Chapter 5

The influence of moral education on the personal worldview of students

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Introduction

In discussions about religion in public education the premise often defended is that such schools should not aim to influence the religious convictions of their pupils nor favour a particular religion.\(^\text{19}\) It is argued that state schools should be neutral when it comes to religion. In state schools in the United States (US), for instance, teachers are not allowed to participate in religious activities or advocate particular religious views when they are teaching. They are discouraged from sharing their personal religious views with students. This does not mean that religion is excluded from the state classroom’s curriculum in the US. It may be taught in a knowledge based manner. State schools may for example teach courses in comparative religion or teach the Bible as literature. The law also permits private religious activities in and around the state school. For example, students are allowed to discuss their religious views with their fellow students and to organise prayer groups as an extracurricular activity. It is, however, not an educational aim to transmit religious views to students (Feinberg & Layton, 2013; Feinberg, 2014; U.S. Department of education: http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/religionandschools/prayer_guidance.html).

In the Netherlands we find a comparable situation: state school teachers are legally bound to provide their students with knowledge about and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews but have no role in furthering particular commitments in pupils. Recently a debate started on the question whether state schools should do more than providing knowledge about religions. Some schools and state school organisations state that they should contribute to the identity development of their students by paying attention to the personal views and beliefs pupils have about meaning of life without imposing certain specific religious views on them (Lammers, 2013; Miedema, 2013; Veugelers, 2008; Veugelers & Oostdijk, 2013).

In the first example, the discussion focuses mainly on the position of religion in state schools. However, as the second example makes clear, it seems that only part of the issue is being dealt with. Firstly, many people have non-religious views and beliefs about meaning of life. These views and beliefs are not taken into account when the focus is on religious convictions in education.

\(^{19}\) The focus of this contribution is confined to moral and worldview education. These can be conceived of as domains of the overall aim of education in primary schools (public and denominational) that can be conceptualised in terms of personhood formation/identity development/subjectification, qualification and socialisation (Biesta & Miedema, 2002; Biesta, 2010; Miedema, 2014).
Moral education and personal worldview

only. Secondly, it is quite possible that the education state schools provide has an influence on personal meaning-making views of pupils, even if they do not intend to contribute to the development of (religious) worldviews of their pupils. However, in that case it is possible that this has consequences for religious beliefs of students as well. We propose that this influence is particularly likely in moral education provided by schools. In many countries the state requires state schools to provide moral education. The values and ideals that are integral to popular moral educational approaches today, such as a morally good character, democratic values or a positive attitude to diversity, are not specifically religious. The aim of many approaches to moral education is not to transmit religious views to students, but to raise morally astute adults who have assimilated these values into their thinking and acting and to prepare them in this way for participating in society. However, this does not mean that there is no (intended) influence on the personal views and beliefs pupils have about meaning-making.

In order to analyse the relationship between moral education and these meaning-making views, two distinctions need to be made. The first is between organised and personal worldviews and the second is between broad and narrow morality (Van der Kooij, De Ruyter, & Miedema, 2013). An organised worldview refers to a view of life that has developed over time as a more or less coherent and established system with certain (written and unwritten) sources, traditions, values, rituals, ideals or dogmas. An organised worldview is shared by a group of people who adhere to this view. Every religion is an organised worldview, but organised worldviews can also be non-religious, such as that of humanism (compare Vroom, 2006).

Personal worldviews are not necessarily religious or restricted to religious beliefs and views. A personal worldview can be, but is not necessarily, based on or inspired by a (religious) organised worldview. If a person calls himself or herself a Christian, it is likely that his or her personal worldview will be more or less based on the organised Christian worldview. People nowadays construct their own personal worldview, which is not necessarily based on one specific organised worldview and therefore it can be more eclectic and idiosyncratic than an organised worldview (see for example Hartman, 1986; Sandsmark, 2000).20 The religious beliefs of a person are part of his or her personal worldview,

20 We encounter for example ‘bricolage’, which is the use of words, symbols or rituals from different traditions to construct a personal religious worldview (Hervieu-Léger, 2006).
but a personal worldview encompasses much more than religious beliefs: it consists of more or less definitive answers to various existential questions, such as cosmological, ontological, theological, eschatological, teleological and ethical questions (De Jong, 1998; Hartman, 1986; Hijmans, 1994; Van der Kooij, De Ruyter and Miedema, 2013; Sandsmark, 2000).

The main point in the above discussion is that state schools should not aim to influence the religious convictions of their pupils. Schools should not present a particular organised worldview with the aim that pupils should adopt this view as their personal conviction. Thus, it might be argued that the concern is about the personal views and beliefs of pupils, their personal worldview. Yet, it is discussed in terms of religious and non-religious organised worldviews.

The second distinction we will use is between narrow and broad morality. Narrow morality can be described as the basic rules and principles that make it possible for human beings to live and work together. It is the morality that is necessary for the continuation of every tolerable society and is other-regarding (Mackie, 1977). Broad morality contains the body of ideals, principles and values that determine a person’s acts designed to realise his or her most important aims and give meaning to life (De Jong, 1998; De Ruyter, 2006; Mackie, 1977). Broad morality is both self-regarding and other-regarding.

In a previous study we found that narrow morality is conceptually independent of both organised and personal worldview, and does not need to refer to ‘worldview’ for its justification. Broad morality and personal worldview are closely related. Broad morality is conceptually part of ‘personal worldview’. The person’s more or less definite answers to ethical and teleological questions form the domain of broad morality. Broad morality can include theological matters but this is not necessary. For many people meaning-making notions or teleological questions are theological in nature, but not for all. Furthermore, people justify their broad moral views by referring to ideas and beliefs from their personal worldview (Van der Kooij, De Ruyter & Miedema, 2016b). This means that when schools choose to teach a broad morality, they cannot avoid influencing the personal worldview of pupils.

In this article we will further explore the relationship between moral education and worldview education, focusing on the question whether certain approaches to moral education aim to influence the development of the personal worldview of students and if so, what this aim entails. If these approaches do not have this aim, it might still be the case that moral education does have consequences for the personal worldview of students. The question
that arises in this case is whether or not it is possible to provide moral education without influencing the personal religious views pupils might have.

In this article two moral (education) theories are discussed: moral education related to virtue ethics, commonly called character education, and moral education based on deontological ethics.\(^{21}\) We will compare the aims of these approaches to moral education with the domain of personal worldview, but first we present an example of a Dutch education programme that provides moral education in primary schools. The purpose of this example is to make the above questions more specific and express them with more clarity. Furthermore, this case gives a better idea of and illustrates how the relationship between moral education and personal worldview plays a role in educational practice.

The Peaceable School: concretising the relationship between morality and worldview in education

In order to get a better understanding of the main question posed in this article, we concretise the relationship between morality and worldview in education by means of an illustrative example of moral education: the Dutch programme, The Peaceable School. The programme not only aims to provide moral education but integrates this with social and citizenship education. It is a popular programme that is used in more than 550 primary schools in the Netherlands.

The programme focuses particularly on moral themes such as ‘We belong together’, ‘We solve conflicts ourselves’, ‘We listen to each other’, ‘We care for each other’, ‘We all contribute’ and ‘We are all different’, which are dealt with in weekly lessons. An example of a lesson topic for 8- to 9-year olds is ‘to stand up for each other’. Pupils discuss why laughing at each other and humiliating others are bad things to do and how to defend and support each other. Another lesson for 10- to 11-year olds is about respecting each other. They learn about the difference between negative feedback and positive feedback and how to encourage each other in terms of suggestions and compliments (Pauw, 2013a; Pauw, 2013b; de Vreedzame school: http://www.devreedzameschool.net/belangstelling/voorbeeld lessen-downloaden).\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) These theories are chosen for three reasons that we will explain more extensively later in the article: First these two theories represent two dimensions of morality: the deontological and the aretaic dimension (Carr, 2006). Second, both theories are widely applied in schools. Finally these theories seem suitable examples of respectively a theory that aims at more than narrow morality (character education and the emphasis on moral goodness) and a theory that is restricted to narrow morality (deontological ethics and the emphasis on rules and obligations). In education these theories can be applied in various ways.

\(^{22}\) The programme is based on views of Dewey and Kohlberg. Dewey believed that schools have a fundamental role to play in promoting democracy in a society and that children learn through active participation in collective activities. Kohlberg investigated how schools could be turned into places where real-life moral judgement could be learned and practiced (Henry, 2001).
The Peaceable School aims to create a positive moral and social climate in the school and aims to stimulate children to become responsible and contributing participants of a democratic society. It focuses on interpersonal matters such as caring for each other, fostering positive social relationships, keeping an open mind to diversity and also dealing constructively with conflict. Pupils are asked to give each other positive feedback during the school day by sharing tips or compliments, and to learn to take responsibility for the moral and social climate in the community. The programme also focuses on intrapersonal matters such as self-reflection, self-confidence, self-control and an understanding of the effect of acts on others (Pauw, 2013a; Pauw, 2013b).

The Peaceable School programme is widely used in state schools and it might be thought that schools stay within the boundaries of neutrality with regard to worldview. We have shown that the Peaceable School programme has a variety of aims. While these may be neutral with regard to religious and non-religious organised worldviews, they may not be neutral with regard to the personal worldview of pupils.

The ethical value of caring for each other instead of doing only what is necessary and the positive attitude towards diversity instead of simply tolerating people who are different are values and ideals that go further than the rules necessary for living together harmoniously in society. They are part of the broad moral domain. The programme’s aim is that students acquire these values and act upon them.

In the introduction of this article we stated that broad morality is conceptually part of the personal worldview. The ethical questions and teleological matters that broad morality consists of are part of the existential notions a personal worldview contains. Although the Peaceable School does not aim to influence teleological matters, we can conclude that the Peaceable School aims to influence broad morality and is aimed at personal worldview development because of the ethical views that are transmitted to students.

This demonstrates that, when analysing approaches to moral education, the first question that we should ask is whether it is possible to provide moral education that does not include attention to broad moral views and therefore avoids influencing the personal worldview of students.

When we investigate the Peaceable School programme further, we find that there are certain ontological views underlying the programme. Ontological views focus on the nature of a human being: What is a human
being? Is human nature good or bad? (see for example Sandsmark, 2000, p. 6; Walsh & Middleton, 1984). A subcategory of ontological views consists of the anthropological views we encounter in the Peaceable School, for example that human beings are social beings. Any programme that provides moral, social and citizenship education will be developed from certain viewpoints regarding the purpose of human beings, how they should act and their role in the world. The aim of these programmes is to motivate students to act upon these beliefs.

When examined more closely, existential views do not only underlie the programme of the Peaceable School but they are also taught to pupils: norms and values regarding existential matters, for instance the view about the good nature of human beings or about the idea that human beings are not in the world for themselves only, are part of the programme. This shows that we also have to ask another question with respect to approaches to moral education, namely whether they aim to influence the personal worldview matters that lie outside the broad moral domain.

In the introduction we stated that discussions focus mainly on the position of what we call religious and non-religious organised worldviews in public education. The Peaceable School does not aim to transmit certain theological beliefs or views that are specifically religious or specifically related to a non-religious organised worldview. However, as a consequence of the programme aiming at self-reflection and self-confidence, students can be stimulated to reflect on and even reconsider their own (theological) organised worldview beliefs. This demonstrates that two extra distinctions might be helpful in answering our main question more precisely, namely intentional versus non-intentional teaching and directive versus nondirective teaching.

If an approach to moral education seems to have consequences for the theological convictions of students and their organised worldviews, we can examine whether this influence is an intentional aim of the programme or approach, or a non-intentional side effect (Brezinka, 1994) and whether attention is paid to religious and non-religious organised worldview convictions in a directive or nondirective manner (Hand, 2008).

An educational activity has a certain educational aim. The result of the activity can be what was intended, it can be something different or there can be no learning outcome whatsoever. When the outcome of an educational activity is different from the aim that was set, we speak of non-intentional learning (Brezinka, 1994). This often happens in education. Students can learn
something from a teacher even though he or she is not trying to teach it, for example, when students learn a new word from a teacher that he or she merely used to explain something else. In the case of personal worldview development, it is possible to imagine that an approach to moral education has the non-intentional result that students think critically about their personal worldview, as we saw in the Peaceable School example. Since this is a non-intentional consequence that could also happen in subjects other than moral education, we believe that this is not contrary to the aim of public education as it is still in accord with the aim of public education not to transmit specific religious or non-religious worldviews. However, when a moral education programme or approach does intentionally aim to influence the religious or non-religious worldview convictions of students, the question should be asked whether this is appropriate for public education.

The second distinction we can make is between directive and non-directive teaching (Hand, 2008). If applied to moral education, directive teaching involves the teacher having the intention that the students will come to share the view that something is morally right or wrong because there are no good or valid reasons to argue for the opposite position. The issue is non-controversial amongst reasonable citizens. In the case of non-directive teaching the teacher explains as impartially as possible various moral views so that students can understand them. The teacher does this because of the belief that he or she does not have any convincing arguments for one particular position. In Hand’s (2008) words, the topic is controversial.

Religious or non-religious organised worldviews can be used in moral education as examples of how people think about morality. If this is the case they are taught in a non-directive manner. Many moral education programmes teach morality in a directive manner. Views on what is morally right or wrong are transmitted. If this is related to a particular organised worldview that is believed to hold the only right convictions with regard to moral matters, directive moral education also becomes directive teaching of religious or non-religious organised worldview notions. This shows that the final question we have to ask is, are moral norms, values and principles related specifically to religious or non-religious organised worldviews taught intentionally or non-intentionally, directly or non-directively?

Brezinka (1994) makes a distinction between education as an intentional concept and education as an effect concept. In the former, education is seen as a means of achieving intended aims. When the intended aim is not realised, one cannot speak of ‘education’. In the latter, the effect of education, not the intention, is crucial. Thus, unintended pedagogical relations and situations may subsequently generate positive educational outcomes or effects (Brezinka, 1994).
What does this illustrative example of the Peaceable School demonstrate? In the introduction we explained that the personal worldview is broader than the religious views and beliefs a person has. Although a moral education programme can at first sight seem to avoid influencing religious convictions of students, nevertheless, the personal worldviews of students can be at stake. Our example illustrates the following: we saw that the Peaceable School aims to influence the personal worldview of students. The example also clarifies the following three questions that need to be answered if we want to analyse whether a moral education programme aims to influence the personal worldview of students: (1) Is it possible to provide moral education without aiming to influence the broad moral views and thus the personal worldview of pupils? (2) Does the approach aim to influence the development of personal worldview matters that lie outside the broad moral domain? (3) Are moral norms, values and principles related specifically to religious or non-religious organised worldviews taught intentionally or non-intentionally, directly or non-directively?

Educational translation of moral theories

In this section, we apply the three questions listed in the previous section in a broader, more general educational context. We will analyse whether two moral theories, which have been influential in education, confine themselves to narrow morality only or whether they can also be interpreted in terms of broad morality and personal worldview. First of all, we will discuss virtue ethics, which is the basis of various kinds of character education, concentrating on Aristotle’s virtue ethics. Character education, which has become one of the prevalent moral educational approaches in recent years, focuses on how to develop good moral character on the basis of virtues (Sanderse, 2013). Secondly, we will discuss deontology and focus on Kant. Deontological ethics, or rule-based ethics, is used in education when moral education aims to transmit duties and moral rules, such as ‘Do not steal’ and ‘Do not lie’.24

The focus of our analysis is restricted to these two moral education theories for several reasons. Firstly, these two theories represent two dimensions of morality: the deontological and the aretaic dimension (Carr, 2006). The

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24 Virtue ethics as a basis of character education and deontology are not discussed as specific methods or programmes for moral education but as two important theories that are applied in schools.
The deontological dimension focuses on rules and principles that are seen as duties and obligations. It relates to the moral aspect of the *action* of morality. Character education is often related to the aretaic dimension of morality. It focuses on moral goodness, excellence and virtuous character. People cannot be forced to live up to these standards but can be encouraged to do so. This dimension relates to the moral aspect of the *person* who is performing a moral act (De Ruyter and Steutel, 2013).

Secondly, both theories are widely applied in schools. ‘Character education’ is a popular approach in moral education based on various interpretations of virtue ethics, and the deontic dimension of morality always has a place in education because rules are an important aspect of school life where large groups of children spend time together. Finally, we have chosen these theories because at first sight they seem suitable examples of a theory that is aimed at more than narrow morality (character education and the emphasis on moral goodness) and a theory that is restricted to narrow morality (deontological ethics and the emphasis on rules and obligations) respectively.

**Virtue ethics and character education**

The term ‘character education’ is used to characterise various approaches of moral education related to virtue ethics. They all state that they aim to teach students virtues. They differ, however, in their method, particular aims and fundamental ideas. We make a distinction between two approaches of character education. The aim of the first approach is to pay attention to the cultivation of students’ virtues in order to bring about good behaviour. The focus, however, is not so much on the character of the students as on their actions and behaviour. For instance, certain values such as respect, fairness and responsibility are considered central in the school and teachers are expected to live up to these values, which encourages students to behave according to these values (Character Counts: www.charactercounts.org). This approach to character education is practical and pays particular attention to how classroom exercises can contribute to bringing about good behaviour. The theoretical and philosophical background is minimal (Sanderse, 2013). We will therefore call it the ‘practical approach to character education.’ All practical character education programmes state that they are based on Aristotle’s views on virtue ethics. However, his ideas are never really elaborated on (Sanderse, 2013).
The second approach to character education we discuss is an Aristotelian virtue ethical approach. This approach aims to contribute to the development of moral virtues in students (Sanderse, 2013). The main focus of this approach is not the behaviour of students but their character. Moral virtues are defined as stable states of character, concerned with morally admirable conduct. Each character state of this kind typically comprises a unique set of attention, emotion, desire and behaviour, but also a certain style of expression, applicable in the relevant context (Aristotle, 1999; Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 2). A virtuous person experiences and is moved by ‘desires or emotions neither too weakly nor too strongly’, but in a way that moves him or her ‘to act as reason would dictate, and to take pleasure in doing so’ (Curren, 2010, p. 547). In order to achieve this, ‘practical wisdom’ is necessary:25 he or she is able to understand complex moral situations and to make sense of all matters that influence emotions and relationships, and he or she is able to give the reason for performing certain moral actions (Aristotle, 1999; Kristjánsson, 2013; Sanderse, 2013). A virtuous person is not just acting according to certain moral rules; rather, his or her actual character is affected (Carr, 2006; Steutel & Carr, 1999). Virtue ethical character education aims to influence students’ ideas about what kind of person they should be and what kind of beings human beings are in general. It aims to encourage students to adopt the virtues because they see the intrinsic value of them.

An important difference between the practical character education approach and the virtue ethical character education approach is that the former can be typified as instrumental. Virtues are being taught in order to make students behave better. The virtue ethical approach, however, sees the virtues and their exercise as constitutive elements of the good or fulfilling life or ‘eudaimonia’ (Aristotle, 1999; Steutel & Carr, 1999).26 Only someone who possesses moral virtues can flourish (Curren, 2010). Virtues are not a means to living a fulfilling life, but living virtuously is part of this life. Being courageous, just, compassionate and so forth are a necessary part of the fulfilling life (compare with Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 3).

25 Aristotle suggests that the virtuous person has intellectual virtues too: capacities of understanding, judgment, and reasoning that enable people to find truth. Practical wisdom is the intellectual virtue of good judgment (Curren, 2010)

26 Virtues and the exercise of them are a necessary condition for flourishing but not sufficient. Other goods as health and wealth are important as well.
Virtue ethics in terms of narrow and broad moral education

In this section, we use the questions that we derived from the example of the Peaceable School to analyse the relationship between both forms of character education and personal worldview. The first question we aim to answer is whether character education can be provided without aiming to influence the broad moral views of students. The focus of the practical character education approach is on habituating students to good behaviour that is desirable for a society or community. Certain ‘virtues’ are being transmitted and taught through exercises. Teleological or meaning-making notions and ethical matters that are part of broad morality are not necessarily explicitly addressed in this form of moral education. However, the question arises whether influencing behaviour can happen without influencing a person’s ethical views and beliefs. Changing behaviour seems to involve a change in one’s ideas about what good behaviour entails.

In contrast, it seems unlikely that virtue ethical character education can be restricted to narrow moral education. This approach cannot but deal with ethical and teleological notions and questions, for an important aim of this approach is to influence the ethical views of students and their ideas about what kind of person they should be so that they adopt the virtues because of their intrinsic value. Teleological or meaning-making notions are also part of this approach. Students are encouraged to be virtuous because exercising the virtues is an important part of leading a meaningful, flourishing life. Striving for eudaimonia gives meaning to life.

The second question from section 2 is whether character education aims to influence the development of personal worldview matters that lie outside the broad moral domain. In the example of the Peaceable School we stated that every moral educational programme has certain underlying ontological views as it presumes a particular conceptualisation of the nature of human beings. This also applies to the practical approach of character education. Human beings are seen as beings who are not naturally inclined to do well but need external instructions on how to act. These external instructions are called ‘virtues’ in this approach. These ontological notions are the only notions that lie outside the broad moral domain that are part of the practical approach of character education. Other existential notions (cosmological, eschatological

27 Aristotle uses ‘teleological’ to describe that something (a process, action, etc.) is directed at a final cause. In this article, including the part about Aristotle, we use ‘teleological’ to describe the meaning in or of life.
and theological) are not necessarily part of it (Van der Kooij, De Ruyter and Miedema, 2016b). Good behaviour can be cultivated independently of these notions. For instance, certain specific views on questions such as whether or not there is an afterlife or about the origin of the world are not necessary for teaching pupils to behave well.

The virtue ethical approach of character education also aims to influence normative ontological views. Virtue ethics has a clear view on what kind of beings human beings ought to be and what is valuable in human existence. It aims to teach matters such as ‘human beings are capable of a virtuous life’ and ‘virtues such as justice and persistence are valuable in human existence’. Are other existential notions part of this virtue ethical approach to moral education? The approach does not necessarily aim to influence cosmological, theological and eschatological matters. Thus, the virtue ethical approach is similar to practical character education when it comes to aiming at influencing existential notions beyond the broad moral domain.

The final question we focus on is how both forms of character education relate to organised worldviews and the religious convictions students might have. We discovered in the example of the Peaceable School that an answer to this question requires the distinction between directive and non-directive teaching and between intentional and non-intentional education. Both forms of character education can be taught without directly and intentionally aiming to influence the religious or non-religious organised worldview convictions students might have. It can, however, be a non-intentional effect of both forms of character education that a student reflects on or changes his or her personal religious or non-religious worldview convictions. Furthermore, many organised worldviews agree with and communicate the importance of certain virtues like justice, persistence, honesty and patience; they are part of all the world’s great religions and therefore organised worldviews are sometimes used as examples of ways in which morality, in this case the virtues, are presented, clarified and defended (Kristjánsson, 2013). For instance, the Islamic Ramadan can serve as an example of the virtue of persistence and the Jewish King Solomon can serve as an example of a just person. In this case, however, it is not necessarily the aim to influence the personal worldview of students.

In conclusion, every moral education programme presumes a particular conceptualisation of the nature of human beings. The aim of these programmes is to motivate students to accept these ontological beliefs. This is also the case
for both forms of character education. Practical character education assumes that virtues need to be cultivated in human beings in order for them to behave well—human nature needs to be cultivated. The virtue ethics approach states that human beings are capable of a virtuous life and it teaches which virtues are valuable in human existence. This influence of approaches to moral education on personal worldview is inevitable.

In general, transmitting ontological views in (public) education is not seen as problematic for or contrary to the belief that public education should not influence the religious convictions of students or their personal identity development; this transmission is simply unavoidable.\(^{28}\) However, moral education can have a wider influence on the personal worldview of students than these ontological views, as is the case with character education based on Aristotle’s virtue ethics approach. It aims to enable students to live fulfilling lives and as a consequence it aims to influence ethical and teleological notions of students. It therefore aims to influence the broad moral views and personal worldview of students. This raises the question why this influence is not seen as problematic in state schools where influencing the religious ideas of students is a problem.

**Deontological ethics**

Deontological moral theories are characterised by (moral) rules and principles that decisively judge actions as being morally right or wrong. Regardless of how ‘good’ the consequences of a certain act are, some acts are morally forbidden. What makes a choice ‘right’ is its conformity to a moral rule or principle (Alexander & Moore, 2012).

A distinction can be made between a maximal and a minimal approach to deontological ethics and deontological education. The minimal approach can be understood as a form of social contract consisting of basic rules that enable us to live together in relative peace and harmony and that we cooperate despite our different personal values and particular interests (Carr, 2003, p. 177). Examples of these basic rules are the rule not to steal or kill and to respect (the freedom of) other persons. The basic moral rules form the foundation (or definition) of a society and therefore need to be transmitted to the next generation to ensure the continuation of that society.

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\(^{28}\) Note that this does not mean that the ontological views themselves are not controversial. We will return to this in the concluding section.
The maximal version of deontology is based on Kant’s (moral) theory. We will briefly summarise his views on deontology and focus on his ideas about ‘autonomy’. Kant holds that the single fundamental principle of morality on which all specific moral imperfect duties are based is the Categorical Imperative. This principle implies that an action is only morally right when we can, will that it becomes a universal law (Kant, 1998, p. 4:421). Kant furthermore explains that the basic dignity of oneself and others should be recognised. This is achieved by never treating others and oneself as a means to an end only but as an end in itself. Persons ought to be respected as rational beings with their own maxims (Kant, 1998, p. 4:429).

The idea that human beings can be autonomous is central to Kant’s theory. The idea of autonomy relates to Kantian ethics in two ways. Firstly, recognising the basic dignity of a person means that one respects other people’s autonomy and acts in such a way that autonomy is produced. Secondly, autonomy is important for making moral decisions. Kant believes that a person is truly autonomous when decisions are not affected by other factors than reason. A will that responds to reasons is a rational will (Hand, 2006, p. 541; Kant, 1998). As Korsgaard (1996) explains: he defines a free will as a rational causality which is effective without being determined by an alien cause. Anything outside of the will counts as an alien cause, including the desires and inclinations of the person. The free will must be entirely self-determining (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 97). Reasons or motivations to act must be evaluated by the will against some rule or principle through a reflective process thereby making them the will’s own (Korsgaard, 1996). This way, reason provides an action-guiding principle. This action-guiding principle takes the specific form of the criterion of universalisability, as described by the Categorical Imperative. That is to say, a principle or maxim should be chosen that one would be willing to have as a universal law governing everyone’s actions (Hand, 2006, p. 542; Kant, 1998; Korsgaard, 1996).

Deontological ethics in terms of narrow and broad moral education
What is the relation between deontological moral education and personal worldview? The questions that were derived from the Peaceable School example will be used to describe this relationship. The first question is whether it is possible to provide moral education that does not involve attention to broad moral views and therefore avoids influencing the personal worldview of students.
We begin with the minimal version of deontology and its relation to education. Moral education with this aim is focused on narrow morality and on pupils adhering to the rules of society. Teachers in this case would teach the rules of society in order for pupils to adhere to them. They teach how these rules are ordered and where and when they apply, and how to make judgments in light of these rules (Johnson, 2007). This means that the first question can be answered positively for this minimal version of deontological education.

Is this also true for the maximal version of deontology based on Kant? Although Kantian ethics focuses on rules and obligations towards others, it also relates to the broad moral domain. Firstly, Kant distinguishes between perfect and imperfect duties. Perfect duties are prescriptions of specific kinds of action, they are based on reason, clear-cut and leave no doubt about what and how much should be done. It is a duty that people must act upon constantly in their lives. An example of a perfect duty is the duty not to lie because universalising lying leads to a logical inconsistency. When lying is universalised, for instance, where this suits a person, telling the truth can no longer be expected. Since the presupposition of telling the truth does not exist, ‘lying’ does not exist anymore either. Furthermore, a practical consequence would be that it would be impossible to take any statement seriously in situations where telling the truth is not the norm. Imperfect duties are prescriptions of general ends and also based on reason. However, imperfect duties are not as strong as perfect duties. They are either aspirations or they depend on the circumstances in specific situations that lead to particular or specific rules. In the context of this paper, the first group of imperfect duties are of interest. These imperfect duties surpass moral rules. One cannot live up to these aspirational duties all the time and they are never fully completed, as is the case for perfect duties. An example of such an imperfect duty is giving money to charity or striving for a world free of child labour. These aspirational imperfect duties relate to the broad moral domain in two ways. Firstly, just as was the case with the Peaceable School, teaching imperfect duties moves beyond the rules that are necessary for living harmoniously together. These duties are ethical in nature and thus are part of the broad moral domain. They are not about what is right, but about what is good. Secondly, one strives to fulfil certain aspirations because one considers them important and valuable. Striving to fulfil them makes life meaningful. It was already stated that meaning giving is also part of broad morality.
What place can aspirational duties have in education? They can be taught directly. However, the result of this teaching, namely whether or not pupils will embrace these aspirations, is uncertain. This is because for the aspirations to be fulfilled intrinsic motivation and a belief that the aspirations are valuable and meaningful indeed are needed. Of course, students can be encouraged to reflect on what they believe to be valuable and meaningful to strive for. If this is part of moral education, students' broad moral views and therefore their personal worldview can change.

A second manner in which Kantian moral education relates to broad morality is via the ideal of autonomy. Kantian moral autonomy is an ethical value or ideal and therefore part of the broad moral domain. Educating students in Kantian autonomy (that is, encouraging them to become autonomous in the Kantian sense), has consequences for the broad moral views of these students. Since broad morality is conceptually part of personal worldview, this also has consequences for the personal worldview of students.

The second question that needs to be addressed is whether deontological moral education aims to influence the personal worldview of students beyond the broad moral domain. Are other existential questions than the ethical and the teleological part of this education? We already stated that every approach to moral education is based on certain ontological views: the inevitable and minimal influence an approach to moral education has on personal worldview. This is no different for minimal and maximal deontology. The minimal approach assumes that human beings need moral rules and principles in order to be able to live and work together. The maximal or Kantian approach to deontological education assumes that good character is based on the will to act morally right and that being morally autonomous is an important aspect of being human.

The minimal and maximal approach to deontological education do not aim to influence existential notions beyond the broad moral domain other than the ontological. Theological, eschatological and cosmological matters are not necessarily part of these moral educational approaches.

This demonstrates that the minimal and maximal versions of deontological education are similar in trying to influence the personal worldview development beyond broad morality. Both these versions do not go further than the inevitable and minimal influence on ontological views. The difference between the two versions consists of the fact that minimal deontological education does not aim to influence broad morality where
maximal deontological education does aim to influence ethical and teleological views when attention focuses on imperfect duties and the educational ideal of Kantian autonomy.

The final question posed in the example of the Peaceable School is how both forms of deontological moral education relate to organised worldviews and the religious convictions students might have. Both forms do not directly and intentionally aim to influence the religious or non-religious organised worldview convictions of students. However, maximal deontological moral education can have non-intentional consequences for the students’ views. Using one’s reason autonomously is crucial in this type of education. If students have learned to use reason, it seems difficult to avoid reasoning being used in other domains of students’ lives, such as their religious upbringing. The Divine Command Theory, for example, which states that an action is morally good when God has ordered it to be good, contradicts Kant’s idea of reasoning autonomously. Thus, theological matters could be looked upon differently when students have learned to reason autonomously and to rely on their reason only.

In conclusion, it is possible to teach narrow moral education based on deontological views when one uses the minimal approach. The maximal approach, or the Kantian approach to moral education, entails broad morality and intentionally influences the personal worldview of students. This can happen without aiming to influence the theological aspect of personal worldview.

**Concluding remarks**

In the introduction we stated that it is possible that the education in state schools has an influence on the personal worldview of their pupils. Furthermore, we suggested that this is particularly likely in moral education provided by schools. The illustrative example of The Peaceable School demonstrated that this method does indeed have an influence on the personal worldview of students. The exploration of the Peaceable School resulted in three topics that need to be explored in the relation between moral education and personal worldview development: (1) Is it possible to provide moral education without aiming to influence the broad moral views of pupils? (2) Does the approach
aim to influence the development of personal worldview matters that lie outside the broad moral domain? (3) Are moral norms, values and principles related specifically to religious or non-religious organised worldviews taught intentionally or non-intentionally, directly or nondirectively? Analysing these led us to the following three conclusions.

Firstly, we demonstrated that every approach to moral education aims to influence the personal worldview of students because of the underlying (normative and anthropological) ontological beliefs: a particular conceptualisation of the nature of human beings is presumed. We called this the inevitable and minimal influence of moral education on personal worldview. The practical character education approach conceptualises humans as beings that are in need of the cultivation of virtues in order to behave well. The virtue ethical character education aims to teach matters such as humans being capable of living virtuously and it aims to teach the value of virtues like justice and persistence. Underlying minimal deontology is the belief that the nature of human beings is such that they need moral rules and principles in order to be able to live and work together. The maximal or Kantian approach to deontological education is based on the view that the will to act morally right is necessary for being a good person and that being morally autonomous is an important aspect of being human.

As we noted, this minimal and inevitable influence is not seen as problematic or as contrary to the belief that public education should not influence the religious convictions of students or their personal identity development. The reason for this is obviously that it is unavoidable, but might also be due to the fact that the ontological beliefs (regarding the purpose of human beings, how they should act and their role in the world) that underlie public education tend to be phrased in quite an abstract and general way. However, although the influence of moral education on ontological beliefs is unavoidable, this does not mean that this is necessarily uncontroversial. This is not only true in case of a particular conceptualisation of the nature of human beings based on a specific religious view. All ontological views may have consequences for the religious views of students. When discussing the consequences of moral education for personal worldview formation, these points have to be taken into account.

Secondly, we found that two approaches to moral education we analysed go beyond this ontological influence, namely Aristotle’s virtue ethics
and, rather unexpectedly, Kantian deontological ethics. Both aim to contribute to the personal worldview development of students because they aim to influence the broad moral views (ethical and teleological matters) students have. Aristotelian virtue ethical education aims at affecting the character of persons and aims in order to enable students to live fulfilled lives. Kantian deontological education aims to influence ethical and teleological views when attention focusses on duties and the educational ideal of Kantian autonomy.

This study makes clear that religious and non-religious organised worldviews are an issue in educational discussions but that attention to the personal worldview of students is also important. It demonstrates that not only religious education as a subject taught in schools influences this personal worldview, but other subjects like moral education influence the personal worldview and religious views of students too. This does not mean that moral education should not have a place in public education. On the contrary, it is generally agreed that moral education is highly important in schools. It does mean that teachers, policy makers and programme developers need to be aware of this influence and be transparent about the impact of the particular conceptualisation of moral education that has been chosen.

Thirdly, our analysis demonstrates that both the Aristotelian approach and the Kantian approach do not directly or intentionally aim to influence the religious and non-religious organised worldview convictions of students. We have seen, however, that reflection on religious or non-religious organised worldview convictions can be a non-intentional consequence of moral education. The premise that public education should not influence the religious convictions of their pupils nor favour a particular religion is therefore difficult to uphold in practice if these approaches to moral education are chosen by schools.

Our analysis of the relationship between personal worldview and moral education makes clear that there is more at stake in moral education than one might think when only paying attention to the relationship between religious convictions and organised worldviews on the one hand and moral education on the other. A question that remains unanswered, however, is why discussions about worldviews in public education focus almost exclusively on religious and non-religious organised worldviews instead of on personal worldviews. This is an interesting empirical question for further research.
References


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Chapter 5


