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ABSTRACT

Both critical thinking and much of moral education see the function of education as the bringing forth of the rational capacities of the child. Although there are similarities between the interest in critical thinking as the basis for educational reform and the educational concern with the moral development of school children, crucial differences exist between the theory and substance of recent advocacy of critical thinking as an educational ideal and much of what has become the standard understanding of moral education in schools. The most common approaches to moral education include the cultural transmission model of moral instruction and the moral development, romantic, and relativistic perspectives. Both the standard developmentalist and cultural transmission models of moral education are unacceptable given the theoretical demands for openness, tentativeness, and rational evaluation characteristic of critical thinking advocates. The interface of a critical thinking theory that gives a priority to the rational process of inquiry and developmentalist or commonsense claims about the limitations of children's competence is a difficult and unexplored issue arising from the entry of critical thinking theory into the arena of moral education. Critical thinking approaches are also in apparent conflict with romantic and value clarification models of moral education which see the core of values as nonrationalizable and essentially an expression of emotion and will. (Contains 20 references.) (IAH)

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The Institute for Critical Thinking at Montclair State College is designed to support and enrich faculty development efforts toward critical thinking as an educational goal. Guided by a National Advisory Board and a College Advisory Council, its primary purpose is to serve as a catalyst in the development of educational excellence across the curriculum at the College. A collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach is in process, with attention to the study of both the theoretical aspects of critical thinking across the disciplines and their implications for teaching and learning at the college level. Leadership roles have also been assumed in helping other colleges and schools to incorporate critical thinking into their curricula.

As part of this effort, the Institute for Critical Thinking publishes a newsletter, *Critical Thinking: Inquiry Across the Disciplines*, on a monthly basis during the academic year. The newsletter publishes information about the activities of the Institute, as well as brief analyses of various critical thinking issues. In addition, the publication of several series of resource documents are in process. These publications will make available, to interested faculty and others at Montclair and elsewhere, working papers related to critical thinking as an educational goal. These publications will enable those persons interested in critical thinking to have access to more extensive discussions of the kinds of issues that can only be presented in summary form in the newsletter. These discussions will typically be regarded as works-in-progress--articles written as tentative arguments inviting response from others, articles awaiting the long publication delay in journals, etc. The proceedings of our conferences will also be presented in the form of resource publications, as will articles based on our series of lectures, inquiry panels, and faculty seminars and forums.

In this first series of resource publications, we have included working papers by members and guests of our Institute Fellows "Round Table." Most of these working papers have been presented for discussion at one or more of the Fellows' seminar meetings, and have influenced our thinking about the nature of critical thinking as an educational goal.

The Institute welcomes suggestions for our resource publication series, as well as for our other activities. Correspondence may be addressed to Dr. Wendy Oxman-Michelli, Director, Institute for Critical Thinking, Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

Critical Thinking and Moral Education

Mark Weinstein

The recent interest in critical thinking as the basis for educational reform has a deep philosophical and pedagogical affinity to the long standing educational concern with the moral development of school children. Critical thinking and moral education both extend instruction beyond standard school subjects and require mastery at higher cognitive levels. The child is seen as a person in the deepest sense, rather than in terms of more instrumental notions of competence. Education from these perspectives is frequently distinguished from schooling, and has as its aim the development of the highest and most characteristically human attributes: rationality and the moral sense (Siegel, 1988). The affinity of critical thinking and moral education is apparent, as well, in the pedagogical strategies most frequently recommended. Critical thinking, like moral education, deals with complex, multi-dimensional issues, and requires open-ended explorations and divergent thinking (Paul, 1982). Characteristically, lesson procedures and outcomes cluster around the upper end of the standard taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, et. al., 1956). Critical thinking and moral education require the analysis of issues, the synthesis of differing perspectives and bodies of information, and the evaluation of outcomes. But no matter how deep the continuities, the recent advocacy of critical thinking as an educational ideal raise sharp contrasts in theory and in substance to much of what has become standard in the understanding of moral education in the schools. It is the task of this paper to call attention to some of the most crucial differences.

1. Some influential models for moral education

Moral education has a variety of concerns and reflects various psychological, philosophical and pedagogical models. The most common, by far, is the view that sees moral education as part of the mechanism for transmitting culturally approved norms to children. Frequently based on overt instruction in moral principles and reasoning through standard subjects like literature and social studies, value transmission is also embedded in the total process of schooling. The institution is seen to play a major role in socializing children in ways consistent with desirable social values (Carr and Wellenberg, 1966). This view, dubbed "the bag of virtues" by

Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 1981, p.9), has as its objective that children should have dispositions of character and personality, expressed in traits that are deemed socially desirable. Such traits characteristically reflect shared values taken as central to well functioning individuals and conducive to the common good. Such an approach to moral education, frequently conservative in moral content, is often manifested in moral exhortation, in curricula that include exemplars of appropriate moral practice and, most tellingly, in the so-called "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 1968). The hidden curriculum is constituted by the norms and standards that are implicit in the schools' institutional practices, especially those practices that, through reward and punishment, reflect on the child's behavior. Such implicit reinforcement is often thought to be the most causally effective mode of values transmission, speaking to the deeper affective and motivational structures that are theorized as underlying the construction of the individual's psyche. In this way values like respect for authority, diligence and honesty are, as it is said, "caught, not taught."

Overt instruction in moral values, in such a model, aids in the transmission of cultural approved values by identifying the implicit structures underlying institutional practice. Children are helped to rationalize operating norms by seeing them reflected in traditionally valued individuals and events. In addition, overt moral instruction extends values transmission to domains not readily reinforced through institutional procedures. Values like sexual chastity that have no analogue in school activities can in this way be identified and reinforced.

The cultural transmission model of moral instruction is frequently thought of as a corrective for less acceptable overt and covert moral messages that the child receives from mass media or from peers. Such messages, frequently hedonistic in tone, are countered with a perspective informed by notions of duty and forebearance. In addition to the inculcation of practical norms required for social stability and the protection of the child from moral evil, moral education points the child upward. The transmission of the higher moral culture becomes part of the general task of weaning the child from superficially attractive but demeaning aspects of the social milieu. Moral education, like acquaintance with art and literature, serves to point the child towards the realm of the "life worth living."

Another of the most common approaches to moral education is that of the developmentalists. In this naturalistic perspective, the child is thought of as pre-moral and, in crucial ways, pre-social (Kegan, 1982). Moral education, even in the absence of countervailing social forces, is deemed necessary to help the child develop from socially and psychologically inadequate egocentrism, to a set of perspectives characteristic of mature and morally well-functioning adult members of society. Such a naturalism sees the essentially egocentric child initially responsive only to the most elemental forms of moral persuasion: reward and punishment. Further, the child is seen to be incapable of seeing moral reasons in other than such rudimentary terms. Starting with morality as based on authorative norms, the child moves over time through stages of moral reasoning characterized

by affiliation with significant others, identification with groups holding shared norms and ultimately to a sense of the larger cultural and ethical sphere (Kohlberg, 1981 chapter 2).

The child's moral development progresses through levels of increasingly other-regarding awareness until the highest moral consciousness, the perspective of equal justice, is achieved (Kohlberg, 1981, chapters 4 and 5). This progression through stages reflects underlying natural processes of assimilation and accommodation common to both cognitive and moral development. Although internal, the process reflects the active child's attempts to deal with the conflicts inherent in moral understanding. Each stage achieves a higher level of equilibrium, a more potent set of concepts and mental structures as measured by their ability to reconcile the tensions intrinsic to the lower stages (Kohlberg, 1981, chapter 4). Moral education, on this view, becomes the active abetting of this process of increasing equilibriation. It is characteristically accomplished through the presentation and discussion of moral dilemmas that strain the adequacy of present understanding, while exposing the child to concept sets that offer the possibility of more adequate moral resolutions (*ibid.*). Central to this conception is the claim that the stages of moral maturation are naturalistically generated. They are not merely more sophisticated social norms or cultural constructs, rather they reflect the essential structure that is deemed common to all humans and implicit in all social constructions of morality. Requiring no more than the availability of social complexity sufficient to engender moral dilemmas, the moral stages are inherently realized in moral reasoning. They constitute, therefore, an objective cognitive substrate that enables a hierarchy of moral principles to be objectively defined.

As is apparent from what we have, said both the cultural transmission and moral development perspectives are anti-relativist, presenting preferred modes of moral perception and behavior. In contrast to such views are the romantic and relativistic positions, popular in recent decades. Such approaches see the child as a spontaneously developing locus of moral perspectives, as a holder of values, coequal with others (Neill, 1960). For such views, education in general, and moral education in particular, requires that the child be given freedom to explore values through choices made. Formal moral education enables the child to identify, articulate and clarify the value stance peculiar to himself (Raths, et. al., 1966). The child is exposed to the values of others, but only to enrich the range of available choices. The awareness of alternative cultural and social perspectives is deemed a positive good, reinforcing a sense of the variety of moral options already chosen. The only value required is the socially enabling value of tolerance and respect for others, although in the most radical of such views even this must be personally chosen. (Neill, *op. cit.*)

2. Critical Thinking and moral education

Like moral educators critical thinking advocates include a spectrum of value postures. Reflections on the american democratic tradition were among the earliest arguments in support of the movement were. It had been long realized that political democracy requires critical intelligence (Glazer, 1985). Education in pursuit of the development of a competent citizenry could thus include critical thinking as part of the necessary socialization of the young. More important, many of the postures associated with critical thinking, thoughtful tolerance, intellectual openness and honesty, and a commitment to rational persuasion are central to the american value stance (Paul, 1984). The requirement that informed citizens be able to evaluate competing claims in light of available evidence and arguments put forward, directly links critical thinking to a central goal of american education (Paul, 1985a). Thus, critical thinking characterized by, for example, Ennis as "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on what to believe or do" (Ennis, 1985, p. 54), is easily viewed as a mainstream activity consistent with even the most conservative stance in values education.

Even as moderate a position as Ennis' raises problems for the implementation of critical thinking in the schools. For "reasonable, reflective thinking" requires abstract standards for evaluation and an awareness of the processes and methods that support the appropriate application of standards to cases. Such an approach requires that school curricula include higher order cognitive skills and reflect such skills in educational objectives of sophistication and complexity. In the terms of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, et. al., 1956) what is required is the ability to analyze arguments offered, synthesize information in support of views maintained and finally to evaluate claims and make decisions that reflect prior rational analysis. Not only, as is well known, are such educational goals mostly honored in the breach, but conservative calls for basic skills education and values by authority, run counter to the thrust of such programs. This is especially problematic for critical thinking in moral contexts, for even if wrapped in the flag of citizenship education, the curricular and pedagogical underpinnings of critical thinking point to value orientations that contradict much of the substance of the transmission of traditional values as seen by conservative educators. As we shall see problems may even extend to the transmission of values associated with liberalism.

Traditional american values do not exhaust the value basis for critical thinking. Critical thinking theorists appeal to the notion of "rational passions" that constitute the dispositions of personality appriopriate to the critical thinker (Peters, 1980). Such rational passions reflect a deep value commitment to truth and to inquiry. But truth and inquiry are not easily achieved when the focus is on issues of moral concern. Moral issues are multi-categorial, transcending any easy analysis from within a particular academic or scientific discipline. To address such issues inquiry must be multi-logical and dialogical. Multi-logical issues require reinterpretation from many perspectives, using diverse sets of concepts and logical strategies

(Paul, 1982). By their very nature they require that conflicting and even incommensurable frameworks be provisionally adopted and sympathetically explored. Prior commitments are then reevaluated through these contrasting points of view. Dialogics, the systematic and open encounter of alternative and competing points of view becomes the method through which these issues are to be joined. This procedure, in itself, precludes the simple presentation and inculcation of values as in conservative models of cultural transmission. But such a critique extends to the straightforward transmission of liberal values as well. Since all appropriately multi-categorical positions must be critiqued in light of alternatives, deep commitments to democracy and tolerance are exposed to their moral and political contraries. Such a principled commitment to the sympathetic presentations of, perhaps, repugnant alternatives, is difficult to operationalize in the classroom, and perhaps harder to justify within the real political context that education affords. Moreover, unless such a multi-logical examination is carefully performed and maturely understood, it can seem like thorough-going relativism, and as such, misleading as to its intent and pernicious in its effects. Thus the deep value structure underlying critical thinking exacerbates the difficulties inherent to moral discussion and creates problems of substance and form for the school practitioner. The commitment to rational moral evaluation through contrasting frameworks becomes liable to misunderstanding and subversion -- the presentation of alternatives becoming no more than opinion mongering.

The apparent need for cognitive sophistication and emotional maturity in the dialogical exploration of multi-logical issues raises a significant issue from the theoretic perspective of the developmentalists. Stage theories see individuals at differing levels of cognitive and moral competence. Some of these individuals are, in principle, at a less adequate level of moral and cognitive functioning. They do not merely have wrong beliefs, they are utilizing cognitive schemata, tools of conceptual organization, that are more primitive and less functional *viz a viz* the issues of concern. Such schemata do offer alternative perspectives, but such perspectives being developmentally prior are not rational competitors, rather they are naturalistically generated and are to be maturationally overcome. Further, it is maintained that people at early stages are not amenable to instruction through schemes that are not contiguous to the stage they are functioning at. They cannot be instructed to use higher non-contiguous stages, nor can they fully comprehend arguments made through rational processes that reflect these stages. This raises obvious challenges for the critical thinking approach as viewed from the perspective of developmentalistically oriented moral education in the schools. If critical thinking requires the exploration of rationally defensible alternatives comprehensible to all of the discussants, critical exploration of moral issues may not be possible.

A possible solution to this dilemma is to limit moral discussion to alternatives couched within the dominant moral stage of the discussants or, at most, the next higher stage. Within such conceptual boundaries competing perspectives could be presented, adequately understood and evaluated. Although such a solution might be seen as sufficient to satisfy the

demands of critical thinking, it falls short of the ideal that requires that the teacher not be seeen as privileged in respect of the point at issue (Weinstein, 1986). Lipman, for example, maintains that the teacher can not be seen, as a matter of principle, justified in her beliefs (Lipman, et. al., 1980, chapter 6 and see the below). A critical thinking discussion, on such a view, requires that the teacher be open to challenge and responsive to the demand for justifying reasons. But in so far as the teacher's position reflects a more principled stage of moral development, her response to childrens' challenges is little more than a charade. The teacher may accept the children's critique, and even respond with stage appropriate arguments, but the challenge is, in principle, irrelevant and the argument presented is inadequate as an expression of the teacher's real justifying grounds. Arguments constructed in defense of claims, modified in the name of development appropriateness, are instructional artifacts, mere expedients that falsify the teacher's position in the name of developmental appropriateness. Stage theorists see children as being developmentally immature and thus have natural cognitive and moral reasoning deficits as compared to their teachers and other adults. How open and critical discussion can be achieved among cognitive unequals is an open question that must be faced by advocates of critical thinking in the schools. Because of the complexity of moral issues and the entrenched developmentalist perspective through which moral reasoning is understood, the question becomes most urgent, a profound impediment to the critical thinking approach to moral education.

A similar issue arises for cultural transmission models. Although on this view children are not in principle incapable of particular modes of reasoning, they have a functionally similar disadvantage. The cultural transmission model, like developmentalism, includes a prior agreement as to the relative adequacy of moral postures. Unlike moral developmentalism, the adequacy of moral position reflects more than stages of moral reasoning. The cultural transmission model, characterically, includes a commitment to particular substantive moral principles and frequently includes quite specific applications of these principles to concrete instances of significance in contemporary society. Moral education is required to reflect such value commitments and is evaluated on its ability to develop children's moral awareness and behavioral conformity with accepted norms. In addition, like developmentalism, transmission models generally adhere to a theory of the child that renders him an unfit critic of these prior judgements. Reflecting the wisdom of the culture, acceptable moral priciples, are not open to immature critique. The child does not have the option of either accepting or rejecting these values on rational grounds, since the child, because of lack of wordly wisdom, is deemed incapable of understanding the deep rationality of the claims, as is the case with developmentally immature cognitive and moral process. The child's rational abilties are inadequate to the task of full comprehension. If moral education is to result in the acceptance of appropriate moral values and their internalization as motives for correct behavior, what is required for cultural transmission is authority, exhortation and ultimately behavioral and social reinforcement. Such a

course of moral training in frequently deemed a prerequisite for later understanding. Harkening back to Aristotle, the child must first learn to do and only then can be helped to understand.

One caveat must be included. It is not logically imposible that a cultural transmission model reflect a prior commitment to critical inquiry and to the moral and cognitive adequacy of children. Such a position might even be attributed to educators with a commitment to critical thinking as the basis of moral education. From such a critical thinking perspective, moral education must include the practice of moral inquiry within a community engaged in the exploration of alternative moral perspectives. Such a community would be engaged in the transmission of the central values of critical thought. Such values, the rational passions, would include a commitment to the acceptance of any moral stance as a posible basis of inquiry; the use of principles of formal and informal logic as tools of criticism; and the acceptance of evaluative conclusions as tentative stopping pieces, reflecting inquiry so far, but open to challenge and reevaluation in the light of further argument. A model of this sort has been sketched by Lipman (Lipman, 1987). It is not yet clear to what extent such a recommendation for moral education will be deemed acceptable by contemporary educators. As things now stand, the available positions advocated by moral educators are restricted to the developmentalist, cultural transmission or romantic models discussed in earlier paragraphs.

Both the developmentalist and cultural transmission models, as standardly construed, are not acceptable given the theoretic demands for openness, tentativeness, and rational evaluation characteristic of critical thinking advocates. Lipman, by no means the most radical of the critical thinking theorists asserts, "There can be no legitimate philosophical discussion in which one party considers the other inferior, not as a matter of prejudice, but as a matter of principle" (Lipman et. al., 1980. p. 154). Since for Lipman, moral education and critical thinking are essentially philosophical enterprises (*ibid*, pp. 172ff.), theories that entail the principled exclusion of children from full participation in moral inquiry cannot be adequate to the task of meaningfully educating rational persons. Lipman once again, "... if children are deemed incapable of principled moral behavior, incapable of having reasons for what they do, incapable of rational dialogue about their conduct, incapable of employing patterns of logical inference, they must be treated as no different from lower animals, or even as mere things" (*ibid*, p.154). Although perhaps overstated, Lipman's hyperbole reveals another of the deeply held value postures of the critical thinking movement. As alluded to in the opening paragraph of the paper, critical thinking like much of moral education, sees the function of education as the bringing forth of the rational capacities of the child.

The most careful advocacy of this view is found in the work of Harvey Siegel (Siegel, 1988). He takes as an unargued assumption, the Kantian view that the fundamental right to personhood is a reflection of the universal rationality of human beings. He maintains that to limit rational capacity is thus to strike at the very source of rights. To deny rationality is to deny

personhood, and with such a denial to violate the individuals rights at the most profound level and in the most all encompassing fashion. Siegel (*op. cit.* chapter 5) attempts to reconcile the need for pre-rational instruction with the Kantian ideals he espouses. He argues that it is possible to "inculcate" beliefs that are consistent with the disposition to accept reasons, where the inculcation of such beliefs, is prior to the child's ability to see the reasons for such a belief. In this way Siegel attempts to show that the inculcation of critical thinking attitudes is non-indoctrinating (*ibid*). It is not at all clear how rationality can arise from purely causal interventions, if rationality requires *seeing reasons as reasons*.. The child can have reasoning *behavior* inculcated through example, participation and reinforcement, but reasoning appears to require more than behavior. Intentions to offer and evaluate reasons through the application of principles to cases are not identical with behaviors; reasonable speech acts require more than lip-service, they require an understanding of the normative force of the principles cited. Such a line of argument points to the need to *presuppose* rationality if the child is to learn to think critically at all. This, however, is a deep and murky issue requiring careful articulation of the philosophical analysis of mind, of speech acts and of the person. The "paradox" of requiring reasonableness without the presupposition of reason remains to be resolved if critical thinking perspectives are to be seriously considered by moral educators.

Given positions such as that of Siegel, it is not clear that the demand for full rational participation in education is incompatible with the developmentalist claim that children are, in principle, incapable of the highest forms of reasoning, or a cultural transmission model that sees children as limited by virtue of lack of worldly wisdom. Even given the cogency of the philosophical resolution of the paradox, questions of the pragmatics of developing rationality in pre-rational individuals remains. A plausible move is to see education, as Kohlberg does, as the vehicle through which full rational capacity is to be attained (Kohlberg, 1981, chapter 3). This attempt at reconciliation, however, does not resolve the problem of educational practice characterized by cognitive inequality. The demand that critical thinking discussions be equally open to all participants, and that alternative positions be seriously considered as *prima facie* equal in their critical role, make the process of developing rationality through critical inquiry paradoxical as well. If the teacher, as developmentally advanced or as superior in wisdom, has a position of privilege, then claims that reflect that privilege are not open to critical analysis by students. Thus, the teacher stands outside the critical inquiry as performed by the students. The students' explorations, on such a view, seem at best preliminary excursions which, if appropriately informed, will result in the mature position already achieved by the teacher. Such a procedure seems closer to group indoctrination than to the open inquiry envisioned by critical thinking theorists. For, on such a reconciliatory model, rational criticism is a mere expedient for bringing students to the already warranted positions of teachers. The central issue is whether priority is given to the rational process of inquiry or whether inquiry is a mere device for coming to correct

understanding. This issue has particular salience in moral education where, unlike purely cognitive domains, inquiry has consequences that are deemed essential to morally correct human action. Can we tolerate, as many critical thinking theorists seem to maintain, inquiry that results in moral error? Is our commitment to the procedures that define rational thought stronger than our demand that children be taught what has been considered best as a guide for social and personal behavior? The interface of a critical thinking theory -- that answers "yes" to both of these questions -- and developmentalist or commonsense claims about the limitedness of children's competence remains one of the most singularly difficult and unexplorred issues arising from the entrance of critical thinking theory into the arena of moral education.

Critical thinking approaches are in also apparent conflict with romantic and value clarification models of moral education. Personalist and relativistic, both of these approaches see the core of values as non-rationalizable and essentially an expression of emotion and will. The only role for rational process is in the clarification of inner tensions and in the overt prioritizing of inherently groundless choices. Although such views when baldly stated may seem extreme, they reflect an analysis of value that was accepted by many (if not most philosophers) from the late nineteenth century until at least the 1950's. Rooted in existentialism as well as logical positivism, values as reducible to emotion or will became cultural commonsense for many educated people. Conjoined with sociological and anthropological evidence of value diversity, such a non-rational view of moral judgement was reflected in even the most sober educational theorists. As centrist an educator as Benjamin Bloom, reflects the philosophical analysis of moral judgements common to his era by replacing the entire hierarachy of moral issues outside of the cognitive realm. Values, seen as commitments and preferences are deemed as constituting educational objectives to be understood in the affective domain. The affective domain is seen as so disparate from the cognitive that its analysis is not to be included in the same volume, much less within an integrated theoretic perspective (Bloom et. al., 1956, 1956a).

The construal of moral judgement as rational, common in philosophy since Hare and Rawls, is a radical revision of philosophic wisdom and a return to the Kantian and utilitarian models. But such philosophical shifts are not immediately reflected in educational applications. And so the critical thinking movement, heir to the contemporary anti-emotivist and anti-voluntarist analysis of moral judgement, runs contrary to many of the "common sense" beliefs of educators, still under the influence of powerful and culturally embedded philosophical theories. But this is no abstract counterposing of philosophical points of view. Personalism and romaticism have a deep affinity with pluralism and the tradition of tolerance in american society, and offer a reconcilition of the perception of the child's cognitive incompetence and our intuition that the child must be given human respect as a holder of values. Further, these views are reflected in curriculm

practices that have had wide acceptance and that reflect the pyschologizing of values construed as motivating desires.

The psychology of wants, needs and drives, constitutes common sense as much as do its philosophical counterparts. Such views offer the educator a handle on moral education that is easily understood and, as importantly, clearly connected with the role of moral education as determing behavior. Moral reason is linked to moral behavior only through arduous and inconclusive studies. Emotivist and volitional theories of moral choice, on the other hand, have a natural and internal relation to action. "You always do what you want," and "You have to use will power to overcome temptation," although ultimately vacuous, have a deep and abiding force that makes their exposure a perennially arduous task for teachers of introductory philosophy. Theories that reify wants and volitions give the teacher a handle on moral education that is user friendly: easy to understand and easy to apply. Critical thinking by contrast offers a most unwieldy and suspicious mechanism for moral advance, since the relation of the cognitive to the evaluative tends to be theoretical, opaque and pragmatically dubious.

3. The challenge to critical thinking as a basis for moral education

My review of the tensions that underly a critical thinking approach to moral education is intended as a corrective for a naive optimism. It is not at all likely that moral educators can welcome the perspective of critical thinking once its psychological and philosophical assumptions are made clear. But that may be all to the good. Moral education has developed in isolation from philosophy and has, most recently, been embedded in psychological theory whenever it has not be completely absorbed into polemical political and social disputes. The challenge from critical thinking should open this arena to critique at the deepest levels of theory and preconception. Critical thinking forces us to reconsider our conceptualization of the child and to precise the notion of reason that underlies our perception of children as pre-rational. On the other hand, critical thinking, typically developed for college level instruction, may not be available to school children without a careful reappraisal of the particulars of its application in the schools. If children are as they are conceived to be by the mainstream of educational psychological theory and by much of common sense, many of the ideals of critical thinking may not readily apply. Critical thinking theorists must address these conceptions, both by a careful critique of theories and cultural assumptions, and by the demonstration of sucessful programs in the schools. Much of the latter is being done, all too little of the former. Some programs of enormous apparent worth are now available to school children. Most of these beg the deep theoretical issues or side step them through their appeal as programs that address pragmatic

issues of school achievement. But the deep humanism and the commitment to inquiry that characterizes the very best of these can only be evaluated within the area that strains these programs to the utmost. That arena, I maintain, is moral education. It is within moral education that the most essential worth of the critical thinking movement is to be tested.

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