an expert and thus should be included in the community of inquiry. To use the example from above about wars' increasing destructiveness, it seems that we ought to also include views from, say, philosophers who take up the issue of what, precisely, constitutes "destructiveness." Perhaps, then, the question about wars' increasing destructiveness should be open to "experts" not just from the discipline of history but from various fields. Yet, Gregory has not made it clear how we determine which disciplines can contribute meaningfully to a particular inquiry. Moreover, it would seem that there are times when persons who are not experts should be included in the inquiry process. Soldiers and victims of war, for example, may have something meaningful to say about this issue even though I doubt they would be considered "experts" as Gregory has defined it.

Gregory does not fully address the limitations of this notion of a community of inquiry. Yet, he does admit that there are problems with his analysis, particularly when applied to a classroom setting. There, he claims, a community of inquiry operates with the teacher as representative of the expert community who acts as facilitator for students constructing understandings, meanings and hypothesis through

experimentation, consultation, and dialogue with experts (e.g., teachers and texts), and an active exchange of ideas with peers. The difficulty, as Gregory points out, is that outside the classroom, inquiry with an expert from a community of inquiry does not have a pre-determined end. That is, when a question is posed or a discussion takes place about a particular subject within a field of discourse, the process of inquiry is open-ended and any conclusions that may be reached are not known before they are reached. In schools, on the other hand, "the intent of pedagogy is to initiate students into knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are substantially predetermined by the practitioners of the disciplines and by society at large" (Gregory, 2002: 400). Thus, the teacher must, in a sense, construct students' experience of inquiry by directing their process and correcting any errors they make in their practice of inquiry. The community of inquiry within classrooms, according to Gregory, is not one in which students engage in the sort of truth-seeking dialogue and research that leads to unknown answers. Yet, Gregory argues, engaging in lines of inquiry adopted by the various academic disciplines taught in schools is important for the following reasons:

- (1) The knowledge acquired in a given field is valuable and should not be ignored;
- (2) Students will see the usefulness and meaning of the knowledge acquired;

(3) The standards of inquiry must be learned so they can be used and preserved; and

(4) Students must be part of a discipline in order to participate in it, benefit from its knowledge, and challenge its findings and even its standards of inquiry.

While reason (2) runs the risk of coercing students to accept a body of knowledge without learning how to challenge any of the information and claims contained within that body of knowledge, and reason (4) runs the risk of coercing students to conform to an accepted set of norms and practices within a given discipline, each is defensible if we agree that one needs to know enough of the knowledge, methods and procedures of the discipline to even challenge them usefully and effectively.

Gregory also states that students should learn to be “critical consumers of knowledge in the discipline, so that, for example, as they learn history passed down from experts they would also learn to examine how the historical arguments were made and what the evidence was for a given interpretation” (Gregory, 2002: 405). He is not clear whether he wishes students to adopt a critical stance toward, say, historical claims from *within* the field of history or whether he is advocating that students engage in a sort meta-level analysis that requires they step *outside* the discipline so they may assess the worth of the methods used to arrive at particular assertions within the discipline. It seems that he only argues for

the former as he states that the role of the teacher is to guide students "to inquire, read, think, dialogue, and experiment their way into the funded knowledge of the discipline" (Gregory, 2002: 407). That is, Gregory argues that students should be taught to be good historians by critically scrutinizing historical claims and looking closely at the evidence and arguments given in support of such claims.

While I agree with Gregory that students ought to be taught to see the importance and value of knowledge gained within a given field and they should be taught to understand and utilize accepted practices of inquiry for that field, we need to be sure that students are motivated and able to seek out and receive all available opposing views with an open mind, even those that come from outside the discipline. What worries me about limiting the community of inquiry to only those who are versant in a given subject is that teachers may not encourage or instruct students to investigate a broad range of perspectives and views on any given subject. They may, in other words, be satisfied with teaching students only one perspective of a controversial and debated issue. When studying the destructiveness of war, for example, teachers may only inform students of the views adopted and articulated by historians. They may never acquaint their students with the perspective of those who suffered as civilians in war, those who were soldiers, peace activists, and human rights workers. Teachers may not inform students of these alternative views nor

encourage them to even consider that there exists views that lie outside those of historians.

We cannot expect teachers to have a full and complete understanding of every issue raised in class. Further, we cannot hold them to moral account for unwittingly narrowing the range of perspectives about a given issue that their students learn. However, if educators teach students to hold a particular view in such a way that they are closed to considering the truth of the view in the face of opposing evidence and alternative perspectives, then such teachers are, at the very least, at risk of indoctrinating their students. To avoid indoctrination, then, students should be instructed to hold *all* beliefs in a way that they are open to considering the worth of counterviews and are able and eager to seek out all available evidence regarding such a belief. Thus, while I agree with Gregory that it is important for students to be taught to intelligently participate in the processes of inquiry within particular fields of expertise, I worry that limiting the community of inquiry to only those deemed “experts” within a given field will not encourage students to seek out and be receptive to arguments and evidence offered by persons outside a given discipline.

According to Misak (2004), for a person to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner, she must hold them open to the experiences of *all* persons. If she doesn't hold her beliefs in such a way, then she is not

genuinely interested in arriving at a belief which would not be met with any recalcitrant experiences at the end of inquiry. Aiming to get the right answer – the answer that we would not doubt at the hypothetical end of the day – means not excluding anyone's experiences that speaks to a given belief. (Misak, 2004: 81) As Misak notes, "the open-endedness of inquiry and the commitment to taking other perspectives seriously must be preserved if we are to have any hope of reaching beliefs which really do account for all experiences and argument" (Misak, 2000: 97). She goes on to say that the standards of inquiry we employ are those that we find to be the most valuable at the present time. However, we must always be prepared to re-evaluate these standards when criticized, *even by persons (or experts) outside the particular group or discipline.* (Misak, 2000: 21)

But precisely who should be allowed to participate in the process of inquiry regarding a particular belief or set of beliefs? Do we include everyone, even persons who have no relevant information or who are severely cognitively challenged, or whom we know to be close-minded on the issue? If we are to accept Misak's analysis, the community of inquiry, it seems, must include any and all persons who have experiences that speak to the issue at hand. Yet, it is not clear how we determine whose experiences are relevant.

Harvey Siegel (1995, 1997) argues that, on epistemological grounds, we can justifiably exclude anyone from the community of inquiry who does not have anything “meaningful” to contribute. He argues that “[f]or some discourses, not everyone is qualified or competent to participate” (Siegel, 1995: 11). He uses examples of conversations about postmodernist theories and “the methodological details of an attempt to detect solar neutrinos” in which he claims his grandparents are unqualified to participate. Thus, Siegel argues, their lack of qualifications in these areas means that their exclusion from the conversation is an epistemologically “*justified exclusion*” (Siegel, 1995: 11).

Kathryn Pauly Morgan (1995) challenges Siegel’s claim that we can justifiably exclude persons from a given discussion on epistemological grounds. Morgan (1995), in her response to Siegel, questions his decision to exclude his grandparents from discussions about postmodernism. Morgan claims that before excluding them, she would like to hear what they have to say because, she points out, Siegel’s grandparents may very well have valuable contributions to make in such a discussion. Siegel has not elucidated his reasons for predetermining that his grandparents would fail to offer anything meaningful. Settling on whom to exclude from a given discussion, according to Morgan, requires that *someone* makes such a determination and, as a result, the reasons for exclusion will be based on the epistemological framework adopted by that someone. Yet,

as Morgan points out, Siegel has not adequately justified his epistemological framework. Additionally, Morgan argues that Siegel has not made it sufficiently clear what the grounds for exclusion are.

Ignoring or disregarding certain persons and their views without first considering the worth of these views risks excluding perspectives and beliefs that may meaningfully contribute to one's understanding of a given subject. For example, Sandra Harding (1991) argues that women have historically been excluded from scientific communities because it was predominantly believed by male scientists that women had little to nothing of importance to contribute. Siegel (1995) admits that we must be careful not to ignore perspectives that historically have been excluded. Truth-seeking inquiry, Siegel seems to agree, requires that students consider beliefs based on *all* relevant evidence including evidence from marginalized and largely ignored voices.

Morgan (1995) points out, keeping persons from participating in a given inquiry may be a way of disregarding a particular set of beliefs. Yet Siegel (1995, 1997) argues that such exclusions can be justified by showing that certain persons do not possess the pertinent knowledge and/or adequate cognitive capacities necessary for meaningful participation. What he does not adequately explain, however, is how we can determine whether one's knowledge and/or cognitive capacities are inadequate. In other words, we need to decide on what grounds we can

decide that a person or group of persons does or does not possess relevant and sufficient knowledge and capacities for meaningful participation in a given discourse. We must be careful to clearly articulate our reasons for disregarding and ignoring certain groups and perspectives from the community of inquiry.

In addition, we must decide if there are *levels* of participation that should be allowed. That is, we must settle on whether some people should be allowed to participate more fully than others. For example, in a discussion about what subjects a teacher should cover in her first grade class, we need to decide who is qualified to participate and at what level they are qualified to participate in such an inquiry. Although it is certainly true that the students are greatly *affected* by this discussion, first graders are not competent enough (i.e., they do not have the necessary information and reasoning capacities) to participate fully. While it may be very important to hear from them about the sorts of subjects they want to study and perhaps even learn from them what they have already studied, it is not likely that they would be able to have a meaningful conversation about cognitive development, learning styles, and educational theory, all of which could very well be part of such a discussion. The students could participate in this inquiry, then, *to a certain degree*, but not fully.

Moreover, if a particular group does not possess the necessary information to be able to participate or participate *fully* in a discussion,

we need to decide whether they should be *taught* the necessary information. For example, if teachers of a particular school district do not have enough information about their school's budget to make wise financial decisions for the school, should they be provided such information? In other words, when is excluding persons because of their lack of requisite information and knowledge a case of *justified* exclusion?

What may help address these questions of inclusion is remembering that teaching students to engage in truth-seeking inquiry serves two important educational goals. The first goal is to help students aim toward arriving at true beliefs. Siegel may or may not be correct in arguing that there are epistemologically justifiable grounds for excluding some persons from the process of a given inquiry. Yet, there is a second goal to truth-seeking in an educational context that we must also consider.

The second educational goal of inquiry is to develop in students the necessary capacities for engaging in such inquiry. Teaching students to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner means getting them to inquire into a multiplicity of views from a wide range of perspectives so they may acquire as broad an understanding of a given issue as is reasonably possible. To avoid indoctrination, students should be encouraged to seek out ideas and arguments that both support and oppose their beliefs so they may further refine their understandings and insights. As one cannot know the relevance of a particular contribution without first hearing it,

students should be taught to approach all evidence and beliefs with an open mind, setting aside or rejecting evidence *only* after examining its relevance as well as its other attributes of epistemic worthiness.

Teaching students the process of truth-seeking inquiry requires that we develop in them the capacities to determine for themselves what evidence is relevant. If we discourage them from considering the views of groups x and y in regards to a certain belief, we risk teaching them to rely on those in positions of authority to decide for them what views are worth their consideration. If we teach students to limit their analysis of a given belief to only those perspectives deemed worthy by the established experts, students may not develop the necessary capacities for effectively challenging accepted ways of thinking and questioning mainstream norms, attitudes, and beliefs. In short, teaching students to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner requires that we teach and encourage them to welcome *all* contributions to a given issue and reject those they deem irrelevant only after critically assessing their epistemic worth.

Peirce's dictum, then, *Let nothing stand in the way of inquiry*, seems to offer a way out of this debate about who ought to be included in a community of inquiry. For every question asked or issue raised, the important thing to remember is not who should or should not be part of the inquiry process. Rather, in keeping within the pragmatic framework adopted in this dissertation, what is of key importance is that nothing, not

personal biases, predetermined inquiry guidelines, or even currently accepted standards of inquiry, should prevent the questioning of a particular claim or belief. If we are to develop students who hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner, we need to teach them that the process of inquiry should not be hampered, constrained, narrowed, or prevented regarding any belief, assertion, or question one may have.

A community of inquirers, then, if we are to stay within this Misakian framework, includes any and all persons who wish to participate in a given discourse. It also includes all persons whose views and experiences an inquirer seeks out in an attempt to gain a full and diverse understanding of the issue at hand. While it may certainly be the case that all views will not be meaningful or relevant and, as was argued earlier, some views must be handled skillfully so as not to cause anyone undue harm, no person, perspective, or group should be excluded from the community of inquiry prior to hearing the offered contribution.

Summary

Misak offers us one particular epistemology among many. I adopt her analysis of truth and her epistemological framework because it presents a clear and useful structure for articulating notions at the heart of the concept of indoctrination when it is taken as a pejorative notion. Moreover, as I have argued in this chapter and will further demonstrate in

a later chapter, employing her framework affords us an account of indoctrination which is useful, one that has practical functionality: it can aid us in identifying indoctrination and assist us in developing educational methods that avoid it.

The alternative definition defended here reads as follows: A *teacher indoctrinates p when she intends to get students to hold p in a non-truth-seeking manner.* In this analysis, *p* denotes any and all truth-apt claims, that is, any claim which is constitutively responsive to experience. Thus, assertions that are conventionally considered to be *a priori* true and those that are true by definition are included as truth-apt. Claims to which no evidence or experience can speak, on the other hand, such as “My color spectrum is different than yours,” are *not* considered truth-apt on this analysis. Holding *p* in a non-truth-seeking manner occurs when students are discouraged from critically assessing all available evidence regarding *p*. This can occur when oppositional voices and views are excluded from students’ scrutiny by narrowly delimiting the community within which the students are encouraged to inquire.

CHAPTER VI

EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCHOOL CONTEXT IN IDENTIFYING AND AVOIDING INDOCTRINATION

Indoctrination, as I have characterized it in this dissertation, involves teachers seeking to get their students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner. I have argued that a teacher's intention is revealed by what s/he desires, foresees, and/or ought to foresee as a likely outcome of her/his efforts. Yet, what remains to be understood is how teachers can better foresee the likely student outcomes of their educational endeavors. Prior analyses of indoctrination focused almost exclusively on the methods, intentions, and content taught by individual instructors. The assumption seemed to be that indoctrination can be identified by looking only at what occurs inside the walls of the classrooms. Such a narrow focus, however, is inadequate for meeting the purpose set forth here of helping educators foresee when their endeavors are likely to lead to students holding beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner.

The issue of foreseeability is a multifaceted one. Indoctrination, like education, is many-sided and complex and, therefore, trying to determine how one's students will come to hold their beliefs requires

examination of a myriad of factors that influence student outcomes. Teaching does not occur within a vacuum. The manner in which students come to hold their beliefs is affected by not only the classroom endeavors of any given teacher but also by a wide range of factors including: the teaching methods employed by other instructors, the policies adopted by administrators, the decision-making structures of the school, the educational goals and expectations adopted in the school, and the beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and values of the students' home, community, and the larger social-political culture.

Teachers cannot possibly look into *everything* that affects how students will come to hold the beliefs taught them. They cannot, for example, acquire a thorough and detailed understanding of students' home experiences nor even their personal goals or fears if students choose not to express them. In addition, teachers cannot learn about all of the daily experiences a student has with friends and community members. What teachers *can* do, however, is observe and reflect on their own classroom practices, their educational aims, the content they teach, and their students' outcomes. Additionally, we can reasonably expect them to be mindful of the context in which their teaching occurs. In other words, they can and should, to a certain extent, examine what goes on in the school and, to a lesser extent, what goes on in the local community and larger social-political culture. I hope to illustrate the sorts

of contextual clues we can reasonably expect teachers to inspect and think about to help them decide how they can best avoid indoctrination.

One purpose of this dissertation is to help educators, wherever possible, avoid indoctrination by directing them to scrutinize and reflect on their intentions. My purpose in conceptualizing indoctrination in terms of intention is not to assign moral blame. I do not wish to engage in finger pointing. Rather, the aim here is to develop a conception of indoctrination that directs educators to look carefully at what they hope to achieve (i.e., their desired outcomes) and what they are likely to achieve by their efforts given a particular context (i.e., the foreseen and the foreseeable outcomes). The intentional analysis I offer is useful in helping educators avert and prevent indoctrination because it recognizes that educators are professionals who undertake teaching and the direction of learning deliberately and therefore they can be held to certain professional standards.

If we wish to stop indoctrination, it is not enough to assign blame. We must address the problem by helping educators identify indoctrination when it occurs and aid them in finding ways to avoid it. Thus, in the first section of this chapter, I look at how a close and careful examination of one's methods, content, and student outcomes can help one determine when one is likely to lead students to holding beliefs in a non-truth-seeking fashion and how one can best circumvent such consequences – in short,

how to become better aware of one's own intentions. In the subsequent, final section, I show how teachers can better understand what sort of student outcomes their endeavors are likely to effect by having them look closely at the *context* in which their teaching occurs. I show that by examining the policies, practices, traditions, attitudes, beliefs, and educational goals of the school, teachers can make better decisions about the sort of educational endeavors they ought to employ to educate without indoctrinating. Again, indicating all I see as crucial to fully understanding one's intentions in the moral sense, i.e., in the full sense required for responsibility.

Taking Another Look at the Role that Content, Method, and Consequences

Play in Indoctrination

Although I have found the several considered conceptions of indoctrination defined in terms of content, method, and consequences inadequate for the purposes stated here, there is much to be learned from them. These conceptions provide some useful indications of what educators can look for in their attempts to avoid indoctrinating their students. I argue that teaching certain content and employing particular instructional methods may put one more at risk of indoctrinating than when other types of content and methods are used. Further, some student outcomes are more indicative of indoctrination than others.

Examining one's content, teaching methods, and one's student outcomes, as I shall show, helps teacher reflect on their practice and develop educational endeavors that avoid indoctrination.

Content

When a teacher looks at whether she is likely to get her students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner, it is helpful for her to examine the content she is teaching. Although *any* truth-apt beliefs can be indoctrinated, the concern over indoctrination is typically most prominent when the claims being taught are of the sort that express a worldview (i.e. a belief that has a powerful influence over one's other beliefs and behavior). Such claims are referred to in the indoctrination literature as "doctrines" and, as argued earlier, it has not been clearly shown what demarcates doctrines from other sorts of propositions. It is important to note, however, that content analyses do get at a commonly held concern about indoctrination, viz that students will be inculcated in the sort of ideas and propositions which constitute a general outlook on life and whose truth is dubious or, at the least, highly controversial.

Persons are generally more concerned about students being taught to uncritically accept a belief such as, "Humans are a privileged species who have the right to rule over all other animals" than a claim like, "Whales are a species of fish." From content analyses we see why inquiry

into the truth of the former type of claim is considered more important than inquiring into the truth of the latter sort of claim. The former statement directs persons to accept an entire network of beliefs about human's place on the earth and how we should treat animals. Such beliefs have a strong influence on a myriad of choices and actions one makes. Uncritical acceptance of this sort of claim would typically have a broader effect on students' beliefs, attitudes, and actions than believing without question that whales are a species of fish. Thus, when teaching the former type of claim, teachers need to pay particular attention to making sure students have the capacities needed to inquire into its truth so they do not passively accept it as true without question.

There is a further reason why doctrine-like beliefs are of more concern in connection with indoctrination than material that is generally held to be uncontestedly true. Recall that the notion of indoctrination defended here is that it involves the *intention* to get students to hold a belief *p* in a non-truth-seeking manner (where the notion of "intention" is defined as the desire to or the engagement in endeavors that are likely to lead students to be unable or unwilling to engage in any future inquiry regarding *p*). When the beliefs taught are virtually uncontested, there is little motivation for teachers to attempt to *prevent* students from inquiring about their truth. "Inquire all you want," a teacher may think, "there's nothing out there – no evidence, reasons, or arguments – that will cause

you to doubt the beliefs.” On the other hand, when the beliefs taught are controversial, there is motivation to prevent students from inquiring into the truth of the beliefs *if* the teacher’s aim, conscious or unconscious, is to get students to hold the beliefs as unquestionably true.

Teachers, then, need to closely examine their motives and goals, *particularly* when teaching propositions whose truth is debated and which are likely to have a far reaching effect on other beliefs students hold if the claims are accepted as true. Although we don’t want students to hold *any* beliefs in a manner where they are unable or resistant to questioning them in light of counter posing evidence, there is more at risk when teaching students to hold particular kinds of beliefs in this manner, such as, “Humans are a privileged species.” Content analyses of indoctrination instruct us to pay attention to the type of content being taught. If the material being presented in class consists of controversial ideas, chiefly those that have the power to influence a person’s network of beliefs, then teachers ought to look more closely at their aims as well as at the likely outcomes of their teaching so they may be best positioned to avoid indoctrination. I eschew the claim that teaching such ideas is inherently indoctrinary and embrace the claim that being mindful of the nature of the ideas we are teaching can assist us in doing it skillfully. Hardly a new thought, but one worth paying attention to in this context.

Method

The teaching of certain content, however, is only *one* clue educators and others can use to help guide their efforts to steer clear of indoctrination. Teaching *methods* are another useful focus of attention. Although indoctrination can occur using a wide range of methods, looking carefully at how one teaches can lend insight into the manner in which students will come to hold their beliefs. For example, if a teacher expects his students to sit quietly and take in the information given by lectures, repeat the information on exams, and not question or discuss any of the complexities of the ideas given them, the students are put more at risk of holding the beliefs taught them in a non-truth-seeking way than if they are taught and encouraged to critically appraise the epistemic merits of the propositions raised in class.

This is not to say that we can necessarily conclude that a teacher is indoctrinating if she does not take the time to allow critical discussion in her class when instructing her students about a given set of ideas. It could be, for example, that she recognizes that her students, regardless of what methods she adopts, *will* be critically deliberative about what they are told in class and thus she does not need to encourage or instruct them to do so. The aim is not to get teachers to adopt any particular set of methods. Rather, if they are to avoid indoctrination, teachers need to

carefully reflect on how their methods are likely to affect the manner in which students come to hold their beliefs.

No one set of teaching methods, then, necessarily indicates the presence or absence of indoctrination. As I've suggested, if a teacher sees that his students are motivated and adept truth-seekers, then he need not spend a great deal of time encouraging such capacities in them. However, if he sees that his students have little to no inclination or ability to critically examine the ideas professed in class, he needs to provide students with the opportunity and encourage them to learn to do so. Rather than rejecting them outright, we can utilize analyses that define indoctrination in terms of methods to help us see that the instructional methods adopted *can* affect how students come to hold the beliefs taught them and alert us to the need for developing appropriate modes of teaching for preventing indoctrination.

Consequences

Just as with method and content, examining the consequences of teaching, or looking at student outcomes, can also help educators avert indoctrination. If a teacher finds that many or most of her students come to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner, then she ought to look more closely at her own educational practices and endeavors. Reflecting on practice is a professional standard to which we hold all teachers. We

expect that professional educators will reflect seriously on not only what they hope to achieve and how they hope to reach their goals. We also expect them to look closely at what exactly it is that they have achieved; that is, we generally require that teachers scrutinize their educational outcomes to better determine the approaches they will adopt in the future.

One of the benefits of the alternative analysis offered here is that it instructs educators to look for very particular outcomes. Educators should look to see that students are sensitive to experience and its significance for their beliefs. As Misak (2000, 2004) argues, persons who do not hold their beliefs open to experience are not genuinely interested in finding true beliefs. Thus, if a teacher finds that his students come to be closed to any future inquiry regarding the truth of their beliefs, he ought to examine whether his students need more encouragement or perhaps more direct instruction in effectively challenging, inquiring into, and supporting assertions made in class.

Looking at and reflecting on student outcomes are activities that need not necessarily be used to point to a blameworthy agent. We cannot be sure in any given case whether or not students come to hold their views in an uncritical manner because of the teacher's classroom endeavors. The teacher's activities are only one point in a causal nexus. However, examining teaching outcomes affords teachers important

information on how they might alter their instructional efforts so as to affect the desired student outcomes. Understanding the sorts of consequences one's teaching is likely to produce aids one in crafting instructional methods and creating educational environments that encourage students to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner.

Thus we see that scrutinizing the content one teaches, the instructional methods one adopts, and the consequences of one's teaching can, taken separately and in combination with one another, lend valuable insights into what teachers are likely to achieve in their educational endeavors. By examining in this way what they are *likely* to achieve *in conjunction* with what they *wish* to achieve, teachers may be awakened to the myriad factors that influence student learning, both inside *and* outside the classroom. We come to see that examining one's content and instructional methods provides only a partial view of how students will come to hold their beliefs. To gain more insight into how one can best teach without indoctrinating, educators need to examine the *context* in which their teaching occurs.

Contextual Considerations in Avoiding Indoctrination

Critical theorists have shown us that a school's context, its pedagogy, curriculum, decision-making structures, teaching methods, and their policies all play a role in shaping and defining the beliefs students hold and the manner in which they hold them. While the aim of critical theorists is to show how these contextual forces can further entrench students in hegemonic and oppressive social-political structures, I draw on their work to illustrate how the school's context can either help or hinder students from holding beliefs in a truth-seeking manner. Put another way, I proceed to examine how we might better understand when schools are encouraging what Ira Shor calls "critical thought" and when they are encouraging "dependence on authority" (Shor, 1992: 13).

To help clarify our comprehension of the effects that various contextual elements have on student learning, I consider the context under three main headings: pedagogical, ideological, and structural contexts. I undertake an explanation of what I mean by each of these terms then show how examining each can aid teachers in averting indoctrination.

The Pedagogical Context

I define the *pedagogical context* as the teaching methods practiced by all the instructors in a school district. If each teacher adopts a variety of methods, for example, then the pedagogical context may be characterized as richly varied. If, on the other hand, all or even most of the teachers adopt a more traditional, authoritarian mode, then the pedagogical context may be described as teacher-centered and authoritarian. If, on the other hand, all or most teachers implement a Deweyan approach, then the pedagogical context may be described as student-centered or discovery-focused. Were most or all teachers to follow a Noddings' "caring" approach, the pedagogical context may best be described as caring, nurturing, or child-centered. There are a great variety of pedagogical contexts that a school may have.

Understanding which one a particular school has requires that we look at the teaching methods utilized by the teachers working in the school.

Understanding the pedagogical context is important in determining how students come to hold beliefs taught them. For example, if an instructor sees that she works in a teacher-centered pedagogical context where students are expected to listen quietly and passively accept as true the beliefs taught in class, she may reasonably guess that students are unlikely to have developed the capacities required to critically examine and question the beliefs raised in her classroom. The instructional methods

employed by teachers send students a host of implicit messages. As Scott Fletcher (2000) points out, the “banking model,” as described by Paulo Friere (1973), implies to students that their experiences are “at best irrelevant and at worst an obstacle to learning” (Fletcher, 2000: 69).

Friere (1973) uses the term “banking model” to refer to teaching methods where the instructor sees students as empty receptacles and their job as educators is to fill these empty heads full of information. There are certain epistemological assumptions behind this approach to teaching – one of which is that knowledge consists of a set of discreet pieces of information. More to the point for this discussion, however, is that the “banking model” assumes that the information being fed to students is unequivocally true and ought to be accepted without question. If the banking model is widely adopted by teachers in the school, an individual teacher may need to counter the style of learning that this teaching method fosters by making the effort needed to develop in her students critically deliberative capacities. She may need to spend time encouraging her students to make certain that the worth of the beliefs she professes are based on all available evidence rather than passively accepting these beliefs.

Critical theorists, such as Friere (1970, 1973), have shown us that the methods used by teachers influences the manner in which students come to hold their beliefs. While the “banking model,” according to Friere

(1973), encourages passive acceptance, adopting a more critically deliberative approach where students are taught to challenge current modes of thinking and commonly held beliefs encourages students to be more reflective and question the views they hold as well as those taught them in school. Friere argues that the capacity to formulate one's own beliefs based on a critical and unbiased evaluation of all evidence available "must grow out of a critical educational effort" (Friere, 1973: 19). In other words, students must be allowed and encouraged to engage in "reflective participation" (Friere, 1970: 65) where they practice open "dialogue, reflection, and communication" with one another about beliefs they hold and views expressed in class (Friere, 1970: 66).

Friere's pedagogy of the oppressed helps us see that the process of critical discussions and dialogue helps students arrive at beliefs based on "the testing of one's 'findings' and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them ... by soundness of argumentation; [and] by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics" (Friere, 1973: 18). Providing students with opportunities to participate in such discussions aids them in holding beliefs in a truth-seeking fashion. Such teaching is valuable in a pluralistic democratic society regardless of the pedagogical context. Yet, when other teachers adopt more of a "banking model" approach, it is particularly important, for any given

teacher seeking to preclude indoctrination, to develop in her students the necessary capacities to think critically about the truth of beliefs professed in class. Although there is no definitive list of methods that one ought to adopt in any given pedagogical context, and there are no particular kinds of beliefs that one should teach in such a context, looking at the modes of teaching utilized by other instructors in the school provides teachers with valuable information that can guide them in making their own instructional choices, ones that will help them avoid indoctrination.

The Structural Context

In addition to assessing the pedagogical context, it is helpful for teachers to also look at the *structural context*. How decisions are made in a school district, what sorts of rules and practices are adopted, and how rules, policies, and practices are enforced comprises the structural context of that district. Fletcher (2000) argues, the policies and practices of a school impart to students what are considered normal and acceptable modes of decision-making. Friere (1970, 1973) argues that we must teach students how to effectively participate in decisions that affect their daily lives. Only through active participation, he contends, can we alter the existing structures of power. Friere's arguments illustrate how decision making structures help determine how persons hold their beliefs. He claims that if the oppressed are simply told what to do to emancipate

themselves, they will continue to be oppressed because they will not have gained the ability to formulate their own beliefs.

Michael Apple (1996) also argues that the structural hierarchy of a school models the sort of decision-making processes considered acceptable and even desirable. The structural context, then, demonstrates to students how the rules are made and enforced and what role students ought to play in the decision-making processes. Some districts, for example, give teachers a fairly substantial amount of power in determining the curricular choices offered, the policies adopted by the school, and the methods used to enforce the rules and policies of the school. Some schools also allow students to play a meaningful role in these decisional processes. Other schools leave most of the decision making about policies and procedures as well as curriculum and rule enforcement to administrators.

The decision-making structure of the school provides students with a powerful model for how and what sort of decisions ought to be made and how they ought to be enforced. Shor (1992) asserts that if students "do not practice democratic habits in co-governing their ... schools ... they learn that unilateral authority is the normal way things are done in society" (Shor, 1992: 19). Thus, when students see that authority figures (who constitute the minority in number) have virtually complete say over the major decisions that affect students' educational experiences, many

students are likely to believe that the authoritarian model of decision making is “normal” or “typical” and, therefore, many may come to believe it is justified. There will, of course, be some students who do not believe that it is the best way to make decisions. They may, for example, test authority by verbally questioning the rules and/or disobeying them. Yet, when such students are punished (as they so often are when they break or defy rules), the message sent is that challenging authority will be penalized and will not prove effective. In other words, many students learn that there is a significant cost and very little, if any, benefit to defying those in authority.

Teachers need to take the decision-making structure into consideration when formulating choices about how best to avoid indoctrination. For example, I found that when I taught in a school district with a very top-down authoritarian structure, students were reluctant to challenge not only the rules I had established for the classroom but also the ideas I professed in class. This was not true for *all* students, of course, but in general, students from this school were much less inclined to question my decisions and teaching than the students I taught in a school that had a far more liberal structure where they were given opportunities to effect changes in school policies and curriculum.

In the more authoritarian school, I had to spend a good deal of time to get my students to develop classroom rules with me. I had to

explain *why* I thought it was important that they learn to participate respectfully and effectively in the decision making process and I took the time to show them how we might go about this process. I then had to take them step by step through the decision making. Further, I had to continually prod them into participating in ongoing choices that needed to be made such as what assessment methods to use, how much and what kind of homework to assign, and what sort of make-up or extra credit work to allow. Students in the more liberal school had far more experience in these matters. As a result, they felt more familiar and comfortable with the process. In addition, students, generally speaking, in the more liberal school felt more that it was their *right* to participate in the decision making whereas students in the more authoritarian school felt *privileged* in being allowed to participate in the decisional processes.

It is an empirical question, thus one I am not prepared to answer here, whether students are more reluctant to question their teacher's authority in a school that does not allow them the opportunity to make significant decisions about their education. Yet, it is reasonable to assume that if students have never, or rarely ever, been given the opportunity to participate in decisional processes at school then they will be far less likely than students who *have* had a good deal of decision making experience to feel comfortable and adept at participating in these processes and to think, in fact, that such participation is their right.

The structures of power implicitly express a particular set of beliefs, attitudes and values. As Apple (1996) asserts, the decision-making models enacted in schools often mirror the hierarchical power structures in society which keep certain groups in positions of privilege and disempower and subordinate others. If power is given to and exercised by only the few persons who hold top positions of authority, students learn that their contributions to the decision making process is unwanted. Thus, according to critical theorists such as Apple (1996, 1985), Shor (1992), and Friere (1970, 1973), if schools have top-down, authoritarian style power structures where students and even teachers play only a little, if any, role in meaningful decision making, students come to rely on those in power to tell them what is best for them.

Understanding the structural context of a school provides teachers with some insight into the sort of experiences students have with questioning and critically deliberating over the dictates of authority. Teachers can use these insights to help them construct a methodology and learning environment that will aid students in holding beliefs in a truth-seeking manner. To avoid indoctrination, then, it is helpful for teachers to work with their students by building on experiences and skills that teachers find their students already have and developing in them capacities they do not have which are needed to critically inquire into the truth of the beliefs discussed in class.

The Ideological Context

In addition to the pedagogical and structural contexts, the *ideological context* also influences how students come to hold their beliefs. To understand this context, it is first important to take a look at the notion “ideology” as it is being used here. An ideology expresses the ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives held by those who have the power to influence the thinking and attitudes of others in their community and the power to exact a strong influence over the policies and decisions made in the community. According to Fletcher (2000), the term “ideology” is used by critical theorists to “regulate the production of knowledge and help explain how schools reproduce the privilege of a dominant class” (Fletcher, 2000: 59). Ideology, if unquestioned or unchallenged, then, necessarily exerts a ruling influence over persons’ beliefs.

Apple (1985) argues that schools often support what he calls “dominant ideologies” – that is, sets of beliefs, attitudes, values, perspectives, and ideals that are taken to be the norm. He states that the “control of the cultural apparatus of a society, of both the knowledge preserving and producing institutions and the actors who work in them, is essential in the struggle over ideological hegemony” (Apple, 1985: 16). Schools, then, according to Apple, help maintain society’s dominant ideologies by “winning consent” to mainstream beliefs, norms,

perspectives, attitudes, and practices. (Apple, 1996: 14-15) It is important to note here that ideological beliefs are not harmful because of any epistemological status they may hold: they are not necessarily wrong. The referent of the term "ideology," as used by critical theorists, is oppressive only when (or because) it exerts a dominating influence on those who do not have the power in society to challenge or oppose it.

I agree with critical theorists that ideologies held as true by those in power are often oppressive because they can and frequently do inhibit the development and acceptance of beliefs that oppose or challenge the accepted ideology. However, it is important not to see this power struggle over what counts as legitimate knowledge as being overly deterministic. Schools can educate students to be critical consumers of information they receive from society, schools, and even their homes. Not all ideologies, then, are oppressive and harmful. Certain emancipatory ideologies, for example, that profess the value of truth-seeking and encourage students to formulate beliefs based on a thoughtful analysis of the relevant evidence, are not oppressive, at least not in the way that they impede students from holding views that lie outside mainstream notions.

I adopt the general notion of "ideology" purported by critical theorists. Thus, when talking about the "ideology" of a society, I mean the ideas and beliefs held as true by the mainstream – or the cultural group(s)

who have the power to influence the thinking and attitudes of others and help dictate policy for others in society. Similarly, the ideology of a school refers to the beliefs adopted and maintained by official school policy and accepted school practice. If the school's ideology consists of a set of beliefs which are meant to be and, in fact, generally do go unchallenged, then such an ideology tends to be oppressive. If, on the other hand, the school's ideology consists of a set of beliefs which advocates and encourages careful scrutiny of the truth of the views professed in school, it is likely not to be oppressive.

Richard Paul (1994) points out that some ideological beliefs are expressed *explicitly* while others are expressed *implicitly*. His point is helpful here as it shows that some sets of views can be believed, maintained, and advanced even if they are never explicitly articulated. He claims that our ideals, or what he refers to as "worldviews," are often "implicit in our activity and ... in how we describe our behavior" (Paul, 1994: 187). Thus, schools can advance a particular ideology by the curriculum chosen, the policies set, and the structures of decision-making adopted. As Apple (1996) contends, what gets taught, the methods employed to teach the chosen curriculum, the rules created to govern both student and teacher behavior, and the hierarchy of power all can *implicitly* express a particular set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and perspectives. For example, in a school where I used to teach, some

implicitly expressed ideas were as follows: "Students' needs and interests will be *considered* when making policy but will not have any sort of ruling influence," "The U.S. is the best country in the world and to say or imply otherwise is to be unpatriotic and a trouble-maker," and "Students who obey rules with unquestioned and quiet deference are 'good' and those who consistently or often defy the rules are 'bad' or 'at risk' students." Such views, even when unarticulated, make up some of the ideological context of that school.

Whether or not students will believe the claims professed by their teachers, particularly in an uncritical manner, is largely influenced by the ideological context in which they teach. Students tend to believe what they are told by those in authority, and students typically see their teachers as authority figures. Unless students are taught to thoughtfully consider those claims and assertions held as true by the ideology accepted and maintained in the school, particularly if those claims uphold the ideology adopted by dominant groups in society, students are likely to hold these beliefs taught them in an uncritical manner. Again, it is important not to adopt too much of a deterministic view here. While it is true that the manner in which students come to hold their beliefs is greatly influenced by the school's ideological context, students are not completely helpless to evaluate or question beliefs maintained by the school's ideology. Some students, regardless of the beliefs they are

taught and whether such beliefs correspond with or oppose the purported ideology of the school and society, are rebellious, feisty, and/or are adept, independent, and critically deliberative thinkers and will therefore be very unlikely to passively accept as true any beliefs taught them.

One reason students may question, challenge, or even just quietly disagree with their teacher's assertions is that the teacher has proven he is untrustworthy by making several errors, showing a lack of knowledge in the area he teaches, and repeatedly contradicting himself. Another reason that students may question their teacher, and one which is more to the point here, is if students are taught a set of views that *contradict* beliefs held by their parents and local community members. Students are far more likely to question those assertions that *oppose* rather than *coincide* with beliefs commonly held as true by themselves, others in the school, and people in the community.

This is not to say that students who are taught beliefs that lie outside the mainstream ideologies cannot be indoctrinated. If a teacher's desire is to get students to hold beliefs in a non-deliberative fashion, even if it is unlikely she will be able to do so, she still has the *intent* to get students to hold beliefs uncritically and therefore she is indoctrinating. Additionally, if she is a particularly charismatic and influential instructor, she may have a strong and even ruling influence over how her students come to hold their

beliefs. However, understanding and reflecting on the ideological context of a school helps teachers gain valuable insights into how many, if not most, of their students are *likely* to hold beliefs discussed in class.

Examining the ideological context, then, allows teachers to think about how they may be able to *interrupt* or *counteract* the tendency that students have of uncritically accepting beliefs taught them that are rarely if ever challenged by their other teachers, by community members, and by persons in the larger society. Moreover, it allows those who teach marginalized content to better understand how students may react to the beliefs professed in class. Having a critical awareness of the ideological context helps instructors foresee likely outcomes of their educational efforts and develop programs that steer clear of indoctrination.

Summary of Contextual Influences

My definition of indoctrination is that a teacher indoctrinates p when she intends to get students to hold p in a non-truth-seeking manner. The notion of truth-seeking is taken from Misak's (2000, 2004) pragmatic conception of truth which argues that a true belief is one that would agree with all evidence and arguments from a community of inquiry at the hypothetical end of the day. The notion of intention used here expands upon Snook's (1972a, 1972b) definition: one intends students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner if one desires, foresees, or

ought to foresee that students will come to hold beliefs in such a manner as a result of one's educational endeavors and does nothing to try and prevent this.

Defining intention, then, as involving the desired and the foreseeable as well as the foreseen will encourage teachers to examine their motives and practices as well as the *context* in which their teaching occurs so they may determine what sorts of outcomes they are hoping to achieve and what is likely to be the outcomes of their efforts. While no one can fully predict how students will react to a teacher's endeavors, it is important to remember that indoctrination does not occur, according to this analysis, unless students come to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner as a direct result of something the teacher does or fails to do. Knowing that students will come to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner regardless of what one does is *not* the same thing as knowing (or foreseeing) that students will hold beliefs uncritically as a direct result of something one has done.

To help educators and others better understand what sorts of endeavors are likely to lead to students holding beliefs in a non-truth-seeking fashion, I have laid out and discussed various educational factors that need to be examined. To reiterate these briefly, I argued that educators ought to look closely at their instructional methods, the content they are teaching, and the outcomes of their teaching. In addition, I

showed how useful and important it is for educators to examine the pedagogical, structural, and ideological contexts in which learning occurs. By engaging in this sort of reflective analysis, teachers can better determine how students will come to hold the beliefs taught them and thus be in a far better position to avoid indoctrination.

CHAPTER VII

EXPLORING THE NOTION OF SCHOOLS AS AGENTS OF INDOCTRINATION

Prior analyses of indoctrination focus exclusively on the individual teacher, discussing a teacher's methods, content, and the outcomes of an individual's teaching. Most of the discussion about intention and responsibility in this work has also been focused on the individual teacher. We readily talk about *persons* having intentions and finding persons responsible for actions taken intentionally. In this chapter, however, I depart from all other analyses. I take seriously that holding teachers responsible for indoctrination is not enough. We must recognize the important role that the school context plays in shaping student learning as well as teachers' intentions. I therefore open this analysis up to explore the possible value in characterizing indoctrination as something that not only individual teachers do but something that *schools* do as well.

I suggest that it may be beneficial to alter the definition of indoctrination offered earlier in this paper so that schools as well as individual teachers are viewed as potential indoctrinators. This new definition, then, reads as follows: *A school as well as a teacher*

indoctrinates when either or both intends to get students to hold p in a non-truth-seeking manner. This alternative and expanded definition of indoctrination is, like the prior definition, an *intentional* notion; thus, it is important to look at how we can make sense of *schools* and not just *persons* having intentions. This is a complex philosophical task and in this context I can only suggest a direction it might take and why it is important to do so. What I can do here, however, is make the best case for an analysis of indoctrination that recognizes schools as intentional agents.

Remembering that one of our aims in this dissertation is to provide a conception of indoctrination that helps diminish its occurrence in our schools, and recognizing that the school context plays a significant, sometimes even decisive, role in shaping student learning, it is important that schools, as well as teachers, reflect on their educational goals and on how the ideological, pedagogical, and structural context of the school will likely influence the manner in which students come to hold their beliefs. While neither teachers nor schools can *ensure* that students will hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner, there is much, however, that we can do. As was argued earlier, indoctrination causes significant harm. It seems reasonable, therefore, to require that we do whatever possible to avoid such harm. While we do not have an analysis that provides an unambiguous claim that schools can have intentions, given the nature of the risk of indoctrination, and given that there is much that we can do to

avoid it, we are best served by characterizing schools in such a way that they become recognizable agents of indoctrination.

Exploring the Possibility of Schools as Indoctrinators

Given my intentional analysis of indoctrination, it is imperative to show that it is possible for schools to have intentions. One way to demonstrate that it is reasonable to attribute intentionality to schools is by showing the significant impact that the context has on, not only student learning, but on teachers' intentions. If we can show that a school's context, whose influence lies largely outside the control of any individual teacher, can significantly thwart or shape teachers' intentions, we will have shown that schools play an important role in shaping the manner in which students are influenced by their teachers.

In the first part of this chapter, then, I illustrate how the school context affects both teachers' intentions as well as student learning. This analysis allows us to look beyond the individual classrooms for environmental factors that make it either quite difficult or fairly easy for teachers to indoctrinate. Yet it still assumes that, while there exists outside influences, indoctrination occurs within classrooms and it therefore falls on the individual teachers to take full responsibility for opposing indoctrination. I argue that, while teachers should take responsibility for thwarting indoctrination whenever possible and in any way they can, it

may also make sense to require a more thorough change in the school *context* than teachers can effect to prevent indoctrination from occurring in the school. In the latter part of this chapter, I push the analysis further and make a case for claiming that schools *themselves* are agents of indoctrination. To do this, I provide examples of schools being characterized as intentional agents – such examples are provided by legal cases of harassment and discrimination against schools. My aim here is to illustrate how attributing intentionality to educational institutions allows us a broader look at how students come to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner.

Contextual Influences on Student Learning and Teachers' Intentions

School policies, educational aims, traditions, and curricular options affect two crucial conditions of truth-seeking; they affect what assertions and beliefs are to be regarded as truth-apt *and* what constitutes the community of inquiry. So, even if schools *cannot* be said to have intentions, they (their policies, etc.) can seriously undermine and distort teachers' intentions to have students hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner and thus determine much of what are the foreseeable consequences of their efforts. To appreciate the extent to which an institution's context shapes its workers' intentions, I look to the literature on corporate intentionality and moral accountability. Schools, like

corporations, are institutions with highly organized structures, practices, policies, and goals. Thus, looking at how corporations are said to be sometimes responsible for the actions and even intentions of its employees is instructive in our aim to ascertain how schools may be responsible for teachers intending to get students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner.

I draw primarily on Larry May (1987) and Peter French (1979) to illustrate the considerable impact an institution's context has on shaping and determining the workers' intentions and actions. Each argues that the corporation not only influences employee intentionality; they also contend that the corporate influence is so significant that it is appropriate and reasonable to sometimes attribute a worker's intentions to the corporation rather than the individual person who committed the given act. While I find both May's and French's analyses valuable for their insights into the degree to which a corporation - and in our case, schools - can shape its members' intentions, I argue that schools can only *influence* but cannot take away or replace teachers' intentions.

Larry May (1987), in his work on corporate responsibility, suggests how we may understand the effect that the school's context has on teaching and learning. He describes an intersectional point between the individual and the institution:

the organizational structure has facilitated behavior which would not have occurred if the individuals had acted on their own intentions in the absence of the corporate decision-making structure, and which cannot be fully understood apart from this structure. (May, 1987: 70).

A school's organizational structure – the rules and practices of the school, the way the rules are created, and the manner in which they are enforced – not only shapes what teachers do in their classrooms, but it also influences the aims they set for their students. May shows us that we can best comprehend a teacher's actions when considering how her intentions are influenced by the context in which she works. We must, in other words, look at those intentions within the structural context in which they are developed.

When a teacher sets out to meet the demands and expectations placed upon her by the policies of the school, her individual intentions are molded by such policies. Her educational aims are largely determined by the rules with which she must comply. For May, when an employee's intentions are significantly shaped by the corporation's rules and procedures, it is reasonable to attribute such intentions to the corporation rather than the employee. Peter French (1979) would describe such intentions as "corporate-intentional." I proceed here to lay out French's argument for ascribing corporations with intentionality as it is instructive in highlighting the major impact that the school context has on student learning and teachers' intentions. I argue, however, that French has

failed to adequately show that when a corporation exerts even a dominating influence over a worker's intentions, the worker no longer acts in accordance with his own intentions. While his intentions may have *altered* due to what may be very coercive conditions, I argue that he still acts intentionally.

French, like May, argues that institutions such as the corporation can act intentionally. He asserts that corporations possess a highly structured hierarchy, clearly defined roles for each corporate position, and a set of explicitly stated policies, procedures, and goals. This "Corporate Internal Decision (CID)" structure, as French calls it, "is the requisite redescriptive device that licenses the predication of corporate intentionality" (French, 1979: 141). He argues that the CID structure, in effect, subordinates individual intentions and actions to those that meet with accepted standards of behavior, corporate policy, and are in line with the expectations of her/his particular place in the power hierarchy.

When an individual's actions comply with corporate policies and meet with corporate standards, French claims that the individual can be said to have acted "for corporate reasons, as corporate belief and so, in other words, as corporate intentional" (French, 1979: 145). Because employees must comply with corporate policies and work to meet corporate goals, an employee's intentions are altered and shaped by the CID structure. French provides the following example to illustrate how the

CID structure acts to “redescribe” employees’ actions as corporate-intentional.

Employees X, Y, and Z vote on whether the Gulf Oil Corporation will join a world uranium cartel. By the position that X, Y, and Z hold in the company, their votes will be the deciding factor in determining whether or not Gulf Oil joins the cartel. The employees are expected to read carefully the reports given them by various other employees and base their decision on all the information at their disposal. In this example, French seems to imply that X, Y, and Z are expected to act in the best interests of the corporation’s stated goals. He claims that even if one of them has reasons for voting in favor of the merger that are “inconsistent with established corporate policy” (French, 1979: 146), the vote is still a corporate decision because voting is consistent with stated policies and joining the cartel meets the goals of Gulf Oil. In short, X, Y, and Z’s voting is not best described as individual actions based on individual intentions. Rather, according to French, their voting is “redescribable” as a corporate decision because it meets with corporate policy and thus is done for corporate reasons and initiated by a corporate desire (and, I ought to add, is done with the foreseen and foreseeable outcome of meeting corporate goals). In other words, the decision was “corporate-intentional.”

There are some obvious parallels between French's characterization of corporations and our generally accepted views of schools. Like corporations, schools have clearly articulated policies, goals, and expectations as well as a firmly established and organized hierarchy of power where each person's role is well defined. Moreover, like corporations, individual employees in a school are expected to comply with the rules and procedures laid out in school policy, and they are expected to work toward meeting the prescribed educational goals. In fact, as with corporate employees, teachers are evaluated based on their ability to achieve pre-determined educational objectives and goals. If they fail to meet such goals and show no progress over time, they are often fired or seriously reprimanded in some other way. In other words, if teachers do not mold their intentions to comply with school demands and desires, their employment is likely to be terminated.

As with corporate employees, teachers cannot be said to act entirely of their own agency. Their intentions are, at least to some degree, subverted by the intentions (goals/desires and policies) of the school. For example, consider a teacher who wishes to delve into the assertion stated in the assigned textbook and supported by the school administration, other teachers, and many community members that the current U.S. foreign policy in Latin America benefits the working masses who reside in that part of the world. She desires to instruct her students to look into the

theory that the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia promotes the inhumane treatment of the landless poor in Latin America. Let us imagine that she is discouraged from pursuing her plans, perhaps by time constraints coupled with requirements to cover a long list of proscribed subject areas. She is therefore not afforded the opportunity to allow her students to discuss and critically assess the worth of the views professed in class. In this case, the teacher's intention of creating a thoughtful analysis and understanding of U.S. – Latin American relations is subverted by the school's curricular requirements and these requirements end up having a significant impact on not only what students come to believe about U.S. – Latin American relations, but how they hold these beliefs.

It seems, then, that employees of an institution do not always have the power to act as independent, autonomous agents – that is, as agents who are free to carry out their own intentions. Rather, often times, employees must carry out the intentions of the institution which are established and revealed in the rules, requirements, goals, and organizational power hierarchy of a company. As employees, teachers' individual intentions are necessarily influenced or circumvented by the pedagogical, structural, and ideological contexts of the school which largely determine what assertions are to be considered truth-apt and who belongs as part of the community of inquiry. The school context, then, if we adopt French's analysis, can be said to act in the same way as that

which French calls the CID structure of a corporation - which, to reiterate, is the "requisite redescriptive device that licenses the predication of corporate [or school] intentionality" (French, 1979: 141). If we accept French's argument, a teacher's intentions can be "redescribed" as the school's intention because a teacher's desires are formulated based on meeting school expectations, and the foreseeable student outcomes are, at least, significantly influenced by the context in which s/he works.

French's argument indicates that the corporation and not the teachers should be held *morally* responsible when the teachers' individual intentions are subverted by the school's intentions. David Silver (2006) also contends that corporations are blameworthy when employees' actions meet corporate demands. He states that "corporations can bear moral responsibility for their actions even if we grant that they lack bodies, minds, intentional states (such as beliefs and desires), and free wills" (Silver, 2006: 271). These arguments have merit as it does not seem reasonable to hold someone to account for actions that were, to a significant degree, coerced. However, showing that teachers are not *blameworthy* in certain circumstances does not necessarily demonstrate that their actions were not *intentional*. The school context certainly *influences*, it may even exact a *dominating* influence, on teachers' intentions. Yet, this only shows that the context *alters* their intentions so that they comply with the demands and policies of the school. It does not show that the school has *removed*

or *replaced* individual intentionality. I argue that teachers intend to follow or intend to depart from the rules, practices, traditions and goals of the school. Their actions are therefore intentional and are *not* better described as what French might call “school-intentional.”

Consider for example a teacher who is no longer allowed, in accordance with a new school policy, to have her first grade students read any books that illustrate acceptance of homosexuality. This teacher has taught *When Grown-Ups Fall in Love* by Barbara Lynn and Illustrated by Matthew Daniele, a book that shows some children with a mommy and daddy, some with two mommies, and some with two daddies. The teacher's intention was to help students who have gay parents feel accepted and to make any of her students who may later find that they are gay feel they are accepted. Because of the new school rule, however, the teacher has taken the book off her syllabus to avoid being reprimanded or even fired.

Although the teacher in this case had no intention of removing the book from her syllabus *prior* to the policy change, the new rule altered her intentions. French (1979) helps us see that the teacher should not be blamed, at least entirely, for her action because she was, to a certain extent, coerced. As Margaret Gilbert (2006) argues, “the less *free* an action is, the less blameworthy it is ... An *intentional* action need not be free or voluntary” (Gilbert, 2006: 97). French shows us that employees of a

school, who act in accordance with mandates and regulations, should not be, at least wholly, blamed for their actions. Yet, French fails to provide a strong enough case for showing that the teacher did not act intentionally, or that her intentionality was *replaced* by the intentions of the school.

French's analysis (1979) is useful, however, in that it highlights the importance of considering the school context when looking to understand how teachers' intentions and student learning is affected by school policies, procedures, the curriculum, decision-making structures, and educational goals and objectives. His work shows that, to identify indoctrination and develop programs that avert it, we must direct our attention not only to individual teachers' intentions but to the goals, practices, policies, and structures of the school. Teaching and learning, after all, do not occur in sealed off environments unaffected by outside influences. Each is strongly affected by the multiplicity of contextual factors in which they occur. If we are to avoid indoctrination, we must be willing to examine all the factors that nurture, sustain, and cause indoctrination as it is reasonable to consider. Recognizing that the pedagogical, structural, and ideological contexts of schools play a significant role in determining whether or not teachers indoctrinate provides us with more enriched insights into how we can best circumvent it.

Thus far, I have argued that, to avoid indoctrination, teachers must develop classroom practices that help interrupt or oppose any indoctrinary influences that occur in the school context. Their responsibility, as I have described it, lies within the confines of their classroom. In other words, I have not yet argued that teachers, or anyone else for that matter, ought to work toward altering the school context. However, if we are serious about averting indoctrination, we are best served by addressing *all* sources of indoctrination. Allowing a school's context to continue to nurture and sustain indoctrination, although teachers may be doing what they can to oppose the contextual impact on their students inside their classrooms, does not do a thorough enough job of rooting out or diminishing indoctrinary endeavors in our schools. If we can show that the school (i.e., the policies, traditions, curriculum, decision-making structures, etc.) prompts students to hold certain beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner, we need to expand our notion of indoctrination to include the school, and not just individual teachers, as an agent of indoctrination.

Because I have adopted an intentional analysis of indoctrination here, claiming that the school indoctrinates implies that the school can act as an intentional agent. As we have already seen, this has some complex theoretical implications; I explore these further in the next section. Specifically, I look at the work of Peter Velasquez (1983) to

illustrate some major objections raised in regards to ascribing institutions with intentionality. I address these objections by referring to some well documented legal cases to show the usefulness and theoretical strength in attributing educational institutions with intentionality. Finally, I draw upon Iris Marion Young's "Social Connection Model of Responsibility" (2004) and Barbara Applebaum's (2007) analysis of this theory to argue that we can and should hold persons responsible for altering the school context so as to diminish as best we can any existing indoctrinary elements.

Theoretical Implications of Ascribing Schools with Intentionality

Ascribing intentionality to schools has some serious theoretical implications. When we say that a *school* intends to get students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner, it is not clear to whom or what, precisely, we are attributing the intentionality. Common sense seems to indicate that *persons* and not schools intend actions. After all, what do we mean by a school intending something? Surely, as stated previously, we do not mean the school building. If we follow French (1979), we would mean the CID structure, or in our case, the multiple factors that make up the school context. Yet, how can structures or contexts have intentions? They can influence actions; they can even cause actions, but it is not

readily apparent how they can, *themselves*, act, let alone act intentionally.

Assigning intentionality to institutions, according to Velasquez (1983), is simply a way of "elliptically referring to those people in the corporation [or in our case, schools] who intentionally brought the act about through their direct bodily movements or who knowingly contributed to the act" (Velasquez, 1983: 126). Instead of blaming the school context or the school itself, then, Velasquez would have us say that those persons who knowingly contributed to the context, or failed to prevent it when they had the power to do so, intended students to hold beliefs uncritically. He claims that corporations "do not themselves originate intentions and because they do not themselves carry out intentions, corporate policies and procedures cannot be said to originate actions" (Velasquez, 1983: 121). Members of the corporation and not the corporation itself, according to Velasquez, both originate and carry out intentional actions. Thus, he asserts, only the individual members of the corporation can rightly be ascribed intentionality.

Velasquez makes a convincing argument. It is difficult to locate where exactly the intentions lie if we don't attribute the intentionality to persons. It is true, as Velasquez claims, that schools do not have a mind or body that itself can act intentionally. Yet the analogy between corporations and schools is not perfect and so we may not be able to

hold particular individuals accountable, as we may be able to with corporations, for actions that occur as a result of established policies, procedures, traditions, and expectations within schools. Granted, school administrators, like corporate CEOs, have tremendous say in establishing school policies. However, unlike CEOs, school administrators are often far more answerable to (and thus their intentions and actions are strongly influenced by the wishes, expectations and dictates of) school board members, community leaders, parents, and state and federal educational mandates. Thus, identifying a particular person or group of persons to which we can ascribe intentionality for the educational context created and maintained in a school is not as easily done as Velasquez suggests is possible for corporations.

While it is true that schools do not have minds, it may still be reasonable to talk about them acting intentionally in regards to indoctrination. As we have seen in the last section, the school policies, curriculum, decision-making structure, power hierarchy, norms, goals, and traditions often play an important role in deciding upon two crucial determinants of truth seeking: which beliefs ought to be considered truth-apt and who ought to belong in the community of inquiry. Further, the school context is made and continually influenced by a complex network of demands made by a wide range of groups and individuals including: parents, business owners, community members, local and national

mandates, as well as the various professional and support staff of the school. Although it is true that administrators have the authority to create policy and set curriculum, they are, to reiterate, answerable to, and thus their decisions are importantly shaped by, the school board, state and federal requirements, and even, to some degree, the interests and needs of their students and teachers. It is difficult, then, to point to any particular individual or group as the cause of indoctrinary endeavors that originate from the school context. Because we cannot identify any one person or group of persons for creating and sustaining an indoctrinary school context, it seems reasonable to point to the context itself – or, rather, to the *school* itself.

There has been a good deal of philosophical analysis on moral agency of persons and of collectives. Very little, however, is written on *institutional* agency or institutional intentionality. While Velasquez (1983) and some others (see Denis G. Arnold 2006; Larry May 1987; Peter A. French 1979) discuss *corporate* intentionality there is nothing in the philosophical literature on *school* intentionality and, as we have just seen, schools are distinct from corporations in some significant ways. It is for this reason that I turn to the literature on school law where we do find examples of the law attributing intentionality to schools. More specifically, I examine legal cases of harassment brought against schools as they illustrate how ascribing intentionality to schools rather than to particular

individuals is both possible and of practical use. I do not mean to appeal to the law as proof that we can and should ascribe intentionality to schools. Rather, my use of legal examples is meant to *illustrate* how we can and do sometimes hold schools responsible for what we deem bad outcomes even when we cannot attribute intentionality and responsibility to individual persons within the school context for these “outcomes”.

Schools have been held liable for harassment under both Title IX and the Fourteenth Amendment. The latter of these two, however, provides us with a clearer illustration of how we can and sometimes do attribute intentionality to schools. In the cases of *Adickes v. S.H. Dress and Co.*, *Randle v. City of Aurora*, and *Lankford v. City of Hobart (Youth and Schools, 2003)*, a school district (or municipality) can be charged with harassment under the Fourteenth Amendment if the harassment proves to be “so permanent and well settled as to constitute a ‘custom or usage’ with the force of law” (*Youth and Schools, 2003: 32*). These last cases indicate that a school is liable if the *context* nurtures and encourages harassment to the extent that it plays a very significant role in causing and sustaining harassment. Thus, if there is a long history of students displaying photographs from the *Victoria Secret* magazine on their lockers, for example, or persons displaying in common areas posters of scantily dressed women in sexual poses, or sexually inappropriate illustrations in

some of the teachers and secretaries' offices, this may constitute harassment to such an extent that it becomes normalized.

In such cases, the school context itself is seen as the agent of harassment. Holding responsible each individual who displays inappropriate images does not get at either the problem of the school policies that allow such displays or the attitudes of all personnel responsible for intervening or opposing the displayed material. Moreover, holding each individual responsible does not recognize the influence that such a context has on any given individual's intentions. For example, if person A has no intention to offend and would never consider affixing such images to his locker, after seeing that such practice is pervasive and considered normal, he may alter his original intentions and join in with what his friends and many of the others are doing so he feels that he fits in. Thus, if there is a consistent and known history of ignoring harassment to the extent that such behavior is not only tolerated but even encouraged, then an individual teacher or student, say, would be seen as acting in accordance with the unstated custom of the school.

While it may be argued that such practices would appear to be unlikely in today's schools in regards to sexual harassment, it does not seem so unlikely in regards to indoctrination. As we saw in the previous chapter, the ideological, pedagogical, and structural contexts of a school can and do nurture and sustain indoctrination. It would seem

reasonable, therefore, to ascribe responsibility to a school if it can be shown that indoctrinary endeavors are so prevalent and customary as to constitute tradition or "the force of law."

The law on sexual harassment as it is applied under the Fourteenth Amendment illustrates for us how in cases where indoctrination is occurring and there are no identifiable persons responsible, we can sensibly hold the *school* responsible. If we claim that the school context is responsible for indoctrination, we are, on my analysis, claiming that it is likely that the outcome of its influence is that students will hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner. Through seeing that indoctrination is a likely outcome of the school context and the school could have acted to prevent such an outcome and did not, we are implying that the school acted intentionally. Ascribing intentionality to the school encourages those persons who play a role in developing and maintaining the school context to reflect on their desired educational goals and on the likely effects the contextual influences will have on how students will come to hold their beliefs. In short, although the law may hesitate to identify any particular person or group of persons associated with the school as responsible for overseeing the implications of providing one sort of context versus another, as with sexual harassment, holding the school responsible or liable, effectively directs attention to the foreseeable and preventable

consequences of cultivating one sort of context vs another within the school.

Even if we cannot say that schools have intentions in a full blown sense, I believe I have made enough of a case to show that, because schools are *significantly* involved in determining how students come to hold beliefs, we need to bring their role into the picture. Teachers act in accordance with school policies and procedures; their actions, in other words, are done for reasons that these policies and procedures provide. Additionally, the pedagogical, structural, and ideological contexts substantially influence student learning and teachers are not always in a position to counter this influence. Teacher's intentions, then, are significantly subverted by what I've argued we can usefully call the intentionality of the school which exists in the school context. Further, making teachers aware of the contextual influences on their students' learning outcomes aids teachers in developing the best way to avoid indoctrination. Finally, indoctrinary influences can and do exist within the school context itself and are outside the control of any one person. Thus, even on an intentional analysis of indoctrination such as I am proposing, attributing responsibility for indoctrination, in some cases, to schools rather than individuals makes sense because there is legal precedent illustrating it is possible to attribute intentions to institutions such as schools. Further, it seems to me, doing so may be required if we are to recognize the

considerable role that the school plays in affecting how students come to hold beliefs.

Altering our notion of indoctrination to include schools as sources of indoctrination requires that we offer a new definition. Thus, I propose that a revised definition of indoctrination reads as follows: *A teacher or a school indoctrinates when s/he or it intends to get students to hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner.* Thus, just as we would hold teachers responsible for opposing indoctrinary influences and altering any indoctrinary endeavors that exist within their classrooms, we must hold all persons who are responsible for and who have the power and authority to effect changes in the pedagogical, structural, and ideological contexts of a school responsible for making appropriate changes to the school context to help diminish indoctrinary influences.

Claiming that schools themselves indoctrinate leads to an interesting and important query. Given that I've argued that all beliefs are, in principle, open to inquiry, i.e. many more beliefs are truth-apt than is generally acknowledged, we must consider whether schools indoctrinate if they exclude or omit particular views and beliefs from the curriculum. In this query there is an acknowledgement that the school curriculum can strongly influence truth seeking activity in two ways: (1) It can exclude particular views from being considered truth-apt, i.e. declare them or treat them as the sorts of beliefs that are not open to inquiry and,

(2) It can altogether exclude certain perspectives from the community of inquiry. Because schools cannot possibly *inquire* into all views or teach all views and perspectives, there must be a way for them to exclude some without putting themselves at serious risk of indoctrination according to the alternative analysis offered and defended here; at least if this analysis is to be considered seriously plausible and useful.

It may be helpful to clarify how the proposed analysis can meet the challenge by first addressing what it means to say that beliefs are in principle open to inquiry. It means, simply, that all beliefs are regarded as fallible; and this characterization does not *entail* that all beliefs need to be inquired into because it does not entail that all beliefs are epistemically equal in all respects. They are not. All beliefs may, *in principle*, be open to inquiry but some beliefs are considered "settled" by the relevant community of experts, meaning they have been subjected to and have withstood extensive inquiry into their truth. Others are "unsettled," meaning they continue to be debated among scholars and members of the relevant community of inquiry. Others still are considered false, erroneous, or without sufficient supporting evidence by the relevant community of inquirers. In short, different beliefs have quite varied epistemological status. To put the point succinctly, the fact that all beliefs are in principle open to inquiry does not entail that any challenge to a settled belief is an epistemologically good or worthy challenge, one worth

inquiring into. Thus, to avoid indoctrination, schools do not have to admit each and every belief into the curriculum.

Which beliefs are admitted to the curriculum for teaching and for investigation will be determined by many factors as schools have a variety of purposes and educational goals they seek to achieve. Given that we regard schools as institutions charged with the responsibility of initiating students into different forms of knowledge, students, it will be obvious, should learn enough settled beliefs and the reasons for their settledness to be knowledgeable in the various disciplines or subjects they study; they should also know what methods are employed to develop knowledge within that sort of discipline. Further, by the time they graduate, schools should ensure that students should probably know the best most serious criticisms of certain well established tenets within the discipline as well as critiques of the discipline itself so that they know how to inquire knowledgably about the subjects under study.

I do not here mean to take a side in the debates about whether there are distinct forms of knowledge or how many there may be, or whether or not the disciplines generally taught in liberal education represent them. Nor do I mean to express a position on the question of whether schools should teach disciplines or subjects. The point I make about the epistemological criterion for inclusion and exclusion can be made without taking sides in either of these debates. My point is that one

of the criteria for making curricular choices, if we are to avoid indoctrination, needs to be epistemological. However, schools often have competing purposes – for example, along with wanting to cultivate knowledge and understanding, they also want to make children morally good, to create a work force of a certain sort for the state, to develop citizens suited to take on the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy, and so forth. Thus, school districts may want to employ criteria other than epistemological ones to determine not only the curriculum but also *who* should determine the curriculum.

Teaching truth-seeking is only one of many goals and purposes schools have and it is not my intention here to argue that it ought to be the only goal or purpose they should have. However, what I do argue, given the moral harm associated with indoctrination, is that the avoidance of indoctrination is a moral side constraint operating on schools in their pursuit of other goals. Whatever else teachers and schools are doing to educate students, whatever other tasks they may be engaged in, they are not to intend in the strong sense that students hold beliefs in a non-truth-seeking fashion.

There is no simple answer for what schools need to include and exclude in the curriculum to reduce their risk of indoctrination. The particularities of the situation and social context are relevant, including what students do believe in a non-truth-seeking manner or are inclined to

or most likely to believe in a non-truth-seeking manner; and this analysis cannot, in the abstract, provide a blueprint for every case. It even may be that it is not possible for school districts to entirely avoid indoctrination, given other aims or purposes they choose to adopt. No *analysis* of indoctrination can *guarantee* its non-occurrence. However, what analyses can do, and what this intentional analysis of indoctrination formulated as it is in terms of truth-seeking does do, is provide clearer guidelines for determining the occurrence of indoctrination, the costs of it, and how to make curricular choices that reduce the risk of it.

If we are serious about averting indoctrination, we are best served by addressing *all* sources of indoctrination. Allowing a school's context to continue to nurture and sustain indoctrination, although teachers may be doing what they can to oppose the contextual impact on their students inside their classrooms, does not do a thorough enough job of rooting out or diminishing indoctrinary endeavors in our schools. We have shown that the school (i.e., the policies, traditions, curriculum, decision-making structures, etc.) prompts students to hold certain beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner by its major role in determining what counts as truth-apt assertions and who belongs in the community of inquiry. Arguing that we cannot hold any particular person or persons responsible for influences that arise outside of the school context and therefore lay outside any given individual's control leaves us to determine how we can hold

anyone morally responsible for addressing and opposing such influences. We need a theory of moral responsibility that will compel all persons who have a significant impact on the nature of the school context to work toward altering indoctrinary contextual elements.

We must be careful here. It is important to develop a moral theory that holds persons *responsible* for averting and avoiding indoctrination but does not hold individuals morally *culpable* for cases of indoctrination which occur for reasons that lie outside the control of any individual person or group of persons – cases, that is, in which indoctrination occurs due to contextual conditions. Iris Marion Young (2004) offers such a theory. Her “social connection model” holds persons of privilege *responsible* but not morally *culpable* for racist and oppressive structures.

According to Young, we need a theory of moral responsibility that accounts for persons' participation in oppressive structures “in which individual contributions are impossible to disentangle” (Young, 2004). Young's alternative model of moral responsibility is meant to be useful in cases where, she claims, the consequences of any given individual's behavior are unintentional. Her notion of “intentional,” however, is different than the one used in this dissertation. Young seems to define an intentional outcome as that which occurs as a result of what one desires. Thus, one only *intends* to push poor black families out of their homes due to increased rents when one's behavior is motivated by the *desire* to

effect such an outcome. Because most privileged whites do not act out of such desires, and because their actions are part of a structural system that encourages them purchasing property in certain areas that can and often does economically force the working class poor out of their homes, she does not want to hold the privileged in these sorts of cases morally accountable for their actions. She does, however, want to hold them morally *responsible*. In other words, she wants to morally compel them to take what actions they can to try and alter the oppressive structures.

Barbara Applebaum's (2007) analysis of Young's theory is instructive here as it provides a clear illustration of how we can apply Young's model to students. Applebaum shows that well-meaning white students can, and often do, further entrench racist attitudes and engage in racially oppressive behavior by acting in accordance with culturally accepted norms, practices, and traditions. She asserts that racism is, to a significant extent, a product of structural processes that are played out, in part, in our culture's institutions. To help alleviate the problem of racism, Applebaum employs Young's model to develop an emancipatory pedagogy whose goal is not, in Young's word, to "blame, punish, or seek redress from those who did it, but rather to enjoin those who participate by their actions in the process of collective action to change it" (Applebaum, 2007: 464). For Applebaum, finding a moral theory of responsibility that does not seek to assign blame but *compels* persons to

take action against the problem of racism suits her aim of finding a model that supports her notion of white complicity as being characterized by behavior that results largely from acting out long established cultural traditions, habits, norms and expectations. In other words, she claims that there are often no particular persons to whom we can assign blame for white complicity when whites are merely conforming to standard and accepted norms. Yet, to stop or help diminish racism, she argues, we need to *compel* persons to alter these oppressive structures and modes of accepted behavior.

Indoctrination, like white complicity in racism, can also occur due to reasons that lie beyond the control of any individual person or group of persons. It can occur due to the structural, pedagogical, and ideological contexts of a school which are the result of a complex set of factors to which no person or persons can be blamed. Yet, similar to Applebaum's aims for diminishing racism, if we wish to reduce and work toward abolishing indoctrination in our schools, we need to encourage and morally compel all persons who have a role in formulating and maintaining a school's context to work toward opposing those contextual elements that encourage and help sustain indoctrination. Thus, an analysis of responsibility which avoids assignation of blame yet illuminates possibilities of action in opposing racist structures, is helpful in motivating whites to take action against racism.

Concluding Remarks

To be able to foresee likely student outcomes and to address indoctrinary elements of a school's context, educators must not only recognize the part that the school context plays in indoctrination, they must also take responsibility for working toward opposing and averting it both inside classrooms and in the school context itself. Defining indoctrination as something that both schools as well as teachers do is a reasonable theoretical claim. It is adequately (if not thoroughly) supported by legal cases of attributing intentionality to schools. It is also an importantly *useful* notion as it allows for more refined judgments within the nexus of causes that both promote and enable indoctrination thus equipping educators with an enriched understanding of how they can best avoid it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PAYOFF: ILLUSTRATING THE PRACTICAL USEFULNESS OF THE ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF INDOCTRINATION

I have thus far in this dissertation laid out what I take to be a better alternative analysis of indoctrination. To gain a better understanding of how this alternative conception can be of practical use, in this chapter I provide detailed examples of two different teachers, Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora. Both teachers work in the same school and both teach the same course, Peace Studies. I keep the school and course the same to illustrate how this alternative conception is able to distinguish between even subtle differences in teaching. I select a course in peace studies in order to return to and address one of the concerns that first prompted this work – that peace educators are particularly vulnerable to the charge of indoctrination although, when it is levied, it is not clear precisely what this charge entails and how best to answer it.

The first teacher, Mr. Dubois, for the most part, is an excellent teacher. Yet, in regards to a particular set of beliefs (i.e., about the superiority of non-violent action over war), he does not do enough to diminish the chance that his students will come to hold these beliefs in a

non-truth-seeking manner. His is an interesting case because for the most part, he encourages his students to hold their beliefs in a rationally deliberative and thoughtfully reflective manner. Further, because he is such a likeable and engaging teacher, his students tend to accept the beliefs he professes, particularly if he professes them as if they were settled. The second teacher, Ms. Sandora, whose teaching is very similar to Mr. Dubois's, takes steps to avoid indoctrination even when teaching beliefs she too wants her students to accept as true. Hers is an interesting case because she illustrates the skillful means of teaching students to hold beliefs that she herself advocates in a truth-seeking way. To set the stage and characterize somewhat the situation of their teaching, I first provide details of the school's ideological, pedagogical, and structural contexts. I then describe both teachers' educational efforts, and analyze them employing the alternative conception of indoctrination I have developed.

The School Context

The high school where Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora teach, Johnson Memorial High School, is what some people might describe as "fairly progressive." A little more than half the Social Studies and English instructors make a concerted and sophisticated effort to teach from the perspectives of the disenfranchised and oppressed groups in societies throughout the world. In addition to the Peace Studies courses, for

example, the Social Studies department offers world cultures courses taught from the perspective of the oppressed native peoples; it also teaches an American Studies course that focuses on such issues as white privilege, gender and sex oppression, and U.S. ethnocentrism. The English department offers a course on Women's Literature, an ecology literature course, and an American Literature course that emphasizes a broad range of culturally diverse American authors. In addition, at least one of the biology courses is taught as a course on sustainability. More conventionally, the remaining courses in English, Social Studies, Science, and the courses taught in the World Language, Business, and Math departments are fairly traditional – teaching students beliefs widely accepted in mainstream society.

The ideological context in this school, then, is fairly mixed. However, students can conceivably graduate without taking any courses, for example, that teach the less conventional perspectives. Teachers who profess more conventional notions versus those who espouse more marginalized views are readily identified by the students. Thus, students may, and often do, select courses based not only on subject matter but on the teacher as well. Peace Studies courses are largely made up of students who have "liberal" ideals and are at least somewhat familiar with the perspectives and values advanced in the class. Yet, there is always a handful or more of students who hold more conventional beliefs and

ideals but are in Peace Studies because their friend is taking it or because it is offered at a convenient time. Some even take the class to “straighten out” all the “liberal hippies” who are in the course. While both instructors teach the same particular content and both profess similar views about the morality of employing violent means to attain our ends, as we shall see, the content of what they teach is not what is at issue when we characterize only one of these teachers as indoctrinary on my analysis.

In addition to a fairly diverse ideological context, the pedagogical context is also relatively diverse. Most of the teachers at Johnson Memorial employ a mix of instructional methods – some lecturing, some in-class small and large group activities, some question and answer sessions, and some lively student discussions. In all these courses, teachers generally describe what they are doing as providing students with important information (what we might call teaching settled beliefs) that will allow students to better understand their cultural traditions, to succeed with their applications to higher education, and be prepared for the jobs they seek in the workforce, as well as, yes, to deliberate over the truth of the claims they teach. Whether they indoctrinate or not requires careful scrutiny of not only what they desire, but the manner in which their students are likely to hold their beliefs given the teacher’s educational efforts within the particular context in which they work. Generally speaking, though, most teachers at Johnson Memorial encourage their

students to think carefully about the beliefs discussed in class so they may understand not only what claims they make about the world but what sort of evidence supports these beliefs. In short, most teachers want their students to hold beliefs based on good reasons and be open to questioning such beliefs if new and opposing evidence should arise.

While the pedagogical and ideological contexts are fairly mixed and diverse, the structural context of Johnson Memorial is quite typical, it seems, for U.S. public high schools. Students are encouraged to participate in their Student Council and on various student committees. However, these groups are only permitted limited decision-making power: for example, they may decide when the next student dance will be, how to raise money for their class, which faculty member to honor in the yearbook, and what to select for their senior class gift. Students are discouraged by administrators and most of the faculty from expressing their views on educational matters such as curriculum choices, assessment methods, and on policy matters such as dress codes, rules of conduct for students, and discipline procedures. In this school, then, students do not have a venue for and are dissuaded from taking part in the sort of decision making processes that affect their daily educational experiences at school. In short, the structural context in this school operates in a top-down, hierarchical manner affording students little to no opportunity to engage in meaningful decision making processes.

Mr. Dubois's Class

Mr. Dubois has been teaching at Johnson Memorial High School for 12 years. A well liked teacher by the students and respected among his colleagues, he is easily recognizable in his button down green or beige corduroy shirt adorned with one of the many striped ties he owns and a pair of faded and well worn blue jeans. In class, he sits casually and comfortably on his desk, one foot on the ground the other swinging easily just above the floor and smoothing down with one hand the few hairs remaining on his head. A smile plays on his lips as he welcomes his students to another day of Peace Studies, a course he is committed to as he believes it plays a small but important role in helping the world become a more just and peaceful place.

Two of Mr. Dubois's major goals in this course are to teach his students about a side of history often overlooked or opposed in the more mainstream U.S. History courses, and to teach them about the history, theory, and techniques of peace movements. He works hard to create an engaging learning environment, and his enthusiasm for the subject is infectious as many of his students get caught up in his excitement about the information taught and the ideas they discuss. In addition, Mr. Dubois assigns many creative projects where students can show what they have learned in a manner that builds on their strengths. For example, artistic students develop projects that utilize their artistic talents such as poetry

books, murals, and illustrated songs. Mr. Dubois also brings in guest speakers, shows interesting videos, and engages students in group discussions about the issues raised in class.

Students in this course are encouraged to discuss and debate many unsettled beliefs and assertions because Mr. Dubois feels it is an effective way to get students to think about the various arguments and perspectives regarding these views. So, for example, after seeing a video on the history of Jews in America, students debate over whether Jews should have been welcomed into the black U.S. Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Some students argue that they should not have been allowed to participate because, at the time, many blacks wanted the movement to consist only of African-Americans so it maintained its focus on issues of oppression specific to blacks in the U.S. Other students argue that Jews were in a particularly good position as co-sufferers of oppression to empathize and thus fight with the blacks.

Mr. Dubois sits on his perch at the front of the room and oversees these discussions, often staying silent so students have the opportunity to voice their own views. He occasionally interjects with a comment such as: "Ah, excellent point, Jessica. What do the rest of you think?" to get others involved in the conversation if no one seems to be ready to speak. On occasion, he intervenes to introduce a relevant perspective or idea if he feels it is being overlooked. Thus, students may argue over whether the

New York Times is predominantly liberal or conservative, and Mr. Dubois may suggest that it is neither – that it errs on the side of the current administration whether they are democrats or republicans.

For many unsettled beliefs, then, Mr. Dubois encourages his students to engage in lively discussions and hopes and expects that his students will become so involved in the issues being discussed that they will think more deeply about their beliefs and those raised by others in class. If asked, Mr. Dubois would say that he wants his students to eventually adopt the view that is best supported by the evidence. For now, though, with many unsettled beliefs, he recognizes that there is much more for them to learn about these beliefs and thus, they ought to continue to think about them and look more into the evidence available regarding these beliefs.

With settled beliefs, Mr. Dubois may allow some discussion, but he usually tells his students what the experts claim to be true and, time permitting, gives them the substantiating reasons. Thus, if students start to argue over whether France's economic condition played a significant causal role in the French Revolution, Mr. Dubois may allow for enough discussion to hear what a student may say in contrast to such a view. Typically, however, he tells his students that historians overwhelmingly agree that, while there are many factors that led to the Revolution, France's poor economic state and inequitable tax distribution was an important factor in the underclass revolt.

The classroom dialogue over settled beliefs is fairly limited as students are taught that they cannot discuss every idea raised in class and thus, while they may take up inquiry regarding settled beliefs on their own or in their other courses, for the sake of time, discussions will be encouraged only with beliefs generally considered to be unsettled. The classroom dialogue over unsettled beliefs, however, is lively and thought provoking with Mr. Dubois running up to the board to quickly write down a phrase, word, or idea that his students have raised, exclaiming, "Yes. Good. Keep going!" in order to keep the discussion both focused and moving along. Mr. Dubois, however, does not encourage such debate and independent thinking when it comes to assertions about the moral and practical superiority of non-violent action over the practice of war. For Mr. Dubois, such assertions are settled. He thus makes it implicitly clear to his students that there is no reasonable alternative to the view that war is morally and practically unjustifiable. He advocates a strict pacifist view and he provides many good reasons, arguments, and a great deal of evidence to support his view.

Although Mr. Dubois provides good reasons for his beliefs about the viability of non-violence and its advantages over war, he does not teach his students to inquire into any of the counter arguments and reasons put forth by scholars and experts on these matters. Students in Mr. Dubois's class learn what Mr. Dubois believes and they learn the good reasons for

his beliefs. Because his students generally like him, trust that he speaks as an expert on his subject, and respect his commitment and love of his subject, they rarely question or challenge such beliefs. Thus, students do not typically learn to critically consider the beliefs raised in class about war and non-violence in light of the available evidence. In short, Mr. Dubois does not provide his students with the opportunity to settle *these* beliefs for themselves. So, a discussion about the Iraq war looks something like the following.

When a student, Keon, says that the Iraq war is illegal and immoral, Mr. Dubois points to him, smiles and says, "Yes, very good, Keon! It's illegal because the U.S. and Britain's preemptive invasion in Iraq violated UN conventions, and it's immoral because we are killing thousands of innocent civilians in a war that never should have begun." When another student, Bryn, objects and says that the U.S. *should* have invaded Iraq because it got rid of the tyrant, Saddam Hussein, and will bring democracy and freedom to Iraq, Mr. Dubois says, "Well, that's a common enough belief, Bryn, but you should know that one of the major reasons that the U.S. invaded Iraq is to gain access to their oil as Iraq has one the largest oil reserves in the world and the U.S. did not have any rights to it before the invasion." Mr. Dubois does not lose the enthusiasm in these discussions that he shows in the student debates over what he considers unsettled beliefs. In fact, Mr. Dubois still smiles, still shows his love and

commitment to the subject, and still treats his students with kindness and respect. While he makes every effort to not have anyone feel badly for voicing their beliefs, he is careful to point out where they went wrong in their thinking when they express views that oppose or challenge the view that war is unjustified and immoral. Thus, though his students enjoy his class and are often encouraged to express their own views on many ideas and beliefs taught, they are, we might predict, subtly discouraged from speaking as openly and freely about beliefs that challenge the view that war is immoral and unjustified. So, in this example, students do not learn that although there is some good reason to think one cause of the U.S. invasion of Iraq is control over the oil resources of that country, this is not incompatible with thinking the US also had interests in toppling a dictator and building a more sympathetic climate for democracy. Nor do students learn to inquire into the authoritative status of UN conventions.

Mr. Dubois believes that his students are free to choose which views to adopt because they are exposed to differing and opposing beliefs from different teachers. He doesn't think he needs to spend the little time he has with his students discussing more conventional and generally accepted ideas about morally acceptable usages of war because students are taught these views in many of their other classes and are exposed to them in the mainstream media. He wants to spend what time he has with his students teaching them his alternative views and their

supporting reasons as well as the arguments against their opposing, more conventional notions.

The alternative conception of indoctrination I've advanced focuses our attention on Mr. Dubois's intentions. To try to get an accurate reading of his intentions it is useful, helpful, to look at the content of his course, his instructional methods, and the consequences of his teaching all within the pedagogical, ideological and structural context of his school. His Peace Studies course teaches highly controversial claims - such as, there are realistic alternatives to war for settling national and international disputes and opposing even severe acts of injustice. It is not likely, therefore, that students will adopt his claims as unequivocally true given the marginalized nature of the views he teaches and given that they are continually exposed to counter arguments and opposing perspectives and beliefs throughout their lives.

It may be worth noting here that if Mr. Dubois taught more conventional ideas and beliefs - such as the belief that the U.S. bombing of Japan during WWII was justified as it ended the war quickly and thus saved lives in the long run - and taught them as if they were settled, his students would be far less likely to question such views as they are beliefs that are rarely challenged in other courses or in mainstream thinking. Teachers of more conventional beliefs and ideas, then, need to take particular and deliberate steps in interfering in the natural tendency of

students to accept what their teachers tell them as true. Mr. Dubois is very aware that the subject he teaches is highly controversial and that he can reasonably expect that students will naturally question his views with the counter arguments they've grown up hearing and believing. He thus feels it unnecessary to spend time having students read and discuss opposing views in class. However, as I've argued elsewhere in this dissertation, students do not naturally acquire views with the good reasons that there may be for them, nor do they challenge views necessarily for good reasons; in short, *unless students are taught and encouraged to engage in rational deliberation of various and opposing claims, they will be unlikely to do so*. And so as for Mr. Dubois, however much he affords students the (good) reasons for some views and presents (good) arguments against other views, we can not yet be reassured that he is teaching his students, or that his students are learning in other classes, to engage in rational deliberation themselves over the truth of the views he professes as settled but which in fact are unsettled. Although we may feel confident that Mr. Dubois knows how to, we are not yet assured that *his students* know how to seek the truth about the matters under consideration and learn to settle such beliefs for themselves. Because Mr. Dubois's students are not taught to hold beliefs in a truth-seeking manner about war and non-violence that Mr. Dubois asserts in class, we can reasonably foresee that they are likely to choose what to believe about these assertions based on considerations

other than reasons, evidence, and arguments. They may, for example, make choices based on loyalty to their family's beliefs or based on their emotional attachment to a particular teacher, or indeed on their aversion to this particular teacher.

Although Mr. Dubois's students can provide reasons for the beliefs they acquire in his class about war and non-violence, we cannot reasonably expect them to hold these beliefs *because* of the reasons, nor can we expect that they will likely question these beliefs in the face of new and opposing good evidence against them. Now, to be sure, this is a hazard of the profession. Anyone undertaking to teach students beliefs knows the possibility, indeed the likelihood exists that students will hold beliefs based on all kinds of irrelevant considerations. The question is whether what the teacher does increases this likelihood or diminishes it. In regards to assertions he makes about war and non-violent action, Mr. Dubois does little to interfere with this probable consequence of teaching, although he does an excellent job interfering with this probable outcome in regards to the other beliefs he teaches. Thus, if he handles the beliefs about war and non-violence similarly to the way he handles other unsettled beliefs, Mr. Dubois could avoid indoctrinating his students into these beliefs.

Mr. Dubois does many things well: he engages his students in interesting class discussions, provides meaningful readings from which the

students learn much and enjoy, and he provides a great deal of information of the sort that students may not be exposed to in mainstream society and in courses that teach more conventional notions and perspectives. My concern with Mr. Dubois is that, although he does not *desire* that his students hold views in a non-truth-seeking fashion, he is at risk of effecting such an outcome with respect to his assertions about war and non-violence. Thus, by the analysis of indoctrination I'm proposing in this work, we can say that it is likely that Mr. Dubois is indoctrinating the peace values and assertions he professes in class. I say likely because my analysis leaves it open for Mr. Dubois to respond appropriately by pointing to what he thinks he does to get students to both see the professed indoctrinary assertions as truth apt and to acquire the skills needed to inquire into their truth status, i.e. what he does to interrupt what he can foresee are likely outcomes of his teaching given his knowledge of the context and so forth.

In Mr. Dubois's case the alternative analysis of indoctrination enables us to recognize even fairly subtle indications of possible indoctrination. Further, in the case of identifying and addressing indoctrination by an individual teacher, it shows that we need to examine the teacher's instructional methods, the student outcomes, and the pedagogical, ideological, and structural contexts to have a clear enough indication of the indoctrinary intent. In the case of Mr. Dubois we see

that, given the context in which he works, his students do not come to his class prepared to adopt a truth-seeking approach to the views he espouses, or at least not all his students do, and likely most do not. Thus, because he does not take the time to instruct them to do so in regard to the particular beliefs he cares so much about, it is quite likely that they will come to hold these beliefs in a non-truth-seeking way. This analysis really presses teachers (as well as teacher educators and pre-service teachers) to examine their intentions and attend to the school context. In other words, it prompts educators to look at what they *hope* to achieve and what it is they are *likely* to achieve given the particular context in which they work.

Ms. Sandora's Class

Ms. Sandora teaches in the same school and teaches the same course as Mr. Dubois. Thus, the ideological, pedagogical, and structural contexts in which she teaches are the same as with Mr. Dubois. What is different, as we shall see, are her intentions regarding how students hold beliefs about war and non-violence. Like Mr. Dubois, Ms. Sandora believes that teaching Peace Studies will help students adopt more peaceful attitudes and work toward creating a more just and non-violent world. She too provides her students with perspectives, values, attitudes and beliefs they have rarely if ever encountered in their more mainstream

courses. Furthermore, her students enjoy her class as they find the readings and lectures interesting, and they enjoy the discussions they have in class. Finally, like Mr. Dubois, Ms. Sandora spends very little time teaching students views and perspectives that oppose those advocated by peace scholars because she, like Mr. Dubois, reasons that students are exposed to such opposing views a great deal in their other courses and in the mainstream media.

Unlike Mr. Dubois, however, Ms. Sandora treats assertions about war and non-violence as unsettled. Thus, in her class discussions, students are expected to not only express their thoughts and ideas about such beliefs, they are encouraged to inquire into the reasons supporting these beliefs as well as some of the best opposing arguments regarding them. I raise two similar examples to those discussed in Mr. Dubois's case and show how Ms. Sandora handles her students' comments in class about war and peace differently than does Mr. Dubois.

Ms. Sandora, like Mr. Dubois, is a well liked teacher. Although her dress is more modern and stylish, she has a similarly casual yet enthusiastic demeanor with her students. The desks in her class are arranged in one big circle and she sits at a different student desk each day within the circle so she can, as she says, "Look at her students from a different perspective each day." She jokes with them that she likes to spread the joy by allowing each a turn to sit next to her. At first her students think it a

bit odd that she sits among them, but soon come to see that she genuinely wants to hear their ideas and give them the respect they deserve by being a member of the discussion and not, in her words, “an overpowering authoritarian leader.” Although her manner is easy, she demands that her students take these discussions seriously, preparing fully for them the night before, listening attentively when others speak, and contributing with sincere and honest comments about what they truly think: that is, what they genuinely find confusing, disagreeable, interesting, mistaken, or right on the mark about the subject or issue at hand. For most discussions, Ms. Sandora’s students act in a similar way to Mr. Dubois’s. The difference occurs in the classroom dialogue about beliefs regarding the moral and practical superiority of non-violence over war. And this is where we see how Mr. Dubois can do a better job of engaging his students in such discussions so as to help ensure that his students adopt beliefs in a truth-seeking manner.

On the first or second day of the course, Ms. Sandora engages her students in an activity that she hopes will get them to begin to see the beauty and importance of adopting an open-minded and truth-seeking attitude toward ideas and beliefs that will be raised in class. She hands out to each student a manila colored, card stock, 8 ½ x 11 inch sheet of paper. She asks that her students cut out holes of varying sizes in the paper, some in the shape of triangles, some in circles, and some in

squares. She also asks that her students make sure that they leave over half the paper without any cut outs in it but that the holes are scattered across the paper. Some students take to the task with the utmost care, slowly sketching out the shapes with a pencil before taking up the scissors. Other students simply attack the paper with the scissors and start cutting rough approximations of the shapes asked for. When they are all done, Mr. Sandora puts her own paper with the shapes cut out at arms length in front of her face and asks the students to do the same. "Now, look around at the class through your paper template," she says. "I want you to not only notice what you are able to see through your cut outs, but I also want you to notice what you *don't* see." Students are silent while they look around the room through their templates – their silence, it seems, is more due to confusion than any sort of interest in what they're seeing as they occasionally steal a questioning look at a friend. "Okay," Ms. Sandora says. "Do you all notice the things you see and don't see?" Students nod in agreement. "Now hand your template to the person sitting on your left and look through *their* template." Students trade to the left and, once again, look through the templates at their class. "Do you notice different things through your neighbor's template that you didn't see through yours?" she asks. "And, are there different things that you don't see with this new template that you were able to see with yours?" Again, students nod in agreement. "You may now put down your

templates.” When they do, Ms. Sandora explains the purpose of this activity.

“The templates you created are a metaphor for how each of us sees the world. None of us is able to see everything all the time and so we only notice some things while others go unnoticed. Our templates are continually being formed and re-formed. The various shaped cut outs represent our particular perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, and habits of mind. Such things are formulated in our lives by the views and beliefs of our loved ones, our religion, the ideas professed in our local community and in the media; they are formulated by our fears and hopes, our desires and interests. In short, each of us has a different template because each of us has a unique set of experiences that shape who we are and what we see and don’t see in the world. Yet, despite our individual differences, many of us in this classroom, but not all, have grown up in the same community, and are therefore affected by very similar cultural experiences. Thus, those raised in similar cultures tend to have many commonalities in their templates.”

“Imagine now,” Ms. Sandora continues, “that you are talking with someone who has a completely different template than you do. You speak about things that you see quite clearly, your friends see, and you are accustomed to having people see and talk about. This other person has no idea what you are talking about and speaks to you about what he

sees and what he notices in the world. You each look at each other and, for a moment, think the other may be a bit crazy. 'What is he going on about?' you think because he is seeing things you never even knew existed. People who have vastly different life experiences often have very different templates from ours and therefore see the world quite differently than we do."

Ms. Sandora stops and notices that her students seem to be following her, thus she continues. "What I want us to do in this class is begin to recognize that we see the world through a template and we are not typically aware that we do so. Instead, we think we have a clear picture of all of reality without any filters or interference. There are things, in other words, that we are not seeing and we are completely unaware that we're not seeing them; it never occurs to us that such things even exist. So, what I want is for us to learn two things: 1) I want us to learn that we all have different templates and we need to listen openly and carefully when someone else in class is describing something – an experience, an idea, or a belief – because they are describing something that they can see but we may not be able to or we do not see in the same way because our templates are different; 2) I want us to also become more aware that there are things we may be overlooking – some ideas that oppose what we always assumed to be correct, or some new perspective we have never before looked into. Doing these things," she

says, and pauses to look around with the utmost seriousness and wonder, as if she is describing an amazing and powerful journey, "will continually put new cut outs in your template and allow you to see more and more of the world."

She raises a finger in warning. "Now," she says again, taking the time to look all the way around the circle, "just because we are able to see lots of new things, does not mean we have to agree with everything. What I want is for you to develop and grow in your understanding of different beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and perspectives so that you may test your own beliefs in light of these new insights. However, understanding doesn't always lead to agreeing. I'm not so much concerned with whether you believe this idea or that idea. Rather, I'm looking for you to change how you *hold* your beliefs. What I'm hoping for is that the beliefs you do hold will be based on a sincere and carefully considered understanding of all the evidence available to us and that you will continue to be open to re-considering your beliefs if something comes along and puts a new cut out in your template and you see something you had until then never noticed."

Many students look back at their templates with new found respect. Some even take them back up and look through them again, noticing even more acutely what they are seeing and what they are not. To keep this lesson alive in their minds, Ms. Sandora brings up the metaphor of the

template occasionally throughout the course, reminding students to listen openly and attentively to other students and try and truly understand the ideas being professed in their readings. Thus, although Ms. Sandora, like Mr. Dubois, would like all her students to agree with her that non-violent action is a realistic and morally superior alternative to war, she is more concerned with her students learning to settle these beliefs for themselves through careful deliberation of all the available evidence regarding such beliefs.

The concern, then, for Ms. Sandora is that she teach her students to be open to engaging in truth-seeking inquiry regarding all the beliefs raised in class. Not all forms of inquiry will do. As Misak (2000) points out, genuine inquiry involves asking questions and exploring issues with the aim of getting at the best understanding possible of the given issue or belief. Students who are trying to win a debate or merely show that they are clever enough to raise counter-posing claims are not truth-seeking. Ms. Sandora models the sort of inquiry she is looking for with her students. For example, a student, Abey, says in her class that she thinks the U.S. was right to invade Iraq because, as she puts it, "It's our duty as a powerful nation to bring freedom and democracy to the oppressed Iraqi citizens whose human rights were being violated by the violent and corrupt Saddam Hussein." Ms. Sandora first listens attentively to Abey by allowing her to have her say without interruption. Then, to be sure that she

understands her properly, Ms. Sandora repeats what she thinks Abey said. In this way, Abey feels heard and feels that her ideas are being treated with respect. Thus, Ms. Sandora asks Abey if she is saying that declaring war on a country is acceptable if one's aims are to help citizens who are powerless to help themselves escape from the violent and oppressive actions of a tyrannical ruler and to help them form a democratic government. If Abey agrees, then Ms. Sandora asks if anyone has a genuine question – that is, a question that one is truly curious about and wants to hear an answer to (Anthony Weston, 2001) – or has a comment in response to Abey's claim. One student, Miguel, asks how important it was to the U.S. to bring democracy and freedom to Iraq. Sheila asks if the war will be able to bring peace and democracy. "Has such a war ever ended in peace and the development of democracy?" she asks.

Tyrone makes an opposing claim saying that he thinks the U.S. was wrong to invade Iraq because it broke international laws and he says, "The U.S. government doesn't care so much about helping Iraqi citizens as it does about gaining access to their oil." In response, Ms. Sandora asks him if he feels it is wrong to declare war on a nation when doing so violates conventions established by the United Nations and whether it is wrong to use military means to gain access to another nation's valuable resources. Tyrone agrees and Ms. Sandora asks if anyone has a genuine question for Tyrone. Billy asks Tyrone what laws were broken and if these

laws have ever been broken before. Ian asks how much oil Iraq has and why the U.S. would need to declare war on Iraq to get access to their oil. "Why doesn't the U.S. just buy the oil?" he asks.

Students in Ms. Sandora's class did not start out knowing how to ask such questions. They had to be taught how to engage in truth-seeking inquiry. However, when a teacher like Ms. Sandora places such importance on inquiry and expects the learning lines to move from student to student and not only from teacher to student, the inquiry can go wrong in various ways because the students are learning how to do it, they are not yet skillful at it. But such goings astray can be opportunities for inquiry about inquiry, rather than simply occasions for teacher correction. So, for example, invariably when students are given the liberty to inquire with one another, there are some students who think that the nature and point of inquiry is to challenge everything. Consider the student who challenges almost everything others say, regardless of what it is they say.

In the beginning of Ms. Sandora's course, for example, whenever a student made a comment, another student, Theresa, argued for an opposing view, regardless of the perspective being raised. When Sean said that Hitler would have been a very difficult leader to effectively oppose non-violently, Theresa objected by asking if Sean really knows that Hitler was primarily responsible for the Holocaust and not someone in his administration. When another student, Kari, claimed that we ought to be

careful as consumers of diamonds so we do the best we can not to buy what some refer to as “blood” diamonds, Theresa said that there is no way we can know for sure as an individual purchaser whether they are “bloody” or not so we’re better off not buying any diamonds.

Theresa’s points and comments are not necessarily irrelevant or unimportant; in fact, she often raises very good points. The problem is that Theresa has the wrong idea about truth-seeking inquiry. Asking *no* questions and offering *no* critical commentary is problematic. However, so too is having a mistaken notion of what constitutes inquiry. Ms. Sandora wants to encourage her students to hold the beliefs she professes in a critically deliberative manner. She is fully aware that her students like her and want to please her. She also recognizes that within our culture and schooling system, students will hold some beliefs in a non-truth-seeking manner – that this is quite foreseeable (perhaps even in part because it may be a psychological requirement that we hold some beliefs this way some times). Thus, Ms. Sandora acknowledges this “truth” and seeks to take steps to ensure that her own students regard beliefs she deals with as truth apt by prompting them to hold the beliefs she teaches in a truth-seeking manner and deliberately undertaking actions to interrupt what is foreseeable with respect to the beliefs she deals with. She does this by first respecting their contributions to class, then by encouraging them to look further into their beliefs. She reminds them sometimes that the questions

she asks them are to help them increase the number of cut outs in their templates so they are better positioned to see more of what there is to see which allows them a greater understanding of their beliefs.

She also is aware, however, that students need to be taught to engage in a *certain kind* of inquiry – one which aims at truth. One way Ms. Sandora handles this is by laying out clear guidelines for class discussions at the beginning of the course, giving them to her students in writing, and reminding them about the guidelines periodically throughout the course. So, for example, she states that all students need to participate in class discussions in such a way that they encourage deeper and broader understandings of the issue at hand, and that they make all students feel comfortable participating in the discussion. No student, therefore, should dominate the discussion by speaking too often or speaking in a tone that disrespects the views of others. She asks her students to first be sure that they engage in attentive listening by allowing their classmates to speak without interruption. Then they need to seek to fully understand what is being said. “Try the belief on as if it were your own and think about what strengths such a belief might have and what reasons would support it,” she says. “Then try to see what part of the belief you could agree with. Acknowledge that ‘common ground’ (Weston, 2001: 229) if there is some and look to build on that so the inquiry can proceed to deepen our understanding of the issue at hand.”

The sort of questions and comments Theresa was making become more constructive as she and her classmates learn how to engage in the sort of inquiry whose aim is an ever developing understanding of the issues, claims, and beliefs being discussed. Ms. Sandora encourages such inquiry regarding assertions made about war and non-violence as much as she does regarding other sorts of beliefs. Thus, unlike Mr. Dubois, she does not simply agree with the student who supports peace values and correct the student who challenges them. Instead, by teaching her students to engage in truth-seeking inquiry, she prompts her students to settle these beliefs for themselves in a truth-seeking manner.

Concluding Remarks

In these examples, it is up to Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora to work with their students to ensure that they engage in truth-seeking inquiry regarding the beliefs raised in class. As we've seen in these examples, students do not typically come to their classes ready and able to inquire into the truth of the beliefs the teachers profess, particularly if they treat them as settled beliefs. If the pedagogical context were different, if many of the other instructors prepared students to critically deliberate over the epistemic worthiness of all beliefs taught in school, then Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora could perhaps expect that their students would be able and motivated to adopt the beliefs professed in their classes about war and

non-violence in a truth-seeking manner. Additionally, if the ideological context was different in that they taught in a peace school within a peace community, both teachers would have to take some time to be sure that their students understood some of the best opposing reasons and arguments to those advanced by peace scholars.

Although the examples here of Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora illustrate the important difference in the way each instructor handles inquiry into beliefs about war and non-violence, the alternative conception of indoctrination offered here shows us that we must look beyond the individual classroom. To best understand how teachers and schools can help reduce their risk of indoctrination, we need to look at a teacher's instructional methods, the context she teaches, the consequences of her educational efforts, and we must examine the pedagogical, ideological, and structural contexts in which such teaching occurs.

The alternative analysis of indoctrination defended here is able to distinguish between the intentions of Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora by focusing our attention on what goes on inside their classrooms *within the particular context in which they work*. We see that, while Mr. Dubois does many things well, and his desires and goals as an educator may well be admirable, given the school's context, he would do better to treat his beliefs about non-violence and war in a manner similar to the way he

teaches other unsettled beliefs. If he did so, Mr. Dubois would be more likely to get students to hold these beliefs about war and peace in a truth seeking fashion and to settle them for themselves. Moreover, we see that because Ms. Sandora takes steps to help ensure that her students will be open to inquiring into the truth of her assertions about war and non-violence (as well as all other beliefs and assertions raised in class), and also takes steps to ensure that they inquire about inquiry, it is foreseeable that her students will hold such beliefs in a truth-seeking manner.

While Ms. Sandora uses the template metaphor as a prompt for encouraging truth-seeing inquiry, there are many other ways that teachers achieve similar results. Some teachers do not take a great deal of classroom time to allow students to inquire into the truth of beliefs raised in the course, but they require their students to write several smaller (say, 3-5 pages) and one or two longer (8-12 pages) papers where students must not only research a particular idea or view (e.g., the self-immolation practiced by some Buddhist monks to protest the Vietnam War), take a stand (e.g., Self-immolation should not be considered an act of non-violence), and defend it being sure to explore and address the best opposing argument(s) to the one they're defending. Other teachers encourage their students to continually consider the evidence they provide in their course and compare it with what they know to be opposing beliefs and evidence offered in one of their colleague's

courses, or they give their students the assignment of engaging others outside school in conversation about their questions, projects and views. In these ways teachers are encouraging students to engage in thoughtful and reflective analysis of differing views and perspectives so they may adopt beliefs based on an understanding of the evidence available. The point is that while there are many ways to indoctrinate, there are also many ways to avoid indoctrination; we needn't think that all teachers must do exactly what Ms. Sandora does in her classroom.

One strength of this analysis of indoctrination is that it is practically useful in guiding teachers and schools in reflecting on their educational goals *and* on the likely effects their endeavors will have on how students come to hold their beliefs. Teachers who are concerned about indoctrinating their students are directed, on this analysis, to look carefully not just to what they want, but what might be the likely outcomes of their endeavors with their students, within their context, of teaching in the manner they do. Perhaps more significantly, for schools and school districts, they are less able to overlook indoctrinary outcomes or ignore the need to justify decisions which they claim render them unable to avoid indoctrination.

Looking back at prior conceptions of indoctrination, we see that they are not able to provide an adequate characterization of indoctrination that allows teachers and schools to avoid indoctrination. A

content analysis, as we've seen, only alerts us to the fact that Mr. Dubois is teaching unsettled (and, perhaps, doctrinal) beliefs; it does not enable us, however, to make the distinction between Mr. Dubois's teaching and Ms. Sandora's. A method analysis of indoctrination *may* be able to distinguish between the instructional methods of Mr. Dubois and Ms. Sandora; however it is not clear even on a methods analysis how best to characterize indoctrinary methods in any sort of a general sense. Mr. Dubois, remember, provides only one example of an indoctrinary teaching method. Thus a conception of indoctrination defined in terms of method cannot provide adequate guidance to educators trying to teach without indoctrinating. A consequences analysis of indoctrination may show us that some or many of Mr. Dubois's students hold the beliefs he professes about war and non-violence in a non-truth-seeking way, but it does not help us understand what Mr. Dubois may be doing or not doing to create such consequences. Finally, prior conceptions of indoctrination do not consider the role that the school context plays in how students come to hold their beliefs and in shaping teachers' intentions.

Thus, it is my contention that the analysis of indoctrination defended here is better able than other considered analyses to meet our purposes. It allows for a better understanding of indoctrination and so also the opportunity for a more intelligible and considered response to the charge of indoctrination. The analysis I've offered has the further virtue of

assisting us in knowing how to effectively guide teachers and schools in developing educational programs and efforts that avoid indoctrination.

Indeed, this may be its chief virtue.

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