Becoming of Two Minds about Liberalism
A Chronicle of Philosophical and Moral Development
Dwight R. Boyd
University of Toronto, Canada

Integrating scholarly essays and personal reflections, Becoming of Two Minds chronicles a unique philosophical odyssey, a developmental journey of coming to recognize the inadequacy of liberalism in the face of some egregious social problems such as racism, while also appreciating its strengths. A Personal Prologue describing the main intellectual influences on the author locates the origins of the journey and functions as a backdrop for its interpretation. Fifteen chronologically organized essays, divided into three parts, identify significant positions of contrast between the two minds, establishing the direction of the journey and indications of change. Essays in Part I reflect early allegiance to liberalism and explore its core ideas as they should be interpreted to guide moral education. Those in Part II express disaffection with that allegiance, taking a distinctly critical stance toward liberalism. Part III then consists of essays that represent attempts to come to terms with the becoming of two minds exemplified in the tension between the ideas about liberalism expressed in Parts I and II. A Personal Preface also introduces each of the fifteen essays. These Prefaces address questions such as why the problem of the essay was chosen, why it was approached in a particular way, and what place the essay assumes in the direction the author’s journey takes.
Becoming of Two Minds about Liberalism
MORAL DEVELOPMENT AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Volume 10

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‘Moral Development and Citizenship Education’ is a book series that focuses on the cultural development of our young people and the pedagogical ideas and educational arrangements to support this development. It includes the social, political and religious domains, as well as cognitive, emotional and action oriented content. The concept of citizenship has extended from being a pure political judgment, to include the social and interpersonal dynamics of people.

Morality has become a multifaceted and highly diversified construct that now includes cultural, developmental, situational and professional aspects. Its theoretical modelling, practical applications and measurements have become central scientific tasks. Citizenship and moral development are connected with the identity constitution of the next generations. A caring and supporting learning environment can help them to participate in society.

Books in this series will be based on different scientific and ideological theories, research methodologies and practical perspectives. The series has an international scope; it will support manuscripts from different parts of the world and it includes authors and practices from various countries and cultures, as well as comparative studies. The series seeks to stimulate a dialogue between different points of view, research traditions and cultures. It contains multi-authored handbooks, focussing on specific issues, and monographs. We invite books that challenge the academic community, bring new perspectives into the community and broaden the horizon of the domain of moral development and citizenship education.
Becoming of Two Minds about Liberalism

A Chronicle of Philosophical and Moral Development

Dwight R. Boyd
University of Toronto, Canada

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This book is dedicated

to my father for supporting my seeing two sides to most questions,

to my mother for supporting her family in so many non-academic ways,

to my partner, Ruth Pierson, for supporting my struggles with this book for the many years since it was only a gleam in my intellectual eye.
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The present volume of our series on moral development and citizenship education is a monograph in which the Canadian philosopher Dwight Boyd presents an overview of his work. The book addresses many interesting issues in moral education of the past decades. It has three goals. Firstly, it contains a practical philosophical analysis of the basis of morality and civics, in this case with respect to racism, multiculturalism and similar societal topics on one hand and liberalism on the other. Here Dwight Boyd delivers sharp criticism of liberalistic purity. Secondly, it presents a very finely tuned basis for realistic human goals in moral and/or character education. And thirdly, it is an overview of a lifetime’s worth of writings of a very engaged “social-liberal” philosopher.

The first goal shows the weaknesses but also the possibilities of liberal philosophical thinking. Especially the comparison between Kohlberg and Rawls is fundamental, and Boyd analyses a central problem, namely the content-free structuralist view of both authors. He shows that real problems of our society can not by any means be sufficiently analyzed starting from these concepts, and that it cannot adequately solve precisely societal contents like racism, oppression, financial exploitation, etc. This is why as the second basic idea for moral and character educators they must do both, learning and using the instruments that these philosophers and psychologists have given us; but also realise what human conditions and its suffering demand from us as scholars and how we can overcome this suffering created by human neglect of what seems necessary in any concrete case.

It is the first time that a moral philosopher gives us an overview of his thinking during his life and his work. Here we can see what it means to be part of fundamental change and development. Interestingly, Dwight Boyd presents his work by adding to each chapter an extended introduction about the reasons he had for writing this article, the position of this article in his own academic development, the relation of this article to wider social and academic movements, and, very importantly, how he looks back at the arguments put forward in the article. In this way Dwight Boyd reconstructs his own academic development and starts a critical-dialogue about its meaning.

As series editors we believe that this book is of fundamental importance for scientific research on moral and ethical thinking.

Fritz Oser
Wiel Veugelers
I would like to acknowledge the contributions of several people. First, this book would never have been completed if it were not for Rula Kahil. It was she who suggested trying the current form it has taken. That suggestion got me past the paralyzing difficulty of seeing how to organize my papers in a more standard format. And that suggestion made it fun to do. In addition, she was also of great help in giving me feedback on what to include and whether or not the Personal Preface of each chapter contained the sort of information that she was looking for in the suggestion. Then, I am also indebted to Margaret Brennan for accepting the challenge of learning APA style, typing the manuscript in the format required by Sense Publishers, and keeping us both laughing about any difficulties she encountered. Finally, I also want to express my thanks to the editors of this series, Fritz Oser and Wiel Veugelers, for appreciating the worth of the particular kind of fusion of philosophy and psychology entertained in this book, and to the publisher, Peter de Liefde, for accepting their rationale for publishing it. Without their strong support this book would likely have never seen the printed page.


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I wish to thank both those publishers who required formal permission and those who did not for allowing me to include the papers in this collection.
INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE OF THIS BOOK

In this book I am of two minds. In both love and war being of two minds signals a weakness, one sometimes fatal. In philosophy, however, I believe that it should be considered a virtue. Perhaps there are some areas of philosophy in which there could be an argument for it being a minor virtue. But when the questions being addressed are located in the realms of morality and education – and especially in their conjunction of moral education – seldom, if ever, will only one perspective suffice. If the question is worth worrying about deeply, being of one mind only is surely a hindrance. Such questions pull for answers that are essentially contestable. Moreover, continuing to grapple with them is partly constitutive of what it means to be human. Although the notion of “truth” might not apply in this context, surely the pursuit of certainty here is the enemy of the pursuit of truth’s analogue. It is in this spirit that I offer this collection of some of my work. All of the papers in this collection explore some aspect of the general question: “What do I think about liberalism as a theoretical framework to guide moral reflection and moral education?” It is this question on which I am of two minds.

Two characteristics primarily shape this book. First, it consists of a collection of my philosophical essays on related problems. As a collection of essays authored by one person, it differs from most such collections in that it includes essays written not just over a relatively short period of years, but over a career of nearly 40 years. As such, it thus represents an account of a personal intellectual journey. This journey is chronicled through the essays in terms of the philosophical and educational problems that have motivated me, the paths of ideas that have been traversed, the directions these paths have taken me, and, especially, the significant development in my philosophical orientation that characterizes the direction of the journey. Each essay can stand on its own, but each also has a substantive connection to others as an integral piece of that journey.

The second characteristic perhaps more profoundly differentiates this collection from others. Most collections let the essays speak for themselves, as finished philosophical products with very little context offered for the individual pieces (except perhaps for something very general in an overall introduction). In my case, however, I was prompted to attempt something quite different by my Research Assistant, Rula Kahil. I had been struggling for some time to put together an earlier incarnation of this collection, but finding it difficult to identify a viable overall structure. I was about to give up on the project, and informed her of this likely decision. Her response was not what I expected. Instead of just suggesting some
ways of organizing papers around common problems that I had perhaps overlooked, she had another idea. She observed that she often wished to see more of the person behind the philosophical products, how the papers came to be written, why they were focused in a particular way, what was the thinking that led to their taking the particular shape they did, etc. She then supported her point by adding that this was not just a personal idiosyncratic desire, but other graduate students with whom she had discussed it also strongly agreed. In essence, they wanted to see more of this kind of inside story because they felt convinced that it would make the papers “live” more for them and perhaps help them learn more about the process of doing philosophical work and publication. In thinking back about my experience as a graduate student, I found that I resonated strongly with this observation, as I remembered having a similar feeling that something was missing from what I was reading. So I took my Research Assistant’s advice. Thus, you will find contextual and personal information in this book as well as philosophical discussion.

The essays collected here chronicle intellectual tension and development, with “one mind” being represented in early papers, the second gradually coming into play as the journey unfolds, and the tension between them explicitly identified in later papers. In some of the papers, the earlier written ones found in “Part I. Liberalism Unpacked and Exemplified in Moral Education,” I just assume the perspective of liberalism and endeavor to explore some of its key features and why I considered them philosophically and morally important. The papers in “Part II. Breaking out of the Liberal Cocoon: Moves Critical of My Liberal Allegiance” then represent different kinds of critique of this very allegiance and thus steps I have taken that have led me to be of two minds about liberalism. In “Part III. Moral Education from the Perspective of Being of Two Minds,” identifying more explicitly both the limits and the strengths of liberalism that emerge from these critiques, I explore the implications for conceptualizing moral reflection and education. This brief summary of the three Parts of the book reflects the first differentiating characteristic of this collection of essays in terms of the nature of their philosophical content and the trajectory of change in my thinking over nearly 40 years.

The second differentiating characteristic described above as more personal and contextual material occurs in two forms. The first takes the form of a “Personal Prologue,” what I think of as a brief autobiography of my engagement with philosophy over most of my life, particularly what I see as the most salient influences on that engagement and the change in it. Although I do not intend a direct connection between the content of this Prologue and individual essays, I offer it as personal background against which the differences among the three parts take their shape. Then the second form of this characteristic focuses more on the contextual influences on each paper when it was written – how it originated, what I was trying to do and the reasons for doing this, why it took the form that it did, etc. That is, for each essay in all three Parts I will include a “Personal Preface” that addresses these kinds of concerns, particularly as they inform the way in which the paper contributes to the theme of the Part within which it is located.
As implied, I will engage some of this exploration within the context of aspects of moral education. There are two reasons for this focus, one personal and the other philosophical. On the personal side, I developed an interest in moral education in my graduate studies, largely due to the fact that I had the opportunity to work closely with Lawrence Kohlberg. As I have maintained this interest throughout my career, even as I changed my philosophical position, it shows up in much of my work. However, a second, philosophical reason underlies this focus quite independently of my personal interest. As I argue in Chapter 9, education is an inherently moral and political endeavor. In this sense all education is moral education, and unavoidably so. This characteristic is often hidden, lurking in the murky background of unacknowledged assumptions. But when the focus of attention is on moral education in a narrower sense of explicit efforts to shape the moral and political development of the next generation it cannot be hidden. Rather, significant moral and political questions—and the answers being given to them, whether explicitly or implicitly—are more clearly exposed and thus call for philosophical articulation and critique. Thus I find a focus on moral education to be an heuristically useful entry in some of the essays, and to some extent underlying the spirit of all, for thinking about such questions.

Some of the papers collected here were written over 30 years ago, others quite recently. But the context in which I wish them to be read is, in both cases, a contemporary one. I have in mind the current attention being given to “character” and “character education.” This attention is quite remarkable in many ways, some laudatory, others, scary. “Character education” is now (again) a hot topic, in the media, in schools, in academic circles, and even in political campaigns. It is also an extremely vague and contested topic in all of these various venues: what is meant by the label “character education” is rarely clear,¹ and even more rarely well-grounded either theoretically or empirically. This lack of clarity and grounding leads, I believe, directly to two serious weaknesses in the literature on character education.

First, most, if not all, proponents of the currently popular forms of character education seem to pay homage to many of the core tenants of liberalism, considered as moral and/or political theory that has dominated Western thinking since the enlightenment. However, they also seem either to be ignorant of the main strengths of this tradition or choose to ignore them when the ideas bid to undercut the simplicity and “folk-belief” nature of what they propose. Yet more damning, in my opinion, is the second weakness that even the most theoretically sophisticated accounts of what is needed in contemporary character education take no notice of the serious limitations to liberalism’s capacity to adequately address some of the more egregious moral/political problems plaguing contemporary North American society—such as, in particular, racism, and even multiculturalism in any deep sense. If anything, the quite conservative ideology that dominates this literature occludes attention to these limitations in such a way as to make them more serious—and to thereby exacerbate the problems themselves. My being of two minds in this book is meant to address both of these identified weaknesses in the literature surrounding the most popular forms of contemporary character education.
As already noted, these essays chronicle my developing stance on the question, “What do I think about liberalism as a theoretical framework to guide moral reflection and moral education?” As their titles suggest, each of the three Parts has coherence across the included chapters in terms of a core theme or purpose that represents one of three different aspects of my attempt to unpack my ambivalence on the overall framing question. However, I also need to anticipate some rhetorical aspects of the work as a whole. First, as will be obvious to any reader who chooses to read all the chapters in numerical sequence, there is considerable overlap of ideas across essays, places where different chapters utilize the same ideas in much the same manner of expression. I have chosen not to revise the essays in order to remove these instances of overlap for two reasons. The first reason is that when an idea or passage from one essay also appears in a subsequent essay it is always because it functions in the latter as an integral part of a different and often larger argument. Thus the overlap achieves, I believe, the goal of illustrating how the same idea can function at different levels and for different purposes and thus how it has been central to the development of my thinking. A second reason for leaving the overlap in, however, concerns more how some readers might choose to engage with this book. Although the sequential integration that characterizes the whole is important in itself, for a number of reasons readers may choose to jump directly to one of the later essays. In such a case, not only will the overlap not be noticed, but also, and more importantly, the essay would be missing an essential piece of the argument should it be removed.

Finally, there is also a third reason for not removing the overlap that applies more to the papers in Parts II and III. This reason applies to the use in all of them of my interpretation of Iris Marion Young’s (1990a) account of oppression in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. In particular, I depend heavily on Young’s move away from liberalism’s exclusive focus on the discrete individual as the proper initial assumption in all theorizing. As she has argued so clearly and cogently, this move is necessary in order to recognize the reality and implications of the relationally-defined groups through which individuals function in the real world, and in terms of which individuals’ identities and are shaped and welfare determined to a large extent. This way of viewing social interaction was pivotal in making me of two minds in the way illustrated in this book. But I have also discovered that this is a conceptual move that many liberals find very difficult to make. I believe that one reason is that liberalism’s focus on individuals, and then on all collectivities in terms of how individuals interact, is so hegemonic that the different starting point that is required for oppression to come into view is extremely difficult to assimilate for many. In short, the third reason for the overlap of these ideas in all of the essays in Parts II and III is that I think they bear repeating as often as possible to counter the liberal hegemony that seems to me to characterize the one-mindedness of so many people.

A brief summary of the essays to be found in each of the three Parts in turn follows.
INTRODUCTION

PART I. LIBERALISM UNPACKED AND EXEMPLIFIED IN MORAL EDUCATION

The essays in Part I address philosophical ways of thinking about some core ideas that have their origin and grounding in the liberal tradition, ideas that seem to me largely missing from the contemporary character education literature, and thus, as far as I can tell, from practice in schools. And, despite the fact that these essays were written in the first half of my career, I still find the analyses and arguments credible. At least, I see them credible enough to significantly deepen the theoretical grounding of current character education practice, should they be taken seriously enough to be integrated into the conception of what should count as good character education.

All of the essays in Part I just assume a liberal framework, usually implicitly, but clearly in terms of the authors and literature drawn upon. Many key assumptions of this framework surface throughout these essays, although some assumptions are not explored in depth until my later work brought them under my more critical gaze. Indeed, I was so comfortable with the perspective of liberalism during the writing of this early work – so “of-just-one-mind” – that I did not explicitly entertain critical questions about the assumptions that I chose to use philosophically. Instead, for the most part, I saw my aim as largely one of philosophical clarification of the assumptions themselves and then of how they should be taken as functioning in moral education, if understood properly.

Chapter 1 explicates and illustrates the three most basic normative conceptual differentiations dear to liberalism. These differentiations serve to clarify what different kinds of approaches to moral education should be seen as emphasizing and how failure to do so can result in serious miscommunication. Although I use Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory as the central illustration, I intend the differentiations to be understood more generally. In fact, they arguably form the conceptual starting point of most, if not all, liberal moral and political theorizing, although there is much variation in interpretation of both to what the three basic concepts point to substantively and to how they are interrelated.

Chapter 2 identifies and compares the most basic normative ideas of two prominent liberal theorists, Lawrence Kohlberg and John Rawls. I see these two authors as representing articulations of the normative core of liberalism, but as developed within two different disciplines. I thus establish the underlying strong connection between them. I explicate this connection in terms of their shared assumptions about the boundaries of the moral realm (as found in Chapter 1), about principles of justice, about the nature of the person, and about the need for a constructivist approach to moral knowledge.

Chapter 3 focuses directly on a notion that figures prominently in much of liberal moral philosophy. It offers an argument about how the notion of moral principles should be understood as contributing to the aim of correct moral judgments. The argument uses as a foil the prevalent tendency, especially in moral education discourse, to either see moral principles as absolutes or to reject them as empty of
any help. It locates this tendency in the mistaken belief that principles must function deductively in moral deliberation. As a positive suggestion, I then synthesize how something like Rawls’ “constructivist” account of moral reasoning (introduced in Chapter 2) captures our commonly shared belief that moral judgment must accommodate both autonomy and objectivity.

Then Chapter 4 offers an interpretation of the thorny idea of objectivity in morality via worries about the possibility of corrigibility in moral education efforts. Picking up on the implied positions about truth in these worries, polarized in the contrast between “objectivism” and “subjectivism,” I adapt Thomas Nagel’s claims about the general nature of objectivity in thought to show how both positions rest on mistakes. I then offer a way of avoiding these mistakes through my interpretation of Rawls’ “constructivist” account, understood as both procedural and essentially intersubjective. I show how this move entails an educational view of moral objectivity that is both performative and developmental.

Chapter 5 rounds out this first Part by turning to the difficult question of how moral education can be conceived from a liberal framework in such a way as to respect cultural pluralism. Seeking to avoid some conceptual confusions that this question can spawn, I refer to the Canadian context and the use within it of the metaphor of a “multicultural mosaic.” I use this metaphor to better focus on aspects of the core question, “What is the moral point of view that grounds our disposition to take multicultural/intercultural education seriously – as something that is morally good, perhaps even required?” I see the direction of an answer to this question as essentially an educational effort, understood as an inter-generational, constructivist, performative activity, one that places moral education teachers at its center.

PART II. BREAKING OUT OF THE LIBERAL COCOON:
MOVES CRITICAL OF MY LIBERAL ALLEGIANCE

All of the essays in Part II reflect a more critical direction of my thinking about liberalism. They are steps I took that challenged my original allegiance and led me to being of two minds. Each focuses on kinds of problems that I conclude (or at least imply) liberalism cannot adequately address. In some, the even stronger claim surfaces that for these kinds of problems the perspective of liberalism actively prevents even seeing the real problems. In fact, it might seem that any allegiance to liberalism has been jettisoned. Although my thinking at points in this phase of my journey has indeed veered in this direction, I think this interpretation – even by me at times – is mistaken. It arises instead from the fact that all of these essays take only a critical stance, with no attempt to address where that leaves me with regard to looking back to where the journey started. As such, they are absolutely essential to establishing the direction of the journey, a turn of many degrees that affords a different view of the moral/political landscape, but not a well-defined destination. (It is this task of being clearer about the destination to which I turn in the essays to be found in the subsequent Part III.)
Chapter 6 can be read as a transition to the content of the other chapters found in Part II. It serves this function in two ways. First, it offers a critical analysis of the commonalities and differences in the prominent approaches to moral education extant in the previous 25 years. Although rarely if ever acknowledged as such, all were clearly grounded in liberalism, and thus this overview serves as general picture of how liberalism has in actuality been manifested in programs of moral education. Then, second, the chapter problematizes this commonality in terms of the underlying, limited interpretation of what is seen as constituting a “moral relationship.” In doing so, it also introduces in nascent form most of the critical steps that are then taken to more satisfactory length in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 7 then explores the critical question of how a society professing deep commitment to cultural pluralism must address a very difficult problem labeled the “dilemma of diversity.” It identifies three common perspectives purporting to recognize this problem, each based in liberalism and exemplified in an approach to moral education. Through analysis of these perspectives I show how each in a different way fails to squarely face the dilemma in favor of glossing over its difficulty. I then show how in each case this failure serves to support the dominance of those in some social locations within this diversity at the expense of others.

Chapter 8, co-authored with Barbara Applebaum, consists of an analysis of what it actually means to use the notion of “dominance” as a moral and political criticism as I do in Chapter 7. This analysis hinges significantly on the move away from liberalism’s preoccupation with individuals and toward interpreting social justice problems as residing primarily in the interaction of “social groups,” understood in a particular way. We engage this conceptual analysis through an explicit identification of our personal social locations within such groups. We then explore how exposing a kind of “dominance of meaning” also reveals how we can be complicit in dominance despite out intentions.

Chapter 9 then represents a personalized effort to build upon and deepen the conclusion of Chapter 8 by exploring the question, “What kind of mistake might I be making if I try to ‘do’ philosophy of education as if my social location does not matter?” Starting from an argument that education must be seen as an inherently moral endeavor, I explicitly take up my own social location in terms of several kinds of relationally-defined groups of the sort identified in Chapter 8. Then, building on an analysis of educational discourse as necessarily performative, I endeavor to show how assuming that this location does not matter can result in inflicting egregious moral harm on others not so located.

Chapter 10 returns to the much earlier focus on John Rawls, but now from a highly critical perspective. Using the rhetorical device of reporting a Grand Jury indictment, the paper first briefly explores why the history of treatment of race within liberalism should lead someone with unexamined liberal allegiances to harbor deep-seated doubts. Then it focuses primarily on the work of Rawls as a particularly stringent test case for raising questions about how well contemporary liberal theory
INTRODUCTION

fares in the face of this concern. I identify a set of different kinds of evidence why Rawls’ theory of justice should be found wanting in this regard.

Chapter 11 extends the kind of critical analysis of contemporary liberalism found in Chapter 10 by focusing on the work of Larry May, a theorist who explicitly sets out to enrich our way of thinking about responsibility for racism (among other social problems that involve group relations). It shows how even someone with good intentions can let his unwavering attachment to liberalism’s focus on the individual impoverish, even vitiate, his understanding of what is needed. It thus serves to deepen the suspicion raised through the preceding indictment of Rawls.

PART III. MORAL EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BEING OF TWO MINDS

The chapters in Part III represent some of my recent efforts to come to grips with the realization that I am, despite the critical changes in my perspective on liberalism found in Part II, still somewhat “of two minds.” I articulate this realization through more reflections on moral education in each of the chapters comprising this Part. There are two reasons for this return to a more explicit focus on moral education. The first reason is that the opportunities to do this kind of meta-reflection on where I stood with regard to liberalism also included an obligation to do this with implications for moral education clearly in mind. The second reason is, however, more personal. To better understand and articulate what remains of my earlier attraction to liberalism, it was heuristically useful to return to the practical context of that early work. The result of these two reasons taken together is that, with the exception of Chapter 13, these chapters explicitly weave together the personal and the theoretical as initiated and called for in Chapters 8 and 9.

Chapter 12 utilizes the philosophical notion of the “subjectivity” of human persons as an entry into thinking more about how liberalism both enables and constrains conceptualization of moral education. I first unpack my understanding of the kind of subjectivity that underlies liberalism’s notion of the individual. Then I contrast to that picture the kind of subjectivity that comes into view when persons are seen as members of social groups in relations of oppression. Despite being clearly incompatible, I show how both seem to be needed and thus a profound dilemma arises for theorizing how moral education should address problems such as racism.

Chapter 13 first critiques the currently popular approach to character education by showing the many ways in which it fails to recognize and accommodate the existence of conflict and difference in society and thus prevents any real attention to problems of social justice. It then explores two alternatives that focus more explicitly on the moral education of citizens. The first alternative synthesizes Rawls’ liberal perspective on the virtues that citizens would need to enable the stability of a society based on his theory of justice. A second alternative arises from a critique of the adequacy of Rawls’ view and proposes a more radical picture of what virtues
would be needed by citizens located on the dominant side of oppressive relations if social justice is viewed from this perspective.

Chapter 14 starts from the assumptions that deep diversity and conflict are social facts and that one aim of morality must be to facilitate efforts to appreciate the moral other in the context of these facts. I then show how three different ways of focusing on unity within difference should be understood as harmful impediments to these efforts. I characterize “Epistemological Closure,” “Cultural Arrogance,” and “Relations of Oppression” in turn as “blind spots” to keeping this aim in view. In each case, I also make suggestions as to how moral education might be better conceptualized to address the impediment. But I concentrate on the third of these because it represents an impediment that most people in positions of social privilege fail to recognize and it may be almost impossible to completely eradicate even when recognized.

Chapter 15 represents my most recent effort in one paper to come directly to terms with the overall organizing question driving this whole collection, namely, “What do I think about liberalism as a theoretical framework to guide moral reflection and moral education?” I shape the argument explicitly in terms of my being “of two minds” about this question, by my ambivalence. In order to explore the roots of this ambivalence I first synthesize my understanding of liberalism’s foundational non-moral assumptions (most of which are inadequately identified in the chapters of Part I) and then the most basic moral and political building blocks of its theoretical framework. I then identify, with significant qualifications, the strengths in this framework that I would be willing to defend. But then I counter this positive assessment with a negative one based on liberalism’s inability to adequately address relations of oppression that are so harmful and extant globally. I end by pointing to a direction of change that I think that theorizing a more adequate normative framework should take. This involves exploration of a principle of “Dominance Sensitivity” that people in relative positions of privilege, like myself, need to take up in three identified ways.

NOTE

1 One source of this problem lies in conceptual vagueness and confusion, a source addressed directly in several of the essays in this collection. Another, however, lies in the seemingly intractable messiness of terminology that plagues not only public discussion but also academic literature pertaining to this area of education concern. Moreover, how things are named often changes over time. Since the essays in this book have been written over a significant period of time, a terminological problem immediately becomes apparent. During the period in which the essays of Part I of this book were written, “character education” was seldom heard and even in some circles held to be theoretically and empirically suspect. “Moral education” was the phrase of choice. However, in more recent years, during which the essays of Part III were written, this terminological preference has been reversed. For these reasons both phrases appear in the chapters of this book. However, they should not be taken as synonymous for the arguments articulated in Chapters 1 and 13.
PERSONAL PROLOGUE

VERY EARLY IMPULSES

My life-long favourable disposition toward philosophy started very early, although unknowingly to me at the time. It sneaked up on me very gradually, perhaps starting as early as age nine and certainly by early adolescence. It was probably prompted by where I spent my childhood and teen years. I grew up on a family farm in southeastern Kansas, the kind of farm on which work was the default position for everyone, whatever your age. So, by nine I was deemed old enough to graduate from garden work with my mother to “going to the field” on a tractor by myself for many hours at a time. By early adolescence this meant full days of 12–14 hours. Due to childhood asthma, my assigned task for most of the summer was cultivating the corn and beans with an old Case tractor. This required sitting on an iron seat with no back, trying to “man”-handle a tractor with no power steering and bad brakes, and doing so with unwavering concentration to avoid moving more than two inches to the right or left and thus plowing up the tiny plants I was supposed to be nurturing. Now, part of the point of noting these details is to emphasize that this was an inherently lonely way to spend much of my early life. I was forced by necessity to be my own company for these long hours. But the main point here is what can be done with that company. Another detail thus needs to be added: all of this went on at the often break-neck speed of one mile an hour. So it must be said that this work was also inherently boring. Day-dreaming was one way of dealing with this boredom, but at that age and on a Kansas farm, the content of this itself can be equally boring. I soon discovered that active thinking was much less boring – and much less likely to result in the fence at the end of the row suffering serious injury because a tractor had failed to turn soon enough. Thus, if philosophy involves focused thought, and, in particular, thinking about thinking, I suspect it was cultivated into my bones at a very early age, or at least by the time I was an adolescent and still on that tractor.

To be clear, none of this is meant to suggest that I was some sort of philosophical prodigy, something like one of the main characters in an early Mathew Lippman philosophy-for-children novel. Or, that I even knew what philosophy was. In fact, those involved in a Kansas farm life in the late forties and early to late fifties seemed singularly unaware of the existence of philosophy. (However, having recently found and reread two letters that my father wrote me, one when I graduated from high school and the other when I decided to apply for Conscientious Objector status to the Vietnam War, I must add that I think my father was a natural born philosopher. Almost always he could see at least two sides to any question.) Thus, exposure to the real stuff came relatively late, not until I went to university. In fact, I think it fair to say that my early schooling did not support this kind of thinking, and in many ways
militated against it. When one’s first three years of school are located in a three-room schoolhouse with one teacher, no classmates, no indoor plumbing, and only five students in year three (and one of those was an older brother), the curriculum is pretty basic. Still, since I almost always finished my assigned lessons by noon, I did have hours every day to listen to the teacher’s lessons to the “big kids”, to play (on my own, of course), and, perchance, to think. My experience was nudged toward the more normal from grade four until high school graduation by the closure of the country school and our move to the local “town school.” Still, with only 19 classmates and only 120 in the whole school, the curriculum was far from rich. For example, no foreign languages were taught, English was mostly grammar, and only a little science and mathematics was offered. Football was king. Any students inclined in the direction of thinking about thinking were left to their own devices – if not outright discouraged for being seen as having their head in the clouds. However, I may have received a subtle – and certainly unintentional – nudge toward my eventual interest in philosophy of education from many of my classroom experiences in these early years. Although I honestly do not think I was an arrogant young person (much closer to shy, timid, and introverted), I do remember often wondering to myself why the teacher could not seem to understand my classmates’ questions – and thinking that I could do it better.

EARLY ENCOUNTERS AND INFLUENCES

The subjects that most attracted me in high school were mathematics, chemistry, and physics. They were exciting because they offered new ideas and new ways of thinking about the world. (This likely explains to a large extent why to this day I remember vividly how engrossed I became in the only two substantive research papers I was asked to write in four years of high school. Free to choose, I wrote one on the historical development of the periodic table of elements and the other on bubbles.) It also helped that I was good at them. For both of these reasons, and with very little prudential or strategic consideration, I thought I would concentrate on these subjects when I enrolled in the University of Kansas for a B.A. in the fall of 1963. Although I took seriously the need to learn how to write and to learn a foreign language (German), the focus on science dominated in my first two years.

One significant exception to this focus, however, undoubtedly influenced my subsequent path: I also took a philosophy course in ethics in my second year. My professor was David Jones, a recent doctoral graduate of Harvard University’s Department of Philosophy. It not only exposed me for the first time to some of the “greats” in the Western tradition of moral philosophy, but also introduced me to the contemporary thinking of some philosophers that I would subsequently have the opportunity to study with – in particular, Roderick Firth and John Rawls. What really excited me about this course was the way it seemed in places to speak directly to my life, especially to patterns of thinking that I held, but that seemed at the same time somehow constraining, if not downright morally debilitating. One
example was the problematic forms of relativistic thinking. Another, even more personally significant, was my adolescent tendency to be attracted to psychological egoism. Through this course, I learned that this seemingly unassailable belief could be shown through clear, systematic analysis to be naïve at best, and arguably flat-out wrong. To this day, I can still remember being stunned by how Jones used something from the eighteenth-century philosopher Bishop Butler to escape what I later referred to in print as the “quicksand” of an unexamined belief in the truth of psychological egoism as an all-encompassing explanatory framework of human motivation. I now suspect that this personal experience foretold – and perhaps causally shaped – much of the way I have approached philosophy and philosophy of education in all of my subsequent philosophical studies and professional research and writing. Without a doubt, as I will explain later, it planted the seed of my appreciation of the significance of Lawrence Kohlberg’s work in the psychology of moral development that shaped a good part of both my graduate work and much of my early career.

My budding scientific career did not survive beyond my second year (although to this day, I remain on the lookout for an issue of magazines like *Scientific American* with articles that I think I might understand, especially on topics pertaining to cosmology and time). Back then, I was not (and still am not) a big fan of large, bureaucratically-run institutions, but just occasionally they accidentally do some good for some individuals. I was required by my university to formally “declare” a major before I would be allowed to register for my third year. I knew that science and mathematics no longer felt right. I also had learned that, despite getting almost all “A’s” in these areas, I was not as good in these subjects as some of my classmates – or, at least, their “A’s” seemed to come more easily than mine. I also had come to realize that I had many questions that no science or mathematics could answer – questions of meaning, conceptual connection, and justification, especially, moral and political justification. This latter insight came not from any class, but from long, vehemently-argued “BS” sessions with my two closest friends and classmates in the student-run Scholarship Hall where we resided. (Today, one is a renowned physical chemist at Brown University and the other a very successful psychiatrist in New York.) But what to do given these realizations? My approach to answering this burning question of a major was hardly philosophical, but more like what one might learn on a farm. In short, I sat down with the University of Kansas catalogue of course offerings and went through it page by page, reading the course titles and brief descriptions and asking myself, “Does this grab me?” To be honest, the answer was overwhelmingly negative for most entries. But, there were some – and almost all of these were found (surprise, surprise) in the Department of Philosophy. Ergo, young Mr. Boyd was duly registered as a philosopher-to-be.

On the whole, I found the philosophical world to be a comfortable one, and courses in the philosophy department took up most of my schedule for my two final years. There were, however, notable exceptions: for example, my exposure in a second-year linguistics course to the Benjamin Lee Whorf hypothesis concerning how our way
of understanding the world is constrained so much by one’s first language. That led to my subsequent third-year decision to “test” it via a very intensive year of Chinese language study. In addition, my one exposure to psychology, although not through a course, proved to be a subsequently powerful, almost prophetic, influence. For one summer month, I was hired by Jones to read and summarize in writing all of the very extensive entries in the bibliography at the end of the chapter on “The Acquisition of Morality” in Roger Brown’s (1965) widely used textbook *Social Psychology*. About the only entry that seemed to me – and to Jones – philosophically informed and interesting was a paper by a young psychologist at Chicago by the name of Lawrence Kohlberg. I tried to find another paper of his listed in the bibliography of the one paper of his that I did find, but couldn’t locate it. I followed Jones’ wise and surprising suggestion of “Well, why don’t you just write him?”, only to learn from his secretary that Professor Kohlberg was in Taiwan doing research and would thus not be able to answer my inquiry. I distinctly remember thinking that this was very disappointing because his integration of psychology and philosophy intrigued me, and I assumed that my opportunity for learning more about it was missed. In fact, however, this experience would very soon prove to be my entry card into an approach to philosophy that has been one of my main academic interests and hallmark of much of my past – and current – research and publication.

Although I performed well in the philosophy courses, I must admit that I found most of them boring and “dry” in much of their content and almost all of their pedagogy. “Dry” in this case should be understood as the opposite of what I experienced in Jones’ ethics course – that is, that what I learned in these other courses seemed so far from connecting with my life as to be more just an intellectual exercise than personally insightful ways of thinking about my thinking. Not to put too fine of a gloss on it, by the end of my third-year I was burnt out, bone tired of sitting through these courses (although I enjoyed writing the papers). My interest in philosophy, and likely my career, was saved by a creative Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, someone I did not even know at the time. Apparently understanding the danger of burnout for some students, Dean Bell initiated a special “Senior Independent Study Program,” and offered, on the basis of our academic record to date, 13 fourth-year students the option to sign up for it. There were just two requirements beyond carrying a full course load in terms of hours: (1) we could not register in any existing regular course offering; and (2) we had to design our own individual reading courses in whatever areas we desired and find professors to supervise them. In this context, I flourished again, even in a course in which I required myself to read and write about Kant’s ethical works, supervised by the then chair of the department, Richard DeGeorge.

My personal contact with DeGeorge proved to be very helpful, not so much in terms of content, but in a surprising way that changed my philosophical path radically. On the basis of my record, he encouraged me to apply to philosophy departments in several major universities – namely, Chicago, Northwestern, Princeton, Yale, and Harvard (admittedly a long stretch from cultivating corn in Kansas). To my huge
disappointment and DeGeorge’s expressed surprise, I was accepted with funding only by Northwestern University. Oh, and I also received a letter from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) congratulating me for being nominated for a fellowship to study philosophy of education. This letter puzzled me considerably, as I had not applied to HGSE – or even considered applying there, having no idea that this program existed … or, to confess, even what exactly philosophy of education was. When I took this news to DeGeorge, and asked him what he thought it meant, he revealed the role he had played. He told me that Israel Scheffler at HGSE had written to a number of chairs of philosophy departments around the country asking for recommendations of names of students deemed strong in philosophy, as he had an agenda (something I learned later) to beef up the philosophical nature of the field of philosophy of education by attracting high-calibre students. When I eventually learned that HGSE would also spring for a major fellowship, I began to seriously consider accepting, because I was really worried about the depth of my interest in “pure” philosophy. So I asked my early mentor, David Jones, for his advice. His answer was that I should take the offer from Harvard because, although it was a “back door,” it was “still a way in.” So I ended up, almost by accident, in an academic environment quite different from any I could have imagined when I started my philosophical journey.

MAJOR INFLUENCES DURING GRADUATE STUDY

My years of resident study at Harvard (1967–1972, minus two years leave, 1968–1970, when I worked at the Massachusetts General Hospital as a Conscientious Objector to the war in Vietnam) were heady years – extremely intense and rewarding. I was there when some prominent scholars were making major splashes on the academic scene and, thus, had the opportunity to work with them. These included Michael Walzer, Roderick Firth, Hilary Putnam, Israel Scheffler, David Purpel, Lawrence Kohlberg, and John Rawls. (At the time, I don’t think it even crossed my mind that these were all men, but it certainly does now. Indeed, I have serious concerns about how this fact must have shaped my thinking and approach to philosophy, concerns that were much later appropriately brought to my attention by feminist scholars such as Jane Roland Martin, Nel Noddings, Patricia Williams, and Iris Marion Young.) In particular, Scheffler was in the process of writing some of his most notable books and his lectures were often pieces for those books. Rawls was approximately two-thirds through writing *A Theory of Justice* and his lectures in a course on political philosophy were almost exclusively from his work-in-progress. By the time I returned to university in 1970 the work was completed, and when I sat in on his course again, I was able to witness this progress. Kohlberg was entering the most productive years of his career in terms of influence on the field of developmental psychology, his ability to get major funds to support his research, and the involvement of his graduate students in the on-going, “boot-strapping” revision and refinement of his theory of moral development.
While engaged in this graduate study, I thought of my work as being located somehow in-between that of Scheffler, Rawls, and Kohlberg. I still do, in part. Certainly, these three had the most lasting influence on me. From Scheffler, I learned how to think more analytically about education, especially how language can be misused and how it should always be carefully examined. He also introduced me to pragmatism in a way that made the major figures in pragmatism come alive, and in a way that helped me immensely in understanding Kohlberg’s deep dependence on Dewey. He also introduced me to the British philosophers of education, particularly Richard Peters, inviting him on several occasions to visit Harvard, give lectures, and talk with the graduate students in philosophy of education. Rawls had a huge influence on me in terms of how I thought about normative questions. His lectures on ethics (published many years later in 2000 as Lectures on the History of Ethics) were always so systematic, clear, and considerate of those who had gone before him. In particular, as a mode of entering philosophical discussions, I have always tried (though have never been even close to his success in this) to follow his humbling claim that whenever he found something that he thought obviously wrong or misguided in one of the “greats,” he would refuse to believe this assessment until he had understood from inside the author’s framework why it likely seemed correct from his/her perspective. In addition, I found in Rawls’ political philosophy a satisfying account of why the social contract tradition was so attractive to me, an attraction that continued and surfaced often with explicit Rawlsian flavour in my own writing for most of my career.

Finally, although I was a philosophy student, Kohlberg probably had the deepest influence on me. Some of this influence was certainly academic. In particular, I gained from him a deep appreciation of how philosophy and psychology can, and should, complement each other in the study of some kinds of questions. I have kept this appreciation alive throughout my career. While it appears in many of my papers, the earliest example can be found in the topic for my doctoral dissertation. Here, the emphasis was on the justification, development, teaching, and evaluation of a course in ethics for first- and second-year university students. It focused on countering the problematic meta-thinking about moral commitments that so plagued me before the course I took with Jones – what I came to call the “problem of sophomoritis.” I have also considered moral education to be one of my central areas of academic research and writing, and this certainly derived from Kohlberg’s influence. It was primarily through his urging that I became very active in the Association for Moral Education (including 1986–1989 as Vice President, and then 1989–1992 as President) and served as the Assistant Editor of The Journal of Moral Education where I was responsible for all submissions from North America from 1981 to 1996.

These academic influences have certainly loomed large in shaping my career, but it may be the personal influence that is even more important. Kohlberg had a massive intellect and interest in ideas – perhaps one of the few geniuses with whom I have ever had the privilege of having close contact. At the same time, I suspect as a result of his formal training in psychoanalysis, he had the capacity to listen
to others’ ideas – even those of his graduate students, and even when they raised critical questions about his own theory – as if those who espoused them were true equals. When, in the words of one of my classmates, the usual mode of discussion at Harvard seemed to be something like “screwing into each other’s foreheads,” being consistently the partner in something radically different was truly inspiring. This experience, both in my Harvard years and for the many years until Kohlberg’s death, provided me a model that I sought to emulate through my interaction with ideas and those who advanced them, especially my students.

INFLUENCES FROM MY TEACHING CAREER AT OISE

I have spent my whole career at one institution – The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto (UT). Similar to my experience of ending up at Harvard for graduate study, I started that career at OISE without knowing anything about the place. Actually, I wasn’t even looking for a job. In fact, I wasn’t even sure I wanted to remain in academia. (Studying with the likes of Scheffler, Rawls, and Kohlberg can be quite daunting for a Kansas farm boy, as it was very clear to me that I could never be as insightful or productive as they were.) In 1975, I was finishing my dissertation under the joint supervision of Scheffler and Kohlberg while a marginal “Visiting Scholar” at the University of Washington. While on a trip back to Cambridge to show Kohlberg my latest draft, I was approached by someone in the Department of History and Philosophy of Education at OISE to see if I would like to apply for a position they had open. On considerable urging from Kohlberg, I stopped off in Toronto on my way back to Seattle, interviewed for the position, and two weeks later had it. Thinking that I might go just for one year to test the waters, I stayed for thirty-three years (retiring in 2008).

Although academics often badmouth how their home institutions are run, and I am no exception here, I must say that on the whole OISE was remarkably good to me in offering conditions favourable to my work as a philosopher of education. Having good colleagues with a wide range of scholarly interests was an essential part of these conditions. When I arrived at OISE – and for many years of my early career – the department consisted of six philosophers of education and six historians of education, all devoted to graduate teaching only. This probably made it the largest such program in North America, and perhaps even in the academic world in general. One implication was that there was a wide diversity of intellectual interests and expertise among those on the philosophy side. Thus I never had to teach courses that were outside the boundaries of where I felt prepared and comfortable. Among other things, this meant that with only a few exceptions, in which I took my turn coordinating a collaboratively taught Introduction to Philosophy of Education requested by students, I had the luxury of every semester choosing what courses of my own design I wanted to teach, according to my current research interests. And because it was never a large program compared to others at OISE, it also meant that I had the unusual luxury for the duration of my career of having small enrollments.
in my classes, often only five or six, and never more than twelve. Finally, as this was a graduate-only program, these two factors together contributed significantly to the fact that my students have been central to my experience, in fact, more so even than the influence of my colleagues.

I consider teaching in the discipline of philosophy a quintessential philosophical activity itself, not something that one just does on the side of the real business. As Socrates evidenced repeatedly throughout Plato’s dialogues, it also matters immensely who is on the other side of a philosophical dialogue. For my purposes here I do not have in mind individual characteristics such as temperament and depth of interest or commitment. Although these do matter hugely, and must be factored into all interactions with particular students, it is very hard to generalize about them without being superficial. Rather, I have in mind the kind of influence that my students had on me that depended more on what they had in their academic and professional background that they brought to my classes and through which my teaching would necessarily be filtered and shaped. Although this is a bit of a simplification (for example, I did have some advanced seminars that had various prerequisites that limited the enrollment to a particular population), most of my courses included students from three general categories. (1) Some of the students were teachers, or school administrators, coming back to university for a master’s degree. Usually, these were also part-time students coming to class after working all day in a school. (2) Others were also currently practitioners, but in other fields, such as nursing or occupational therapy. (3) Still others came directly into the courses for a master’s degree in applied philosophy of education from a BA program in philosophy or a cognate discipline such as political science, or from a similar background at the MA level into a doctoral program of study. Although this range of backgrounds in the same course could occasionally be problematic, I learned that it could more often be intellectually and educationally fecund for most students, and certainly was for me personally. In particular, I learned that it demanded from me different kinds of teaching-as-philosophy. In what follows I will try to capture what I mean by this and the impact it had on me according to each category in turn.

Most of those in the first category, usually teachers, had little if any background in philosophy. But neither were they naïve undergraduates. Rather, they were mature adults, often with many years of experience in schools. For them I had to try to be respectful of this experience and their willingness to engage in a kind of thinking that must have seemed alien, almost literally from another world. One of the ways I did this up front at the beginning of a course was to lay down a rule, aimed primarily at those in the class with considerably more philosophical background, that I simply would not tolerate anyone trying to cut their philosophical teeth by biting other students. At the same time, I also had to learn how to listen carefully for ways that I could interpret their comments and questions, about both the readings and other students’ comments, in such a way as to uncover and articulate, in language they could relate to, the philosophical assumptions and questions embedded in what they seemed to me to be saying. And, especially, I had to learn and take to heart the fact
that philosophical questioning can be dangerous for anybody, but perhaps more so for students of this sort.

This danger was brought home to me quite early in my career when a female student who was an elementary school teacher with several years of teaching under her belt came to class one evening about a third of the way through the course with a distinct frown on her face. When I realized that the frown had not left even though we were having a lively, and I thought good, philosophical discussion, I stopped the discussion and asked her what was wrong. Her answer stunned me, and has stayed with me vividly to this day. What she blurted out with considerable honesty and courage was, “You’ve ruined my life!” When asked to explain, she said that before this course she felt quite comfortable about her teaching practices in the classroom. But now she found herself almost paralyzed by the inclination to stop and think about almost every little thing she did. When I asked the rest of the class if anyone shared this feeling, there was a general nodding of agreement. I did not have to imbibe hemlock as a result. But I did learn from these students, and others like them in the subsequent years, to always be cautious about the power of philosophy and the impact it can have on lives, potentially harmful as well as good. And, that one never knows for sure which it is.

Those in the second category invariably presented a particular kind of pedagogical and philosophical challenge to me, but one that I always enjoyed facing. What they needed to learn as a top priority was nothing less than how philosophical thinking is qualitatively different from the kinds of inquiry found in other academic disciplines with which they were already quite familiar. That is, they almost always came to the program with both undergraduate and master’s degrees in some area of science, or applied science. Thus, when proposing problems for papers or dissertations they were understandably inclined to frame them in empirical terms, not philosophical. My response was to acknowledge the problem as both interesting and worth empirical study...just not with me, or with anyone else on the faculty in this program. I would then unpack the often several fascinating philosophical questions which were embedded in the problem as they stated it – and in terms of which they would have to make assumptions in order for the interesting empirical questions to be grounded enough to be adequately framed. At first, this usually just baffled them and, I suspect, must have felt like I was just being unsupportive and unnecessarily obstructionist.

But after many repetitions of this pattern of interaction, at some point in time (and it could take a year or more) they always evidenced something like a sudden gestalt switch in how they thought about the problems that they were now interested in pursuing. They then proceeded to produce first rate philosophical dissertations that clearly sprang from their original stated motivation for coming to us to study philosophy in the first place. Moreover, the careful philosophical thoughtfulness that was evidenced now in how they thought of their practice often astounded me, given where they started. Perhaps the best example of this was provided by one of the Ed.D. students from nursing. She often seemed to be struggling with understanding, or resisting, the kind of cognitive orientation that I required of her in the courses.
She was interested in working on the question of euthanasia for her dissertation, and eventually I thought she had an argument in mind that might work. But then she disappeared for over a year, and I feared that she had given up. On the contrary, she reemerged, not only no longer seeming to struggle, but enthusiastically reported that she had made good progress in mapping out an argument for exactly the opposite position from the one that she thought she held.

In contrast to those just discussed, students in the third category, especially those entering a Ph.D. program, came with knowledge and skills in the discipline of philosophy already firmly established. And they also presented me with both problems and rewards of different kinds. One kind of problem never failed to surprise me. Occasionally a doctoral student with a very strong record from a reputable university (or other department within my university) would write a course paper for me that I found nearly unacceptable, or at least not close to the level of performance I felt I should expect and thought would be needed for writing a successful dissertation. I would fill the margins with critical feedback, return the paper with an invitation to meet with me, and wait – nervously, I must admit. Although undoubtedly much tougher on the student, the eventual meeting was usually compensatory reward, I think for both of us. That is, resistance and rejection were seldom if ever the responses on the part of the student. If the philosophical evidence was strong enough, and not too harsh, they would take it to heart and learn how to do better work. The best example of this in my experience was a young man who had come to us with one of the best records and glowing recommendations that we had ever seen. When he came to see me, I expected fireworks. Instead, he sat down, looked at me, and said that he had gone back and read all the philosophy papers he had written for his M.A. and now saw that my criticisms applied to them as well as to the one he had submitted to me. I have reason to believe that what he learned from this painful experience did transfer to his subsequent work. As some evidence for this, although I did not supervise it, his dissertation was published immediately as a book by a very good academic press. But I know for certain that this experience (and others like it) had a huge influence on me. In short, it gave me confidence to trust my judgment about the real quality of the M.A. and Ph.D. students' dissertations that I supervised.

I came to believe that such confidence is crucial for effective supervision. After all, students do expect, and have a right to expect, that the person in this role is in position to lead them in the practice of doing philosophy better. However, I also learned that this leadership is not absolute, but must be able to accommodate its own limits, limits integral to good supervision. (Supervision is, in my opinion, a very tricky business.) There are several kinds of limits that I could explore here, but two in particular stand out as most important for me personally. The first concerns the need to learn how the distinction between roles of supervisor and student is not always clear and distinct, but has to be flexible at times. The second concerns a kind of political lesson that I learned, in part from interaction with my students, namely, to always question how far I should trust what I could say from within the role of supervisor … or as a philosopher.
With regard to the first, I learned from my students, particularly the Ph.D. students, to be open to being led by them at some point, rather than thinking that I always had to lead as supervisor. One example of this change should not have come as a surprise since one of the defining characteristics of an acceptable Ph.D. dissertation is that it must make some kind of *original contribution* to the literature on some problem. The contribution might not be completely clear at the beginning of the research and our interaction around it, but it should be at some point before an oral defense. At that point in time I learned it was essential to relinquish the leadership aspect of supervisor, at least to some extent, and acknowledge explicitly that the student was the leader – and *that this was good*. I also learned to not accept the resistance that many students exhibited in one way or another to this partial reversal of roles.

Another example is a more generalized version of this reversal. Good Ph.D. students are often exploring areas of research that are new to the supervisor and, with regard to this exploration, necessarily more in the leading role. Two instances of this kind of students’ leading had an enormous impact on my subsequent scholarship and teaching. In the first case, two students not only supported my budding interest and reading in the area of feminist ethics, but led me into literature and questions that I might not have ever pursued without their initial help. In the second case, another student worked closely with me in our mutual concern to work our way into a kind of literature that required us both to question some of our most basic assumptions in some aspects of political theory. This interaction, over a period of several years, also led me to understand and accept a second kind of limitation that I have subsequently found necessary in how I do philosophy, not only with supervisees, but also in my writing in general. In short, I gradually learned to always be suspicious of how my philosophical claims might be shaped, even warped, by what position I embody in society relative to others. And further, to qualify those claims with explicit recognition of this unavoidable limitation.

Finally, another influence that my teaching has had on me pertains to no less than how I have come to understand the nature of philosophy. It also returns me to reflect on how I have characterized the very starting points of my life-long affair with philosophy identified at the beginning of this personal prologue. It is easy to think of philosophy as a very solitary endeavor, essentially monological in nature. For example, recall that lonely adolescent me on that tractor trying to learn how to think about his thinking, what psychologists now call the development of metacognition. Or another example, one that I have experienced multiple times throughout my career and often with considerable emotional impact, has occurred during some periods of writing papers as sole author for publication. On the basis of talking with many students over the years, I’m also certain that this is how they have at times felt about their individual struggle to produce an acceptable dissertation, often expressed as a lonely business. However, I have come to believe that this monological interpretation of philosophy is something more like a derivative, not the real thing. Or, at least, not the best thing.
On the contrary, I have learned in philosophical dialogue with others, mostly with students but also to a lesser extent with colleagues, that something happens to my thinking that is very difficult to produce by myself. On many occasions, from the give and take of working on a question with someone else I have found myself articulating insights that are completely new, so much so that they genuinely surprise me. This can happen even when the question is something that I have thought about for years, even written about, and felt that I had exhausted what I could say about the question. I have also found that these kinds of creative breakthroughs are very easy to forget, even just hours after the discussion, unless there are opportunities to revisit the question and reiterate their substance with someone; trying to do it on my own seldom works very well. The lesson I take from these experiences is that philosophy is inherently an interpersonal activity, not one that is properly conceived in individualized, monological terms. I believe that this is true even for work that is generated primarily, or even solely, by one person and then published. In this case, the dialogue takes place with many people and can span years, even centuries. Likewise, I think it may be also be true for that lonely adolescent experiencing meta-cognition for the first time: this kind of thinking unavoidably depends on the temporary bifurcation of the self to enable at least two points of view. Thus, if I had never had the opportunity to teach philosophy, my personal sense of what philosophy really is would have been severely impoverished, even crippled. For this reason, I owe more to my students than they to me.
CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTUAL MORAL DISTINCTIONS
FUNDAMENTAL TO LIBERALISM
AS I INTERPRET IT

(1977)

PERSONAL PREFACE

The reasons I wrote this paper very early in my career stemmed from observations I made in two quite different contexts. The first context was some of the work that formed a part of the research for my doctorate. The second context was my later concern with the state of language use in the growing field of moral education.

For my dissertation I designed, philosophically justified, taught (along with Keith Moore), and evaluated a course in moral philosophy for first- and second-year university undergraduates. (This was a more focused spin-off of a course that I designed at the urging of Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard and then in 1970 taught with him, Keith, Carol Gilligan, and Peter Scharff to Harvard undergraduates.) I designed this course around the effort to take seriously the way unexamined beliefs in forms of egoism and relativism are often developmental stumbling blocks for many late adolescents, as they were for me at that age.1 I noticed very early in the course that students were using moral terminology in ways that seemed to me far too loose. This observation took me back to my personal experiences with these problems, as noted in the Personal Prologue. For me, part of my escape from the clutches of these problems in moral thinking was derived from my very early exposure to the work of some major figures in moral philosophy, especially an early paper by John Rawls. Similarly, it was bolstered by my experiences in a “Western Civilization” course. There I was exposed to what is known as the “Social Contract” orientation within the liberal tradition through reading the writings of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant (the tradition with which Rawls also identified himself). I found myself strongly attracted to this tradition of thought and its development over time. In particular, two core features of this tradition stood out for me (and still do today). These features are: (1) the assumption of a particular kind of social conflict as the necessary starting point of moral and political theorizing, and (2) a way of differentiating basic concepts as an essential tool for theorizing about that conflict. So, recalling this experience, and having learned how central these ideas were to Rawls with whom I had been recently studying, I wrote and delivered a lecture focusing on these features and utilizing a diagram of what I called the “Moral Pie.”2
The second context for another observation that motivated this paper consisted of my subsequent reading of the burgeoning literature in the area variously called “values education” and “moral education.” In short, I observed a similarly loose use of moral terminology, particularly across “camps” promoting different educational approaches. It seemed to me that not only did this looseness interfere with helpful communication, it was also sometimes downright dangerous – especially to anyone who might be grappling with the same problems as those that my undergraduate course was designed to address. The core of this paper is thus the lecture that I wrote for the undergraduate course. This core is then framed by a concern about that looseness in terminology in the existing literature.

I could have addressed the latter concern by supporting it through instances drawn from the literature. For example, a strong case could have been made by demonstrating how it occurs in the movement known as “Values Clarification” which was at that time so prominent in the literature and in schools. Instead, I chose to focus on Kohlberg’s theory of moral development. There are several reasons for this choice. One of these was, admittedly, loyalty. I had worked closely with Kohlberg for my doctoral degree, and I saw no reason to give more press to other approaches that seemed to me conceptually confused. However, a set of other more substantive, philosophical reasons also made this choice appealing to me.

Thus, Kohlberg was one of the very few prominent theoreticians writing at the time in the field of moral education who took seriously, and articulated explicitly, the conceptual differentiations found in this paper. In fact, I could argue that a correct understanding of his theory directly depended upon them. Kohlberg also locates his thinking squarely in the tradition of the Social Contract Theory form of liberalism with which I felt so comfortable. He does this both through references to major figures in that tradition and in terms of understanding morality as a tool to deal with social conflict and justice as the necessary sharp edge of that tool. However, it was always my intention to use the focus on Kohlberg in a way that could be seen as generalizable to the discourse in general. Certainly the features of liberalism noted above that I also found in Kohlberg’s work function importantly in much of my own early subsequent work (see, especially the next four chapters) and even in some of my more recent papers (see, especially, Chapters 13 and 15). As such, they are partially determinative of both the starting point of the journey chronicled in this book and the shape of how I struggle with being “of two minds” at its end.

Finally, a note is in order about the kind of philosophy being utilized in this paper. Although this has changed dramatically since then, at the time I was writing this paper the kind of philosophy of education known as “analytic” in the sense of “conceptual analysis” was at its peak, having dominated the field since the early 1960’s. I learned the usefulness of this approach through study with Israel Scheffler, a master in showing why it is needed. Having discovered in subsequent years how difficult it is for some of my graduate students to understand such conceptual moves, let alone utilize them in their own thinking, I now suspect that my undergraduate
students, none of whom were even in philosophy, must have seen this side of me as quite alien.

INTRODUCTION

Moral education is beginning to assume some of the characteristics of a bandwagon. It seems to just roll along, not the least deterred by caution signs flashed by critics, gathering momentum and sounding louder as more and more people jump on. Not only is it beginning to sound louder and attract more attention as it rolls along, but it is also picking up so many bandleaders with their own suggestions of what to play that it is in danger of producing more noise than music. Bandwagons in themselves are not necessarily bad; in this case moral education has been neglected for so long that some popularity is warranted to make an impact on current curricular practices. And we need not all play the same tune, i.e., have the same reasons, rationales, approaches, etc., but it is important to step off occasionally to see who is playing what.

One reason that it is so difficult for educators to choose among alternative approaches to moral education is that grounds for comparing and contrasting them seem so elusive. Are they talking about the same thing in different ways? Or are they perhaps talking about different things? Until we know this we cannot begin to choose intelligently.

One way of characterizing and differentiating theories of moral education is in terms of their basic assumptions about morality. There are several different kinds of these basic assumptions that might be used for this purpose, but I am going to concentrate on only one of these in this paper. I am going to be concerned with the different parts of morality which these theories account for, or more precisely, with the basic value concepts around which these theories are constructed. First I will explicate the relevant conceptual distinctions by means of a device which I shall call the “moralberry pie.” Then although these conceptual distinctions could be used for characterizing the most popular theories of moral education, I will focus on Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development as an example for the purpose of clarifying what part of morality can be accounted for in moral education programs based on this theory.

THE MORALBERRY PIE

Moral language is notoriously vague and ambiguous. It is a commonplace complaint that “good” means different things to different people, or as the song goes, “one man’s ceiling is another man’s floor.” Although the way we use moral terms such as “right,” “wrong,” “good,” “bad,” “virtue,” “vice,” is quite often egocentric and not very precise, it should not be concluded that moral terms have no interpersonal meaning. Indeed, it would not even make sense for us to complain about their
vagueness if we did not at some level share basic concepts which these terms represent. In the same way that two people can disagree about whether to call a new car a “compact” or “subcompact” because they share the concept of size, so also may people disagree about whether an act is just or unjust because they share the concept of right. By examining the logic of how we use these terms we can clarify the level of meaning that we do share with each other.

For this purpose I would like to introduce you to the “moralberry pie.” Think of the moralberry pie first of all as just a circle. Located within this circle – in fact what distinguishes the circle – are all different kinds of normative discourse. By “normative” I mean the different kinds of things we say when we evaluate something, for example, statements, judgements, claims like the following: “That’s a good painting,” “Every student should learn some basic math,” “What he did was wrong,” “Racial discrimination is fundamentally unjust,” “Sir Thomas More was a virtuous man,” “Honesty is the most basic virtue.” We use “normative discourse” such as these examples when we want to prescribe something as well as to describe it – when we want to say something about what should be/ought to be, rather than merely what is the case.

Although the moralberry pie seems to include an incredible number of different things, a little analysis can reveal the ingredients. There are essentially three basic, irreducible ingredients in the moralberry pie. These ingredients are not terms or words but rather what lies behind those terms or words. They are the concepts that we are using when we engage in moral discourse, making statements, claims, or judgements like those listed above. These concepts underlie our differing ways of using moral terms and our differing beliefs about what those terms should apply to in the concrete world. They are all elements of meaning which we all share and without which we could not understand any moral judgement or claim made by any other person, let alone recognize disagreements and argue about those disagreements.

Now think of the moralberry pie as a circle divided into three parts. Each of these three parts represents a qualitatively different basic moral concept. Each is applied to different kinds of things and used in different kinds of contexts. Each represents a different kind of moral meaning which cannot be reduced to one of the other two. Individually and in different kinds of combinations they constitute the different ways in which we make sense of the moral realm. The three concepts are 1) the concept of good/bad; 2) the concept of right/wrong; 3) the concept of virtue/vice. I put these words, good/bad, right/wrong, virtue/vice, in positive-negative pairs to emphasize that I am not talking about moral words but moral concepts.

The following list characterizes examples of different kinds of moral discourse in terms of where they would be located in the moralberry pie:

1. **Good/Bad**
   - “That’s a good painting.”
   - “Every student should learn some basic math.”
   - “Pleasure is good in itself.”
“She died feeling she had led a good life.”
“Self-realization is the only legitimate goal of education.”
“Politics is a more worthwhile pursuit than pinball.”

(2) **Right/Wrong**
“What he did was wrong.”
“Racial discrimination is fundamentally unjust.”
“All men have an equal right to freedom.”
“You should have kept your promise.”
“Children ought to obey their mothers and fathers.”
“The community is the rightful authority for deciding what the schools should teach.”

(3) **Virtue/Vice**
“Sir Thomas More was a virtuous man.”
“Honesty is the most basic virtue.”
“She was a person of honour.”
“Good students do not cheat.”
“He should have known better – he should be punished.”
“I would not blame him for what he did.”
“Niceness is nice.”

As in the examples under (1) above, we make use of the concept good/bad when we make normative judgements about *objects, activities, and states of affairs*. Ultimately we are making a claim about what the *good life* consists of, what is intrinsically worthwhile, what should be pursued, cherished for its own sake, and passed on to the next generation. We indicate what our “values” are through these kinds of judgements. When we are in this section of the moralberry pie, we often agree to disagree; that is, although we are willing to try to support our beliefs about what is good, we accept the possibility of differing beliefs which are equally justifiable. “Values” are, in this sense, “personal.”

We make use of the concept of right/wrong primarily when we make normative judgements about *acts and practices* as in the examples under (2) above. When we use right/wrong, we are not making claims about what is intrinsically worthwhile, but rather about how we should act toward each other. That this section of the moralberry pie is qualitatively different from the first can also be seen by the following consideration: the concept of right/wrong is called out by situations of conflict on what is good/bad. That is, it is because people have differing and incompatible claims about and on the good – but yet we have to live together – that we *have* the concept of the right. Judgements of right/wrong are the way in which we seek to adjudicate basic value conflicts in a way that is acceptable to everyone. They are not “personal” in the same sense that judgements of good/bad are “personal.” In fact, they represent our attempt to achieve an a-personal or interpersonal, objective point of view in deciding what to do when two or more persons have incompatible desires.
Finally, we make use of the concept of virtue/vice when we make normative judgements about persons, either of a person as a whole or of some part of a person’s character. Examples of judgements using this concept can be found under (3) above. This section of the moralberry pie is distinct from the other two, but is in a sense logically dependent on them. That is, we praise a person either because that person has succeeded to some extent in leading the good life, or (more often) because that person has acted in what we consider the right manner. (And the opposite is true for blaming). In other words, in order for the concept of virtue/vice to be applicable we have to have already made a judgement about the good or about the right (or both), and we are saying that something about the person is in accordance with this judgement. To the extent, then, that we disagree on the level of these more fundamental moral concepts, we will disagree as much or more in attribution of praise and blame.

It is not difficult to find everyday situations in which all three basic normative concepts are used. The following example both illustrates where each of the three sections of the moralberry pie would figure into the deliberation, and also reiterates the logical relationship between them.

Assume that you and (to keep things simple) one other person constitute a school board of a new school about to open. Although this is a public school and some government agency may have given general guidelines for these kinds of questions, in this case you and this other person have complete authority to determine the curriculum of this new school. It is your job to say what the school should teach and why, and then to set the school in operation. Now just assume for the sake of the example that you say that something like physics, math, history, English and music should comprise the curriculum – and the other person suggests volleyball, tiddlywinks, yoga, cooking, and fishing. When you are making a decision of this sort, i.e., choosing between these alternative activities and trying to justify your choices, you are in the first section of the moralberry pie. You are making a moral judgement about what is the good. You are saying that these kinds of activities are so worthwhile – either because they are good in themselves or because they lead to other kinds of good – that they should be passed on to the next generation.

Now reconsider the example. Note that you cannot just agree to disagree about what the school should teach because you have to act together, you have to set the school in operation. How you decide what you do in this situation is at this point also a matter of the second section of the moralberry pie. By hypothesis, both conditions are present which make the concept of right/wrong applicable: (a) you each have a different conception of the good which you have an interest in maintaining and promoting (e.g., your own children may go to the school); (b) and you must somehow take account of both points of view in order to actually act (we must also assume that neither of you plans to use sheer force to get your own way).

The kinds of things which will matter to both of you at this point are not what kinds of things are worth “valuing,” but rather issues like equality, consideration of interests, fairness, respect for persons, etc. In short, these are the kinds of moral
principles and attitudes which seek to adjudicate the conflict in such a way that the result would be acceptable to both of you if you did not know which particular conception of the good you held.

Finally, consider the situation once more. We are now at the point that you have somehow reached a fair compromise about what the curriculum should contain, and you have acted on it at least to the point that teachers have been hired to cover the various areas and subjects, and maybe they are even teaching already. Along comes another person – maybe someone from the government agency – to assess what you have done. The point now is not just that he or she may agree or disagree with your solution to the problem of what goes into the curriculum; nor is it that he or she may or may not be able to argue that your adjudication of the conflict was fair or unfair. It is both of these and that he or she is going to hold you accountable. You are at this point a candidate for either praise or blame: judgements of this derivative sort constitute the third section of the moralberry pie.

THE MORALBERRY PIE APPLIED TO KOHLBERG

Having laid out one way in which the sounds coming out of the moral education bandwagon might be analyzed, let us now focus on one theory as an example. There are four reasons for singling out Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development for this purpose. First, this theory has been receiving a lot of public attention recently, not only in journals of academic disciplines and professional journals of education, but also in the popular press. The result is both that many people know something about the theory, and that the interaction of the different levels of discourse has tended to blur the very kind of distinctions which we are interested in here and which would help people understand more about the theory. Second, there are many different areas of practical application associated with Kohlberg’s theory, ranging from work in prisons, to use of drama in teacher training, to environmental education. If the claims in this paper are correct, then some of these may be associated in a very loose sense and their success or failure should not reflect on the basic theory. Third, although Kohlberg’s use of philosophical terminology sometimes blurs important distinctions, in fact the assumptions he is making about the nature of morality are much more consistent and easier to get at than in most other popular theories of moral education. And finally, although this paper can only raise the question, developmental theories such as Kohlberg’s may have something very important to say about the nature and validity of conceptual distinctions such as those represented in the moralberry pie.

It is generally acknowledged that Kohlberg’s theory is more concerned with form than content. It does not start with a “content” position on what kinds of things are morally correct and then categorize people’s moral beliefs according to some measure of how much they are in accord with Kohlberg’s. Kohlberg’s theory is based on data which are collected by first presenting a person with a hypothetical moral dilemma, asking the person what is the right thing for the actor in the dilemma to do, and then trying to draw out with a series of probing questions the structure
of the person’s reasoning which forms the cognitive basis of his or her judgement. Whether a person judges a given act to be right or wrong is not that important; what is important is why he or she thinks the act is right or wrong. On the other hand, Kohlberg’s (1971a) theory does start from definite assumptions about the boundaries of the moral realm, i.e., with what does and what does not count as a “moral” problem or judgement.

Our “claims of superiority” for higher stages are not claims for a system of grading the moral worth of individual persons, but are the claims for the greater adequacy of one form of moral thinking over another … [Moreover] we make no direct claims about the ultimate aims of men, about the good life, or about other problems which a teleological theory must handle. These are problems beyond the scope of the sphere of morality. (pp. 214–215, my emphasis)

As Kohlberg says quite clearly in this quote, his theory does not deal directly with virtue/vice or with good/bad. On the one hand, the stages of moral development are not “moral” in the sense of having an implicit view of the ideal person to which each higher stage is a closer approximation. Thus statements such as “stage 3 people would not understand that” are not only morally pernicious, but also logically confused. Kohlberg’s stages are not of persons, of “the moral worth of individual persons;” therefore there can be no such thing as “stage 3 people.” On the other hand, Kohlberg’s theory is also not “moral” in the sense of dealing with the concept of good/bad; Kohlberg makes “no direct claims about the ultimate aims of men, about the good life.” Thus, if a “value” is taken in its most common sense as that which is considered under the aspect of the good, the stages are not different “values systems,” and Kohlberg’s theory does not lend any guidance to “values education.”

So far we have seen that Kohlberg is not talking about two of the three basic normative concepts which constitute the moralberry pie. When he uses the terms “moral,” “morality,” “moral development,” etc., he is not directly concerned with either the concept of good/bad or the concept of virtue/vice. Rather, what he means is limited to the section of the moralberry pie formed by the concept of right/wrong. For Kohlberg (1971b), “a moral conflict is a conflict between competing claims of men: you versus me, you versus him” (p. 51). In other words, what is presupposed by Kohlberg’s use of “moral” is that individuals have differing and incompatible conceptions of the good, and morality is one way we have of adjudicating those differences in order to live together. That Kohlberg’s (1971a) theory of moral development is limited to the concept of right/wrong can be seen by a careful analysis of his description of the starting point of this theory in statements such as those quoted above; and it can also be seen in the most often quoted description of the stages, in which most of the stages are characterized in terms of the notion of “right action.” Recently, however, Kohlberg (1975) has clarified the conceptual limits of his theory much more explicitly:
The purpose of morality is modest, to resolve the conflicting claims of human beings and groups in fairer or better ways. Moral decisions are choices between people’s conflicting claims, and worthwhile principles are ones which resolve these conflicts in ways that are fair, just, impartial or as far as possible by the ideal limit of agreement of the parties involved. If the function of moral principles is to resolve conflicting claims, in some sense these principles must be principles of justice or fairness. Acting out of principles of fairness is not necessarily causing the greatest good. If there is a greatest good that man can agree on, that is fine. But when men disagree on the greatest good, one either appeals to the gun or settles for a fair solution. (p. 22)

Kohlberg clearly recognizes that there are other normative concepts, other areas of the moralberry pie, besides the concept of right/wrong. But what he is doing here is emphasizing this concept as the most important one. He is saying that whatever else it does, morality is first of all an ultimate means of adjudicating conflicts of interest among two or more human persons. And he is focusing attention on this part of morality by limiting the referent of the terms “moral” and “morality” to issues, questions, and problems concerning the concept of right/wrong. This emphasis is, I would argue, an eminently supportable one in the context of moral education in a pluralistic, democratic society. The point of this paper is, however, that moral educators should not overlook the fact that Kohlberg’s theory of moral development and his writings on moral education address only one part of that realm of human activity broadly referred to as the moral.8

NOTES

1 For a description of this course and its effects see Boyd (1980).
2 When I gave the lecture, a young woman in the class scoffed and informed me that no one would remember “moral pie” and suggested “moralberry pie” as a more memorable alternative. Thus this paper was published originally with the title of “The Moralberry Pie: Some Basic Concepts.” To keep this memory alive I have chosen to leave this suggestion in the text of this chapter.
3 For two papers that do take up this task, see Boyd and Bogdan (1984) and Boyd and Bogdan (1985).
4 It should be noted that as long as we are clear about it, nothing hangs on what we call these concepts, i.e., we could refer to the concepts with any words we choose. In ordinary language there is considerable slippage in the way we use words such as “good,” “bad,” “right,” “wrong,” etc., and in fact the terms I have used in the moralberry pie are, in special cases, legitimately interchanged in referring to the basic concepts. At another level, the terms “moral” and “value” present a similar problem. In this paper, except where otherwise noted, I am using these two terms in accordance with ordinary language as roughly equivalent in their shared sense of picking-out something normative.
5 Some of the more substantive, original sources for this theoretical viewpoint are the following: Kohlberg (1969, 1971a, 1971b, 1973).
6 As Crittenden (1972) has pointed out there are limits on this claim. That is, there are some ways in which Kohlberg’s theory does include content, and it is misleading to characterize it as purely formal. However, the way in which content enters Kohlberg’s theory is at the level of the kind of distinctions being made in this paper, not at the level of concrete maxims such as “abortion is wrong.” Thus in this context it is still valid to acknowledge the distinction between form and content.
In contrast to this approach, as several people have pointed out recently, Values Clarification seems to dwell much more on the content of people’s beliefs than on the form of how they justify those beliefs. See, for example, Stewart (1975) and Lockwood (1975).

Although it raises more issues than can be addressed in this paper, a postscript needs to be added to clarify the nature of the central point just made. The postscript consists of two further refinements of the claim that Kohlberg’s theory is limited to the area of morality concerning the concept of right/wrong. The first refinement is that Kohlberg emphasizes the concept of right/wrong in more than one way. He not only limits the moral realm to situations of conflict among persons, to questions of duty, obligation, and rights, but he also holds a particular theoretical view of these kinds of questions – one that maintains that the right can be determined according to formal characteristics, independent of any substantive consideration of what the good is. Thus his stages are sequential steps toward judgements of obligation in this refined sense. Kohlberg acknowledges this clearly in several places, e.g., Kohlberg (1973, p. 632).

The second refinement is a qualification of the scope of the central claim in this paper with respect to Kohlberg’s theory. It should be noted that it was not claimed that Kohlberg’s theory takes no account whatsoever of the concepts of good/bad and virtue/vice, but rather that it does not do so directly. That is, it is not a developmental account of conceptions of the good, nor of conceptions of the moral worth of persons. However, insofar as lower stages fail to differentiate these concepts from the concept of right/wrong, and insofar as they use them in order to make judgements about the right, then Kohlberg’s theory does include them in some ways. The point is that they are included only when they are found in the context of reasoning about situations of conflict among persons and only to the extent that they form steps toward a form of moral judgement dealing purely with the concept of right/wrong.