

the proponents of the new approaches felt it was morally unjustifiable to apply the vital pressures needed to actually shape pupils' conduct, feeling such pressures would constitute "indoctrination." On the other hand, methods of moral reasoning apparently might be taught as routine school subjects with the tacit consent of the pupils involved.

The anti-indoctrination stance central to the new approaches invites amplification. Obviously, the great tradition regarded the issue of indoctrination as a specious question. Proponents of the great tradition say, "Of course indoctrination happens. It is ridiculous to believe children are capable of objectively assessing most of the beliefs and values they must absorb to be effective adults. They must learn a certain body of 'doctrine' to function on a day-to-day basis in society. There is good and bad doctrine, and thus things must be weighed and assessed. But such assessment is largely the responsibility of parents and other appropriate adults."

It is hard to articulate fairly the position of the anti-indoctrinators. Although they are against indoctrination, they provide no clear answer as to how children are given many real choices in a relatively immutable world necessarily maintained by adults. The anti-indoctrinators also do not say what adults are to do when children's value choices and resulting potential conduct are clearly harmful to them or others. After all, punish-

ments for bad value choices are, in effect, forms of indoctrination. And the idea of presenting pupils with any particular approach to moral education in a school is inherently indoctrinative: the pupils are not allowed to refuse to come to school, or to hear seriously the pros and cons articulated by sympathetic spokespersons (or critics) for moral education or to freely choose among various approaches to them. Providing such choices is antithetical to the operation of any school.

To consider another perspective, the secular nature of the typical public school obviously indoctrinates pupils against practicing religion in that environment, although most religions contend that some religious practices of a public nature are inextricably related to day-to-day life. This "reality" of separating religion and public education is understandable. However, it is disingenuous to call this policy nonindoctrinative. Thus, it is specious to talk about student choices. The point is that, *on the whole, school is and should and must be inherently indoctrinative*. The only significant questions are: Will the indoctrination be overt or covert, and what will be indoctrinated?

The great tradition has never died. Many administrators and teachers in public and private schools have continued practices consistent with its principles. Given the increased support from academics and intellectuals, and the concrete recommendations presented in Walberg's and my article

which follows, these principles deserve widespread professional support. □

¹The Virginia Constitution.

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Edward A. Wynne is professor, College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Box 4348, Chicago, IL 60680.

Keeping Them in the Courtyard: A Response to Wynne

ALAN L. LOCKWOOD

Edward A. Wynne is right about one thing: schooling aimed only at instruction in knowledge and skills without equal and explicit attention to ethics is both myopic and misguided. Beyond that, his argument is more polemical than persuasive.

According to Wynne, a millenia-old tradition of moral education prescribes standards of conduct by which young people should be molded through a system of rewards and punishments. Critical analysis of moral concepts and issues should be the

domain of groups of adult experts to whom "appropriate deference" is paid.

I find Wynne's great tradition to be a fanciful construction. Only a highly selective reading of the history of Western philosophy could lead one to

conclude there is historical agreement on the nature of morality or on a sensually prescribed code of conduct.

Our philosophical heritage is replete with serious and intense disagreements that Wynne chooses to ignore. For example, he casually dismisses the "is/ought" debate and fails to acknowledge the persistent disputes between utilitarian and non-utilitarian forms of morality. Introductory ethics courses teach us the differences between Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Mill, and so on. There is no more consensus among our great philosophers than there is between Jerry Falwell and Cardinal Bernardin; Phyllis Schlafly and Eleanor Smeal. If there are moral experts to whom we should appropriately defer, I'm not sure how to spot them, and Wynne offers little guidance.

Educationally, Wynne holds in particular disdain school programs that permit young people to exercise critical reasoning and judgment on ethical issues. He believes such programs contribute to alarming rates of youth disorder but provides no evidence to support such a dramatic claim, and I doubt he can. Virtually all recent national reports on schools describe them as places where rote learning prevails and where young people are rarely challenged to engage in higher-order thinking on any topic, including ethical controversy. Schools may well contribute to youth disorder but not, the best evidence suggests, because they are systematically fostering careful reasoning.

It is difficult to determine why Wynne so opposes honest inquiry into ethical issues. He appears to believe that the great tradition authoritatively and justifiably answers virtually all ethical questions, and it is pointless, inefficient, and wrong headed to ask young people to deliberate about them. We should simply shape their behavior according to such values as courtesy, truth-telling, and obedience. Indeed, there would be little need for deliberation if most ethical questions could be answered unambiguously. Experience shows that they cannot be, and we often must exercise judgment among competing values. For example, if I were John Dean, should I be obedient to my president and cover

up Watergate wrongdoings or be truthful in revealing them? The moral life requires analysis and judgment as well as action. Wynne's moral education appears blind to this brute fact of life.

I also take issue with Wynne's reckless comments about values clarification and moral development approaches to moral education. He fails to recognize the significant differences between them and treats them both as equally flawed. Among other things, he contends the two approaches are uninterested in conduct and hostile to the great tradition.

I have been a long-time critic of values clarification, but Wynne is mistaken in his contention that its advocates are not concerned with conduct. They claim that one cannot hold a value unless one repeatedly acts on it. Developmentalists are also concerned with conduct. They recognize, however, that true moral behavior rests on sound principles and dispositions and is not solely a conditioned reflex.

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The moral development approach derives from a substantial philosophical tradition. Kohlberg's work explicitly traces its lineage from Socrates through Kant to Rawls. It may be hostile to Wynne's great tradition, but not to a major stream of Western philosophical thought.

Wynne's impassioned call for indoctrination will doubtless receive much attention. Beneath his surface rhetoric, however, are slippery definitions and elusive logic. He claims, for example, that schooling is by nature indoctrinative because it is compulsory. Compulsory education is indeed legally coercive, but does that mean that students *should be* systematically indoctrinated once they arrive at school? Conversely, are nonpublic schools by nature non-indoctrinative because they are in some sense voluntary? I don't think so. Certainly many religion-based private schools intend to shape students according to a particular doctrine.

In the final analysis, Wynne seems to say that schools must shape student conduct according to the central moral values of our culture and the great tradition. Aside from asserting a few values such as obedience and truth-telling, he does not tell us what the central moral values are. Neither does he tell us how a clear, nonconflicting code of conduct indoctrinated through rewards and punishments can be derived from them.

There is a role for behavior shaping in a defensible moral education, especially for young children. It is a philosophical saw that one enters the palace of reasoning through the courtyard of habit. Unfortunately, Wynne confuses the courtyard for the palace: the *pre-conditions* necessary for moral education—an orderly environment, common courtesy, and so on—with its end. The morally educated person possesses virtuous dispositions and can reason justly. These qualities must be nurtured by education; they do not magically appear when one reaches adulthood. To advocate mindless conformity to externally imposed standards of conduct is to caricature the moral life. □

Alan L. Lockwood is professor of curriculum and instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 225 N. Mills St., Madison, WI 53706.

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