Creating public values: Schools as moral habitats

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Introduction

It is sometimes thought that all schools ought to inculcate what are called Australian values or if in some other nation, the values peculiar to that nation. That is, it is argued that in order to create a common value system it is necessary that all students imbue the common values of the Nation. While there is some truth to the claim that the State has a vested interest in ensuring that its citizens are equipped with the values and skills that will enable them to be functioning members of the community, it does not follow that there is only one way in which they can become fully fledged and contributing members of civic society. Thus, schools should not be vehicles for the inculcation of those values which a particular government favours. Acting as the executive arm of the State, the government has the power through its control of funding, amongst other means within its repertoire, to exert influence on the school curriculum and hence on the values that are fostered. Such influence, however, has the effect of stifling the independence of thought that the political liberal admires and presumably aims to foster. The cultivation of civic virtues, defined as those virtues needed for the effective flourishing of the State and, by definition, enabling the fulfilment of the individual, may, along with other institutions in society, be considered one of the tasks of the school.[1] This will be so whether the school is secular or religious.

Although some, like Macedo (1995) argue against the idea that schools of a particular religious background can fulfil the core liberal civic mission of inculcating toleration and other basic civic virtues, it is proposed through a consideration of some Aristotelian arguments, that the development of good persons should take priority over the development of good citizens, since though good citizens will not always be good persons, good persons will, for the most part, be good citizens.[2] Along with Aristotle, we take the view, *contra* Rawls and other political liberals, that though there may be many different conceptions of the common good, these converge in important ways and, moreover, that what unites human beings in community is more important than what separates them. If this is right, then whether a school is religious or not, its main task will be the development of good persons and at the same time develop citizens who are not just willing to take their civic responsibilities seriously, by be active in promoting the development of a just and fair society.

Aristotle on the distinction between the Good Person and the Good Citizen

The distinction between good citizens and good persons is central to the argument that schools have a significant role in the development of good persons, that different schools will approach this tasks in a variety of ways and that if they succeed in this task, that good citizens will also be developed. It follows that the good State[3] will be well served by institutions that are allowed to undertake this task without undue interference. The maintenance of the good State depends crucially on persons who understand that their own good and the good of their community are inextricably linked

We shall begin with an outline of Aristotle's reflection in *The Politics* on the question of whether the virtue of a good man is the same as that of a good citizen. He did not distinguish between a public sense of the community and a private sense of the community – the good citizen was a good person, since the fate of the individual depended on the fate of the community and vice versa. In large nation-states, it is difficult to maintain a sense of connectedness and common purpose with each other so that it is increasingly difficult for someone to believe that his or her fate is bound up with the fate of his or her community.[4] Nevertheless, this lack of awareness does not mean that it is no longer the case that human beings are dependent on the fate of their communities. What is asserted is that there is an intimate relationship between the private values that a person learns and the public realm in which he or she has responsibility.

Aristotle draws an analogy between the State and a ship, pointing out that a sailor is a member of a ship's company and each on the ship has a different function consonant with the ship's safe passage. Each of the different functions that each sailor performs defines his role on the ship:one is a pilot, another is a helmsman and a third, a look-out. Each sailor has an interest in the safe return of the ship to harbour and this is a common goal. Similarly, for a citizen, his or her role within the community is defined by a particular function. Nevertheless, the salvation of the community is the common goal of all. Since the political community in question is defined by the particular form of government or political structure that is adopted, so too will the function or virtue of the citizen depend on that structure. As there are many forms of government or constitution, Aristotle argues that what is required of the good citizen need not of necessity be what is required of a person to be a good person.[5] From another angle, says Aristotle, the State cannot be expected to be composed entirely of good persons, but each citizen is nevertheless expected to contribute to the well-being of the State according to his or her particular function. Since citizens are not all the same, what is required of the citizen and of the good person is not the same. (*The Politics* [1277a])

In outline, Aristotle's argument is the following:

1) Though citizens differ from one another, the salvation of the community is the common business of everyone.
2) This community is the constitution. (The constitution determines the form of government and so the nature of the state.)
3) Therefore, necessarily, the virtue of the citizen is relative to the constitution of which he is a member.
4) There are many different constitutions (that is, forms of government).
5) Therefore, necessarily citizens will have different virtues qua members of such states.
6) A good person is one who has one single virtue which is perfect virtue (that is, prudence, which is the virtue on which all the other moral virtues depend).
7) The virtue of the good person does not depend on the state.
7) Therefore, the good citizen does not necessarily possess the virtue of the good person, since they will possess many different virtues depending on the structure of the political system.

All citizens must have the virtue of being good citizens since it is by this means that the state is preserved, but this does not mean that they are therefore good persons – unless we assume that in the good State, all citizens must be good persons also.(*Ibid.*) The question we need to ask ourselves is why it cannot be assumed that a good State demands that all citizens be good persons as well as good citizens. Aristotle is notably silent on this point, though this seems to be because he does not think that it is possible for any State to be good in this sense, since he says that the state cannot be entirely composed of good persons. But this is a practical impossibility, not a logical impossibility. In the ideal or perfect State citizens would be required to be good persons also, since the role of the State is to enable citizens to become good and this will not be possible if the State itself is not oriented to the good. History is littered with visionaries who dreamed of founding the perfect society here on earth, so perhaps Aristotle's silence is salutary.

Nevertheless, even if we acknowledge the practical impossibility of the state being entirely composed of good persons, we can appreciate that the role of the state is to be oriented to the good. The virtues of the state will be the same as those of the citizen, says Augustine, for the individual is an element out of which the community is built up. Drawing on an analogy with individuals, Augustine asks us to compare two states, one which is rich but eaten up with ambition, tortured by fears, always struggling with its opponents, never knowing serenity and another state content with its limited resources, enjoying the blessings of peace with its neighbours, loyal, compassionate and kind. It is obvious, he says, in which state it would be preferable to live. In this world, says, Augustine, the reign of the good is a blessing for themselves, and even more for the whole of human society. (*City of God*, Book IV, Ch.3) This is not to say that the good state might not be assailed by powerful enemies seeking its destruction, but it is not riven by territorial ambition, security fears, or the desire to dominate its neighbours. Its ambitions go no further than providing the conditions under which its citizens may flourish and as far as it can to live peacefully with its neighbours, cooperating with them in ways which will enable their citizens to flourish.

Augustine sees continuity between the virtues demanded of the good person and the good citizen, since it is these same virtues which he says are needed for the flourishing of the state. In this, Augustine follows Plato who also argues for the coinciding of the values of the public citizen with the values of the private person. Plato says that the privately dishonest individual is one in whom corruption goes deep so that he or she is unable to control his or her lusts and desires. As a result, the individual becomes more jealous, more faithless, more unjust and vice-ridden. He or she sinks into a misery from which he or she cannot escape. Because such persons are so corrupted and because they wield power, they set about making everyone else as miserable as they themselves.(*The Republic*, Book IX, 576-580) Aristotle agrees, but he notes that there will be differences between what is required of the good person and what is required of the good citizen.

Aristotle's argument rests on the idea that because different citizens have different functions in the state, they cannot possibly possess the same virtue. This is evident from the definition of virtue as an excellence which enables human beings to function optimally. In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that a good lyre player, plays the lyre well (1098a), but goodness understood in this sense is not the same as the goodness which is the nature of human beings to strive for. Virtue in this latter sense

leads to good when human activity is in accord with it. A good citizen, according to Aristotle, will be one who performs the functions of citizenship well, but such a person need not be a virtuous person in the former sense, any more than a good lyre player necessarily will be a good person. The virtue of the good man and the good citizen, however, will coincide in the wise ruler. Aristotle says that he who would be a statesman must be a wise man.(*The Politics*, 1277a)

Aquinas, in his commentary on Aristotle, explains that what Aristotle undertakes to do is to examine firstly the virtue of the citizen. Aquinas says that the virtue of the citizen has to be considered in relation to the regime in which he finds himself and so the good citizen will be one who works well to preserve the regime. In a regime which is not the best, a tyranny, for example, what counts as a good citizen will not require that virtue the possession of that which would entitle a person to be called good. In a tyranny, what is required of the good person is that he or she speaks out against the regime, whereas to be counted a good citizen would require upholding the regime. What is required of the good person will always take precedence over what it is to be a good citizen.[6] Aquinas says that a man is called virtuous because he possesses prudence, which is the virtue on which all the moral virtues depend. In some regimes, this virtue will not be necessary. (Aquinas, 1963, para. 366.) Secondly, says Aquinas, Aristotle notes that in even the best State, not all citizens are good, nevertheless, they are required to perform their duty as citizens well, from which it follows that the citizen and the good man are not the same. Thirdly, though every State is made up of heterogeneous elements and different parts require different abilities, the virtue of the good man remains the same. That is, what excellences are needed for someone to be a good man remain the same, the requirements of functioning as a good citizen change. Thus, there is a difference in what is required of the citizen. The exception to this is the ruler, who requires different virtues to the citizen who is a subject. It is only in this case, that the good man and good citizen coincide, for the good man is prudent, as is the good ruler. The statesman must be a wise man, presumably one who understands the nature of the good life and who lives such a life, that is, one who is a good man in his private life. Aquinas notes that in Book VI of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that government is a certain part of prudence. Aristotle's argument, however, concurs with those offered by Plato and Augustine when he says that the good citizen is able to rule and be ruled.

The virtues required of the citizen are that he know how to govern like a freeman and how to obey like a freeman. That is, the good man, in the generic sense, has the virtues to be either a good subject or a good ruler. The good citizen is one who is able to perform either role, though of course one is very different from the other. There does not seem to be any room for a delineation between citizen and private individual as far as Aristotle is concerned. Nevertheless, in his account in *The Nichomachean Ethics*, quoted above, Aristotle distinguishes between the good man and the good lyre player, but does not seem to want to maintain the distinction between good man and good citizen, except to draw our attention to the fact that the good man is capable of being a good subject or a good ruler. Aristotle notes that though temperance and justice are the virtues of a ruler and distinct from those of a subject, the virtue of a good man will include both. But this is because Aristotle includes citizenship as one of the attributes of the good man. Practical wisdom, says Aristotle, only is characteristic of the ruler; it would seem that all other virtues must equally belong to ruler and subjects. (*The Politics*, 1277b) Practical wisdom, or prudence, is understood

by Aristotle to be the ability to deliberate rightly about what is good for life in general, not just what is good in particular, such as good health. Pericles and other like him are prudent because they can envisage what is good for themselves and for people in general. (*Nichomachean Ethics*, 1140a24-b12) Further on, Aristotle notes that a person can be wise but not prudent, for they will be ignorant of their own advantage and, moreover, engage in discovering knowledge which is exceptional and marvellous and profound and supernatural, but useless, because their search was not human good.(*Nichomachean Ethics*, 1141a19-1141b8-27) Prudence in relation to the state has two aspects one which is controlling and directive, the other, which deals with particular circumstances (political science). It is perhaps obvious that prudence is indispensable for the operation of the state and that the good person and the good ruler need to possess the virtue of prudence. Moreover, since the end of the state is to enable human beings to flourish, good leaders aim at the good of the person and so they themselves are both morally virtuous as well as prudent.

Aristotle notes that there are many forms of government and so there are many varieties of citizens and especially citizens who are subjects. Under some governments, he says, the mechanic and the labourer will be citizens, but he does not think that anyone who is a labourer or a mechanic is able to practise the functions of citizenship.(*The Politics*, 1278a) They will not have the requisite training. That is, they are not able to practise the virtue of being a citizen, which is to be able to rule and to obey well.[7] It is evident that there are different kinds of citizens, but that the citizen in the highest sense is one who shares in the governance of the state. Aristotle concludes that in some cases the virtue of the good person will coincide with the virtue of the good citizen, but in others that they will not. When they are the same it is not every citizen who is a good person, but only the statesman and those who have or may have alone or in conjunction with others the conduct of public affairs. (*The Politics*, 1278b) The good person will be a good citizen, but a good citizen might not be a good person and so is good in a limited sense. There is no guarantee that they will be wise or prudent.

We began by proposing that persons need to be aware of their own good and that this is inextricably linked with the good of their community and so of the State. Aristotle's arguments, amongst others, have shown that the highest ideal to which we can aim is for the virtue of the good person to coincide with the virtue of the good citizen. While Aristotle does not think we can realistically demand that all citizens be good persons, reserving this requirement for statesmen, nonetheless, it is clear that this is an ideal to be aimed at. The State wants all its citizens to take their responsibilities seriously, not just a few, so the development of good persons is crucial.

Schools as Moral Habitats

It should not be supposed that schools are the only means available to the community – or the State for that matter – for the development of good persons. The family itself is the initial habitat in which the child learns for the first time that there are limits to his or her freedom which are not just due to his or her small size and immaturity. The school is the second major habitat which the child encounters, since he or she typically spends thirteen years – from childhood to young adulthood – in a school. As children mature, they learn that interests are not just limited by what is physically possible – children are well aware of such limits, but rather there are structural limits

and, moral limits. Children learn that there are certain kinds of things that they cannot say or do to each other. The imposition of moral limits does not simply arise just because there are other people who have different interests to theirs and are in a position to impose these, but because they begin to apprehend that there are certain kinds of moral value that adherence to which will enable them to live fruitful and happy lives. Moral education hopefully brings an understanding that the enjoyment of freedom for ourselves involves the recognition that it is exercised with others and not in isolation. We exist in a moral community which forms a moral habitat in which the moral virtues can be practised and reinforced. I do not propose to argue that children need to be taught about moral values and that once taught that these are best inculcated by constant practice. We shall take this as our starting point. What I wish to argue is that the inculcation of a private comprehensive moral system will lead to good citizens because it will develop good persons. Common values will arise not because it is these that are taught to children, but because in the course of their initiation into a particular way of life they will become aware of the universality of moral values. It is these latter values and virtues that are taught and if it is accepted that they are universally applicable, then there is scope for these to form the basis of interactions with others who are not part of a particular community.

It is not uncontroversial to claim that moral values are universal rather than merely conventional, since political liberalism gains its grip because it is assumed that private comprehensive value systems are irremediably incommensurable. Moral values are a subset of such value systems and so there is potential for considerable overlap between private comprehensive value systems, if we allow that moral values are universal. The plausibility of a Rawlsian social contract position increases if we deny that there are any significant commonalities between private value systems, but still want to establish a harmonious public community. Normative ethical theories, however, lay claims to universality, not just that they are applicable to a particular time, place and culture. This means that different private comprehensive value systems if they subscribe to any normative ethical theories will also hold that they are applicable to those who are not members of the particular group or minority community. In all of these theories, the aim is to provide human beings with ways in which they can determine what is morally good and to act accordingly.

Human acts are the expressions of human decision-making and these in turn are the manifestations of a commitment to particular values. Moral decision-making is not excluded from this. In order to engage in good moral decision-making, where by this we mean making moral decisions that are oriented towards the good and the right and hence which enable human beings to be fulfilled as persons, human beings need to be taught the moral values of their community. This is self-evident, since within a particular community they are hardly likely to be taught the values of some other community. The values that human persons absorb and come to hold will be those to which they are exposed, come to be habituated and finally to which they come to be committed. In sum, the habituation of children to virtuous acts enables the development of good persons and hence, good citizens.

The important question with which we are concerned is the formation of young people in sound moral habits and how this is to be accomplished. This is not a new question, but still relevant. The inculcation of good moral habits is recommended by Milton (1897) as the first step in ensuring that young persons are in a state receptive to

instruction in the knowledge of virtue and the hatred of vice. The instilling of good moral habits is important not just for their own sakes, but because this will ensure that they will possess those traits of character which will enable them to take their places as good citizens of their nations. Thus, Milton, unlike Rawls (1996) does not see a distinction between the comprehensive private moral system adopted by an individual and a public value system. He sees the comprehensive private moral system as co-extensive with the public value system, perhaps because of the entrenched view of the time that young men were to be prepared for a role in the public sphere. The moral system to be adopted, he suggests, is one steeped in the Western moral tradition handed down from the Greeks and Romans, arguing that a love of virtue is to be acquired through the study of the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch and Laertius, among others. In this way, young people will come to know what is good and acquire the habits of virtue that will enable them to become good persons and citizens. Of course, much of the Western tradition is no longer a common heritage and it is the loss of this that MacIntyre laments. Importantly, the idea of the good person is not separated from the good citizen and the good citizen is not simply seen as upholding the State, whatever its form, but as actively seeking the good of all. This implies that the good citizen does not support all forms of the State. It also suggests that the good citizen is actively engaged in ensuring that the State seeks the common good in all its decision-making and actively opposes those decisions and laws that he or she considers unjust.

There are several different ways in which we can think about habits and the manner in which they enable us to act. On the one hand, we can think of a habit as something so ingrained in us that we do it without thinking, on the other, we can see habit as something which facilitates the occurrence of certain complex actions. By this we mean that there are some actions which require practice in order for us to be able to do them well. In the case of moral actions, moral habits can facilitate virtuous behaviour so that it becomes second nature. As Aristotle tells us, we come to virtue through practice and, we might add, through reinforcement by habituation. Locke observes that children are not taught by rules which are always slipping in and out of their memories, but by practice which begets habits. (1892)

Locke also thinks that the virtues of civility and good manners are best learnt through the example of others and argues that young persons should be kept away from bad company, that is, a bad moral habitat. If they are not, he warns, all the instruction in the world will not enable them to acquire the habits of virtue for what influences the most is the company they keep. Human beings are like chameleons, adapting their behaviour to the environment in which they find themselves and so it is important to keep children especially away from those who would lead them astray into vice and debauchery. Schools, he notes, have an important role to play in the provision of an appropriate environment in which virtues can be acquired. Vice, he says, is much more easily learnt and so the learning of virtue cannot be left to chance. (Locke, 1892)

Schools and educational institutions have an important role to play in the formation of moral habits for they form a particular habitat in which the values and beliefs of the community can be passed on. Dewey regards the community – which forms a particular habitat – as crucial in the formation of good moral habits, for by withholding or extending approbation for our actions, it begins to form our consciences and develop in us the moral habits which guide in our behaviour. For

Dewey, morality is entirely social and so conventional. Although in a postmodern world that holds morality to be culturally bound, Dewey's view is not new, we need not agree that morality is culturally dependent. Thus, though it might be accepted that moral values may be expressed differently in different cultures, it can be plausibly argued that there are objective moral principles. The existence of such principles provide grounds for optimism that in a culturally diverse society that commonalities at a deep level will create a common moral space in which differences in moral understanding can be discussed. Nevertheless, the kinds of moral habits we develop will be the product of the kind of moral habitat or environment in which we find ourselves. (Dewey, 1981) Given that the school community forms a particular kind of community, it too will provide the opportunity for the inculcation of moral habits. Dewey says that the school or educational community has to be a real community, exercising a real life and so a real habitat in which moral habits can be formed. There cannot be one set of moral principles which are practised within a school community and another which are practised without. (Dewey, 1910)

Although Dewey is right to argue that the school community and the educational community have to be real communities, he is wrong to argue that the moral habits that are formed there are necessarily the same as those in the outside community. Dewey's assumption is that there is a monocultural community of which the school community is a microcosm. Recent debates in the Australian community about what count as specifically Australian values have shown that there is little consensus about what these are and instead, what is reflected is diversity.[8] In a pluralist society it is hardly ever likely that there will be consensus about moral values and so each community will form its own moral habitat which will nurture the moral virtues and values of that community. This is not to suggest that there may not be large similarities among communities and so among the moral habitats inhabited by individuals. Just as individuals group together to form a community (and hence a moral habitat), so too, communities group together to form a larger community or society. In the larger community, a lack of commonalities, which are rooted in the smaller, more specific communities, leads to conflict, sometimes with tragic consequences. It is true that all the actions of an individual will bear the marks of community in which he or she grew up in, but it is also true that the our society consists of many communities and all of these will have some similarities and some dissimilarities. The upshot of this is that common values do not emerge by an identification of abstract values that capture the essence of a nation and that are imposed on communities in order to ensure a commonality of belief and value, but rather that deeply held common values emerge from values that are experienced through different moral habitats. That we have responsibilities to our neighbour is common in a number of major religious faiths, as well as in secular belief systems. Communities which share such a belief have a much greater chance of forming a combined community than ones that do not share such a belief.[9]

The difficulties that a plurality of beliefs and values in a community bring, however, should not be underestimated. Where there are moderates – be they moderate Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists or Hindus – there is always the prospect of dialogue and so reaching of some agreement about common public values. The problems arise where there are more extreme differences. Margalit and Halbertal (2004) raise the question of how far a liberal society should go in tolerating very different communities within the nation. Discussing the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish

Community, they observe that although the Ultra-Orthodox are radically opposed to liberal society, by demanding that those who enter their community space (that is, travel through an orthodox area) conform to their interpretation of Jewish Law (viz standards of dress for women, etc.) they seem to be tolerated. The reason may be that they do not constitute a threat to the majority culture – or to other minority cultures. The other reason may be because in Israel they are recognisably Jewish and so are to be tolerated as a particular expression of the basis of the founding of the State. This will not be so in other countries. A relevant question is whether Muslims will be similarly tolerated in communities the majority of which are not Muslim. It is a salient question because in Australia, the Muslim community form a distinctive, if small minority. Furthermore, as we have already suggested, what are thought of as common Australian values may not be sufficiently thick for Muslims to want to subscribe to them. The other side of the coin may be that if they are sufficiently thick they are not the kinds of values that Muslims would want to subscribe to. If the latter, then it may be that Muslims once they have sufficient numbers would be in a position to change the values to those that are more congenial to them. If the former, then we might expect that they would be insufficient for a serious Muslim to accept and these could be expected to be replaced by more robust values. Alternatively, if the thesis that has been argued here is accepted, it is the serious, thick private values that provide the rationale for the acceptance of common public values and explains why there is conflict about common values and institutions. In any case, if we accept that all citizens are equal then we should accept that all members of the wider community are equally entitled to promote what they see as important public values as any other member of the community. This means that they are equally entitled, as any other individual, to change those public values, which are always under contest.

A Description of a School Habitat

We have argued thus far that the natural state of affairs in pluralist society is the existence of diverse value systems, but that this is no barrier to the existence of common values in the public arena. This is because it is natural for human beings to seek out others with whom to live and furthermore, it is reasonable to suppose that they will seek out others with whom they have some affinity. Conflicts arise most often between communities that do not have very much in common and this is not very surprising.

Commonalities, it is argued, arise in those private comprehensive moral systems deep within which is a set of moral values which are oriented towards the other. Those that are oriented to the other are not self-absorbed, but instead are vitally interested in the welfare and well-being of the other, even if he or she does not share the same set of values. There are conditions that have to be met if we are to have a harmonious pluralist society and one of these is certainly respect for persons. This is, however, no a public value in the sense of being independent of the private value system, but arises out of the convictions of the particular private value system. Iris Young (1990) says that in an heterogeneous society, the task of the public sphere is to overcome oppression and this, she says, means overcoming exploitation, marginalisation, cultural imperialism, powerlessness and violence. For Young, this means that there needs to be some form of common education that will engender a shared civic perspective that will help to overcome oppression, even though she advocates maintenance of diversity within a pluralist and multicultural society. It may be true

that a common education would provide for such a shared civic perspective if the moral habitat that is formed by the common school is able to somehow inculcate commitment to the common good and to virtue. The difficulty is that in a common school, there are no seriously deep values that can reasonably be inculcated, for to inculcate some is to privilege certain values over others. As has already been argued, moreover, common values that all will agree to are likely to be too thin to provide any moral guidance. Serious moral values need a moral habitat committed to ensuring that pupils are formed in their character. If this habitat supports values that respect difference because it recognises the other as deserving of respect, then there will be a commitment to the good of other irrespective of whether he or she espouses the same comprehensive moral system.

If one examines, for example, the charter of an Islamic school, one finds the following principles:

"To welcome staff and students from all faiths and ethnic groups, with the aim of promoting peace and understanding, aiming always to improve the quality and cohesion of Australian society."
"To follow the Quran and the Sunnah (the way of life) of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and the Hadiths (authentic narrations of the Prophet's exemplar life and values) in order to promote solidarity, peace and harmony in our school, our Islamic communities, and Australian societies at large."
"To imbue our students with Islamic values, promoting the respect for the rights of others, and the understanding of all ethnic communities and religions that represent the fabric of Australian's multicultural society."
"To teach our students about neighbourly rights and duties, acknowledging a mutual entitlement to respect, care, and the protection of property and life."
"To stand against those who espouse any form of aggressions and hatred against the religion of Islam and its adherents."
"To reject and condemn all acts of violence, torture and the killing of innocent civilians anywhere in the world."[10]

This charter may be compared to that of Catholic Schools:

"Promoting a particular view of the person, the community, the nation and the world, centred on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ.
Challenging students to find, through God, meaning and value in their lives.
Forming an integral part of a church community in which all generations live, worship and grow together.
Critiquing our culture, and challenging community values, as an integral part of their Gospel mission.
Aiming to be welcoming and reflective communities whose most distinctive sign is the discernment of God's presence and their spiritual life.
Espousing values which unite Australia by promoting a citizenship infused by a commitment to social justice.
Encouraging students to develop an international perspective on their own country and how their country can identify and respond justly to its international obligations.
Developing a sense of historical perspective by reflecting on the development of societies and cultures over time, a story of human frailty but of continual efforts to live the Gospel message.

Giving priority to educating the spiritually and financially poor and being their advocates."[11]

There are obvious differences between these expressions of principle and a more thoroughgoing analysis is required to look at the commonalities as well as the differences between these two faiths, but enough is revealed to at least render plausible the view that private moral systems that support a pluralist and multicultural society need to have a common commitment to respect for persons and to care for the other. By this latter we mean those who are different to them. This will mean a commitment to the welfare of the other, even if he or she does not share one's beliefs or values.

Notes

[1] Held (2005), for example, argues that the cultivation of needed civic virtues must take place in families, neighbourhoods, churches, the workplace and voluntary associations of various sorts. In this, she echoes Robert Putnam (2003), who holds that a democratic society is the outcome of the activity of various associations at the micro level. We do not propose to defend such a view here, since schools as educational institutions are individually micro associations together form a rather substantial and formidable major institution.

[2] The caveat is that in some States, good persons need to stand against the State and so may do things which are regarded by the State as subversive and not the actions of a good citizen in the sense of being compliant with the wishes of the State.

[3] We have not defined the "good State". It can be taken to mean the kind of State in which human beings are able to flourish, where they are able to enjoy various freedoms, the protection of the law and security within their own borders. Good persons may not always live in good States. On the other hand, it is obvious that bad States will not allow their institutions to autonomously develop good persons, but will try to interfere by imposing the self serving, particular views of the ruling party.

[4] See, for example, current debates within the European Union about what it means to be a European citizen. One of the difficulties is the feeling that people are being governed from a centre far removed from concerns with their particular communities and so lives.

[5] Virtues, says Aristotle, are neither feelings nor faculties, but dispositions. They are not any kind of disposition, however, they are such that they enable something to function well. A virtue, as Aristotle defines it, is related to the proper function of something. For human beings, a virtue is an excellence which enables human beings to function well as human beings and this is good. See Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. Thomson, J. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976, Book I, v, vi and VI, ii.]

[6] Being a good Nazi, for example, is at odds with being a good person.

[7] Aquinas' s Commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* is useful here. See #380, in Lerner, R. and Mahdi, M. (eds.) *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, Canada: Collier-MacMillan ,1963.

[8]The debate about the kinds of values which are recognisably Australian and how they are to be taught was raised by then Federal Minister for Education, Dr. Brendan Nelson in September, 2005. In a radio interview, Nelson said that he believed that the best way for such values to be taught was in all schools, including Muslim schools, without indicating in any way why he thought this would lead to a commitment to those values. After all, being taught Australian values is one thing, being committed to them is quite another. He went on to list nine key values which he said exemplified the Australian way of life, superimposing on these the image of John Simpson Kirkpatrick as exemplifying what lies at the heart of Australian identity. A transcript of the radio interview conducted with Nelson may be found at http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1445094.htm, accessed: 1/9/05

[9] The argument here depends at least partly on a rejection of social contract position, which rests upon a view that we can form strategic alliances with people and communities that we do not necessarily trust, but are willing to set aside our differences with in order to gain greater goods than would otherwise be available or indeed attainable. A position which suggests that human beings form communities and alliances because they are naturally gregarious begins from a different starting point. Human beings build communities with people that are like-minded in the first instance because they crave companionship. Human beings do not like to be alone and rather than avoid the company of

others, will seek it out. Seeking out the companionship of others for no other reason than for company and friendship does not involve a relationship of contractual obligation, but mutual self-giving. Thijs also implies that there is no tallying up of favours received and given, so that the contractual bargain remains in balance. There is instead the commitment to caring for the other whether anything is received in return or not. In communities which begin from different starting points, but which nevertheless accept such a common principle are well placed to form an aggregated or larger community.

[10] These are taken from the webpage of the Islamic Schools of Victoria. The school's charter also includes the following principles:

To teach our students to be progressive, productive and proud Australians, as recipients of teaching practices that embrace Victorian State curricula standards.

To stand in unity, and support our Federal and State law enforcement procedures for communal peace, justice and stability.

To defend Australia, as loyal citizens and residents, from any internal or external aggression that threatens Australia's good governance, and the peaceful co-existence of all communities within it.

These principles are clearly oriented to a commitment to the building of a common community, though recognising in the principles enunciated above a particular way of achieving this. These may be found at URL http://www.wicv.org/SchoolCharter.htm Accessed 17/04/07

[11] These principles are a sample of those listed on the National Catholic Education Commission site where further details that include reference to building a socially just Australian community that is multicultural and multifaith may be found. See URL http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/rationale2.html Accessed 17/04/07