

# Reconciling Divisions in the Field of Authentic Education

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*The aim of this article is twofold: first, to identify and address three central divisions in the field of authentic education that introduce ambiguity and at times inconsistencies within the field of authentic education. These divisions concern a) the relationship between autonomy and authenticity; b) the division between the two basic attitudes towards 'care' in the authenticity literature, and; c) the well-worn division between objective and subjective realms of knowledge and identity construction. Addressing these divisions through Charles Taylor's distinction between active and passive aspects of authenticity, I believe, will lead to a better understanding of the main issues involved in conceptualising and applying authenticity-based education. Second, to present what I call *The Postconventional Authentic Relation-to-Self (PARTS)* as a basis for overcoming and reconciling the above divisions. I shall conclude by providing some examples of the way the perspective envisioned by PARTS can be applied to educational practices.*

## INTRODUCTION

There has been growing interest in recent years in the concept of 'authenticity' particularly in political and moral philosophy (e.g. Cooke, 1997, 1999; Ferrara, 1998; Habermas, 1992, 1994; Taylor, 1991) and recently also in educational theory (e.g. Splitter, 2008; Newmann *et al.*, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 2001; Lipman, 2003; Bonnett and Cuypers, 2002; Cooper, 1983). In fact, this growing interest in 'authenticity' has brought about the creation of an entirely new field in educational theory known as *Authentic Education*. The reasons for the relative absence of 'authenticity' in academic discourse as well as its revival are not the subject of this article.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that 'authenticity' is now used in educational discourse either to contest prevailing educational methods and practices that undermine individual autonomy and active engagement in the learning process, or as a corrective to most educational system's failure to take

individual differences into account. Others would say that the appeal to ‘authenticity’ reflects the contemporary socio-cultural expectation to exhibit and realise individuality and uniqueness. In this age of radical individualism, ‘authenticity’, as the paradigm exemplar of the radical quest for individuality and uniqueness, can be said to sit well with the ‘spirit of the time’.

Authentic education is a relatively new field and still remains in many respects underdeveloped. What is more, the conceptual elusiveness of the notion of authenticity (Golomb, 1995), issues various and at times opposing understandings of the very aims of authentic education. The aim of this article is therefore twofold: first, to identify and address three central divisions in the field of authentic education that introduce ambiguity and at times inconsistencies within the field of authentic education. Addressing these divisions through Charles Taylor’s distinction between active and passive aspects of authenticity, I believe, will lead to a better understanding of the main issues involved in conceptualising and applying authenticity-based education. Second, to present what I call The Postconventional Authentic Relation-to-Self (PARTS) as a basis for overcoming and reconciling the above divisions. I shall conclude by providing some examples of the way the perspective envisioned by PARTS can be applied to educational practices.

## I AUTHENTICITY IN CURRENT EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE

Educational thinkers, by and large, apply authenticity to increase student engagement, motivation, and the exercise of meaningful choice, thus developing each learner’s competence to rationally express his or her own views. Authentic education aims to encourage the personal development of individuals to shape their own identity according to their own interests, preferences and capabilities as well as to express their own unique and irreplaceable individuality within learning processes. Thus, ‘authentic education’ can be said to consist of both *developmental* and *expressive* aspects. The ‘developmental’ aspect refers to the creation of a learning environment supporting processes of identity-formation, in which each individual is able to develop as a unique and irreplaceable human being. The ‘expressive’ aspect concerns the creation of a learning environment that supports the expression of learners’ own unique individuality.<sup>2</sup>

More specifically, authentic education can be said to centre on three central themes. The first is reflected in a recent article mapping the domain of authenticity in education. In this article, the authors state that though diverse approaches and conceptions exist, the common strand uniting this domain is the view that authenticity is promoted by the granting of motivational elements, such as the agents’ desires or values, when these are ‘truly the agent’s own’ (Cuypers and Haji, 2007). And according to these thinkers, this commonly accepted view is best understood by contemplating the relationship between *autonomy* and authenticity.

Another crucial and widely accepted theme in the field is the centrality of the construct of *dialogue*. Echoing the views of many prominent thinkers, Splitter writes:

Dialogue is nothing less than the ground of our own authenticity: we become who we are and learn to set goals, make judgments about our own lives, etc. as members of this same dialogical community (Splitter, 2008).

The view that ‘dialogue’ is fundamental to authenticity certainly follows the relatively recent shift from traditional-individualist readings of authenticity (first conceptualised in existentialist and Romanticist thought) towards intersubjective or dialogical views of authenticity advocated most notably by thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor. As opposed to the traditional—radical individualist—understanding, which centres primarily on a passionate and socially detached journey into the heart of each individual’s private inner-realm, the recent intersubjective turn towards authenticity in educational discourse regards dialogue not merely as a *method* for promoting and enhancing student engagement and the development of cognitive capacities such as critical thought, but as a fundamental component and aim of authentic education. Dialogue is therefore an end in-itself.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, some thinkers are still immersed in the traditional dichotomy between the individual and society, between the inner and outer realms, and the well-worn distinction between the subjective and objective realms.<sup>4</sup> I shall shortly address these dichotomies since they lie at the heart of the three divisions discussed below. Yet, the idea that dialogical relations should be a central component of authentic education is still very much the prevailing view.

Finally, the third theme that is recurrently discussed in the authentic education literature concerns the importance of acknowledging and accounting for students’ prior knowledge in engaging with content, and connecting the learning to real problems, tasks and challenges, i.e. those which are connected to life beyond the classroom (Newmann *et al.*, 2001). This aspect concentrates primarily on the connection between learning and reality, a connection that is often neglected in prevailing formal educational practices. For example, one of the central problems which educators frequently encounter in the classroom today is the growing gap between how (and what) is learned in school and the lifestyles and modes of thought and action of today’s youngsters—who are deeply immersed in the digital culture (Prensky, 2001). Only a fraction of progressive schools have made the needed conceptual and technological leap that is required in order to adapt school practices to meet the requisites of the ‘digital age’.

## II AUTHENTICITY AND AUTONOMY

Let me stop to ponder the relationship between autonomy and authenticity (the first of the three themes discussed above) since it concerns the very conceptualisation of authenticity in current literature.

Cuypers and Haji begin their review of the current uses of authenticity as follows: ‘The first set of examples clusters around the theme that *autonomy* is an educational ideal’ (p. 78—my emphasis). The authors continue to classify two other clusters of examples, the second of which refers to progressivism and the ‘deschooling’ movement, the third concentrating on children’s *rights*. In all the above examples—or classifications of the different uses of authenticity—authenticity is viewed as merely one aspect of *autonomy* together with rational choice or conduct:

... the operative conception of authenticity seems closely associated with the capacity to choose, on the basis of one’s own critical deliberations, guiding principles of conduct. Autonomous choice, it is proposed, is thus authentic as well as rationally informed. (Cuypers and Haji, 2007, p. 79)

The view expressed above by Cuypers and Haji, I believe, faithfully represents commonly held perceptions of the relationship between autonomy and authenticity. In current (political and educational) liberal theory it is possible to find similar approaches that conceive authenticity as an integral aspect of autonomy (e.g. Peters, 1973; Cooke, 1999), and whether or not authenticity is in fact conceived as central to the explanation of autonomy is dependent on the specific view of autonomy one holds (Christman, 2007).

For the sake of simplicity, it is possible to draw a conceptual axis along which autonomy can be construed. At one end of the spectrum, hard-line liberals refer to autonomy as the individual’s capacity to live and shape his or her own identity as he or she sees fit according to the principle of non-interference (either from political administrations or the social group to which one belongs). This can be called, reiterating Michael Walzer,<sup>5</sup> the ‘thin’ conception of autonomy, which is in line with such thinkers as Nozick who espouse the principle of state-neutrality, impartiality and the minimal state. At the other end of the spectrum, are ‘thickly’ conceived meanings of autonomy that stress the person’s capacity for self-governance—the ability to guide her life from *her own* perspective rather than being manipulated by others or being forced into a particular path by surreptitious or irresistible forces (either internal or external).<sup>6</sup> Certainly, there are countless variations of both conceptions which can be situated somewhere between the two generic types (i.e. ‘thin’ and ‘thick’). Various strands of the thickly construed approach to autonomy emphasise the need or the right to conduct one’s behaviour and make choices solely on motivational grounds that are properly understood as the *agent’s own*. It is within this thickly defined notion that authenticity, together with rational judgment, pertains to autonomy. To be sure, the question of whether a person is, in fact, able to determine whether the choices she makes are *truly* her own becomes entangled in the opposing lines of thought within the liberal-communitarian debate. I shall address this complication when I introduce my own postconventional understanding of authenticity below.

In any case, even if we adopt a thickly defined conception of autonomy, it is questionable whether the label ‘authentic education’ has any practical

merits. If indeed authenticity is merely an aspect of autonomy, why not use the term ‘autonomous education’ or education for autonomy and (consequently) discuss authenticity as one of its (main) attributes? In other words, the use of the label ‘authentic education’ presupposes an appeal to something other than ‘autonomy’ or at least should highlight clear and distinct attributes if it is to have a credible standing as a distinctive field within educational theory.

### III ADDRESSING DIVISIONS

Making use of Taylor’s well-known distinction between passive and active aspects of authenticity enables us to better understand and reconcile the following divisions within the field of authentic education: a) the relationship between autonomy and authenticity; b) the division between the two basic attitudes towards ‘care’ in the authenticity literature, and; c) the well-worn division between objective and subjective realms of knowledge and identity construction.

Charles Taylor succinctly differentiates between two aspects of authenticity:

Briefly, we can say that authenticity [on the one hand] (A) involves (i) creation and construction as well as discovery, (ii) originality, and frequently (iii) opposition to the rules of society and even potentially to what we recognise as morality. But it is also true, as we saw, that it [on the other hand] (B) requires (i) openness to horizons of significance . . . and (ii) a self-definition in dialogue. That these demands may be in tension has to be allowed. But what must be wrong is a simple privileging of one over the other, of [the active dimension] (A), say, at the expense of [the passive dimension] (B), or vice versa (Taylor, 1991, p. 66).

This division is offered by Taylor in order to confront two current (and opposing) readings of authenticity that are advocated in the literature. The *active* understanding of authenticity refers to postmodern and existentialist readings that highlight the creative and self-constitutive aspects of personal-development and self-understanding. According to this reading, the self is roughly conceived as a freestanding radically self-determining entity that possesses the ability to question at all times the very foundations of his or her identity and the manner in which he or she take on (social) roles. This capacity enables the authentic person to actively reinterpret, reshape, and recreate his or her sense of selfhood. Thus, according to this reading, the self is, in principle, unconstrained by any predetermined values, proclivities or personal attributes.<sup>7</sup> The *passive* understanding of authenticity, on the other hand, refers to contemporary communitarian and feminist readings of authenticity that underscore the dependency of identity formation on either the horizons of significance or predetermined proclivities that play a significant role in the process of self-development and

identity-formation. Taylor acknowledges that there might be tensions between the active and passive dimensions, yet he nevertheless claims that fully accounting for authenticity demands taking both into account.

Taylor's division between the active and passive aspects of authenticity is used by Bonnett and Cuypers (2002) to distinguish between autonomy and authenticity as two different forms of realising personal freedom.

. . . the concept of being true to oneself comprises both autonomy as (more) active self-determination by free choice or rational decision and authenticity as (more) passive social dependence and conformism (p. 336)

For them, the active aspect can be equated with autonomy, conceived as self-determining freedom that is, in principle, unconstrained by predetermined or innate personality attributes, socially determined value-orientations and commitments. Autonomy, in this context, is envisioned as an impartial attitude towards freedom that disregards the particular social context in which a person happens to undergo processes of socialisation. Authenticity is understood as 'passive' when viewed as enticing the authentically acting person to acknowledge the specific personality attributes and proclivities that determine *for* the person who he or she *really* is and wants to be either in terms of socially determined commitments and value-orientations (communitarianism) or gender-specific attributes (Feminism). This is further supported in the authors' distinction (based on Harry Frankfurt's notion of volitional necessity) between voluntaristic and non-voluntaristic views of *autonomy* (p. 329). Whereas the former relates to self-determining freedom, the latter relates to the passive view of authenticity since it awards socially or biologically pre-given attributes a significant role in shaping what one *cares about* and what kind of person he or she is and wants to be.

The way Bonnett and Cuypers make use of Taylor's distinction between active and passive aspects seems odd given that Taylor introduces it precisely in order to stress that *both* aspects are needed in order to fully conceptualise 'authenticity'. They further complicate and restrict the understanding of authenticity by creating an unwarranted division of labour between autonomy (as active) and authenticity (as passive). While it appears that Taylor presents the distinction between the two aspects as an analytic device to sort out misconceptions and misuses of authenticity in current literatures (and culture), Bonnett and Cuypers' utilise the distinction to clarify the conceptual boundaries between autonomy and authenticity, thus arriving at a restricted understanding of authenticity. According to the above passage, authenticity is either equated with social conformism, which cannot be further away from the meaning of authenticity even according to intersubjective formulations, or equated with a non-voluntaristic view which again, undermines the so-called active dimensions. Moreover, the passive dimension of authenticity leads to a *conventional* view of ego-identity, one that more or less abides by the social expectations and value-orientations that are considered legitimate in a

given social group. This conventional view of ego-identity presents clear limitations on authentic choice: first, the possibilities for self-realisation are restricted, since the process of identity-formation is largely shaped by what is deemed legitimate in a given social context (whether in a community, religious or identity group, society, nation, etc.), and second, it restricts the critical perspective that one takes towards one's actions and decisions. If we were to remain true to the moral ideal originally linked with the notion of authenticity—a standard also embraced by those who have taken the intersubjectivist or dialogical turn, then our understanding of authenticity must assume more room for individuals to express uniqueness as well as to expand the perspective from which they evaluate the ethical validity of their identities.<sup>8</sup>

A further distinction that is made in the authenticity literature is the division between two central attitudes towards 'care'. Whereas in feminist theory the term 'care' is used in the sense of *caring for* (Noddings, 2002)—indicating a dialogically-based emotive-emotional perspective that is sensitive to (even dependent upon) the claims and perspectives of others, thinkers drawing on existentialist positions speak in terms of *caring about* (Frankfurt, 1999)—i.e. a self-centred perspective that is concerned about the way things matter or have value for each individual. Here too, the division between the two attitudes presents different understandings of authenticity that are portrayed as being in tension with one another.

The 'caring for' perspective can be viewed as consistent with the *passive* aspect of authenticity, in that the self is viewed as dependent upon the evaluative judgments of others from whom he or she seeks to gain recognition as an authentic (unique and irreplaceable) individual. Acknowledging that personal identity is shaped and defined by the kinds of (caring) relations the self has with others, makes self-clarification and self-realisation subordinate—but not entirely—to external authorities that are not in the self's direct control. In a way, 'caring for' is a perspective that looks both ways: on the one hand, sensitivity and empathy towards the needs and views of others, and on the other hand, acknowledgment that the demand of the 'other' upon the self fundamentally affects one's self-understanding. In both ways, authenticity as 'caring for' is passive in its acceptance of 'objective' restrictions that are 'imposed' upon the self either in terms of the self's outward perspective towards others (being authentic demands a certain kind of interactions with others) or the impact of the look of others upon the self (i.e. the recognition of one's identity that he or she receives from others).

The perspective of 'caring about' concerns the individual's awareness of things that matter to *him or her*. This perspective can be considered as *active*—again, in the sense proposed by Taylor—in that the person is actively involved in a process of either discovery or creation of the values, commitments and expectations that best reflect the person one is or wants to be. To be sure, the 'caring about' perspective can also be considered passive if we take Frankfurt's position that there are fixed proclivities that make the person into what he really is and wants to be. However,

there is no question that 'caring about' is relatively more open to 'active' interpretations than 'caring for' since it is devoid of the fixed restrictions imposed upon it from external 'authorities' beyond the self's control. Thus, the division between the two perspectives ('caring about' and 'caring for') presents significant differences that are readily demarcated by the passive-active divide.

The third and last division to be dealt with is the distinction between subjective and objective perceptions of knowledge and identity construction. This well-worn distinction has a long history, which I cannot adequately address here. However, I wish to refer briefly to one central aspect that concerns this division, namely: the disparity between the authority of what one holds to be objective facts (objective reality), and the authority of one's ideals, values and commitments, irrespective of their correspondence to an external reality. For instance, Newmann *et al.* (2001) consider the importance of connecting learning to real problems and tasks of the real world in order for authentic education to be realised. For Newmann *et al.*, one of the central elements of authentic education is connecting pupils' internal world (including his or her previous knowledge) to the external world.

Here, too, the active-passive divide can assist in clarifying the division between objective and subjective in terms of their impact on the field of authentic education. Closely related to the distinction between inner and outer realms of experience (Guignon, 2004, p. 81, p. 13), the objective perspective presupposes a given external reality that can, in principle, be descriptively explained through tools of rational thought and scientific enquiry. The subjective perspective, on the other hand, views the authority of the individual's 'internal' thoughts, feelings and commitments as primary in the process of knowledge acquisition and personal development. Thus, the objective perspective is passive in the sense that things we encounter or learn are simply *given* to us and our central task as students or teachers is to understand them as best we possibly can in descriptive-objectivist terms. The subjective perspective gives priority to the manner in which the world is seen from each individual's (or group's) perspective and thus involves an active process of interpreting and clarifying the *meaning* of things we encounter.

Certainly, this is only one instance of how the disparity between objective and subjective perspectives impresses the understanding of knowledge and self-identity. Nevertheless, it indicates two very different ways to approach the question of knowledge construction and significantly affects the ways in which authenticity is viewed and applied in educational settings (cf. Splitter, 2008). Another central implication of this division concerns the ways in which the construct of 'dialogue' is understood.

This brings me to Taylor's concept of 'self-definition in dialogue'. It is puzzling why Taylor labels 'self-definition in dialogue' as passive. Surely, 'dialogue' as both a philosophical and educational construct is generally an instantiation of activity; it reflects a dynamic and responsive process in which individuals learn from each other and discover about themselves and the world through their practical engagement and encounter with

others' perspectives. There is no other way to understand Taylor's classification of dialogue as 'passive' other than to acknowledge that the construct of dialogue enforces upon individuals certain limitations, certain rules of linguistic interaction that are beyond the self's authority and creative activities. While it is possible to be creative within dialogical interactions, the fact of the matter is that there are fixed rules of dialogical engagement (or presuppositions of dialogical relations) that cannot be reinterpreted or substituted. Beyond the structure of dialogue, Taylor envisions the content of authentic dialogue—the self's identity—as a creative endeavour that finds its limits within the horizons of significance of a given social group or community. In other words, Taylor seems to be saying that self-definition in dialogue can be the result of dialogues that take place between those sharing a common cultural background and relate to similar objective horizons of significance.<sup>9</sup> This places socially-conditioned *objective* restrictions on the self-definition of persons, as opposed to the radically subjective open-ended processes of self-formation that is advocated by existentialists such as Sartre and postmodernists such as Derrida.

It should be stressed here that the construct of dialogue has itself become central in educational theory, so much that 'dialogical education' is considered as a distinctive field within educational thought. Here too, there are myriad understandings and applications of dialogue; some are more congenial to authentic education than others. While I cannot properly discuss the construct of 'dialogue' here, suffice to say that dialogue certainly presents a further prism through which the division within the field of authentic education is played out. One finds diverse approaches to dialogue, each drawing on different philosophical frameworks such as those of Socrates, Friere, Bakhtin (Renshaw, 2004), Habermas (Huttunen, 2007, 2003; Morrow and Torres, 2002), Levinas (Eg a-Kuehne, 2008) and Derrida (Peters, 2001; Peters and Burbules, 2004). Each approach to dialogue centres on different conceptual bases that are at times at odds with each other. For example, the Habermasian type of discourse—that centres on rationally-achieved consensus—is in many ways at odds with Derridian-type dialogue that centres on playfulness and difference. I would merely claim at this point that an authenticity-based dialogical education (ADE) is one which reconciles the objective-subjective divide and is able to transcend conceptual as well as practical dichotomies such as between self and others, individual and society, individuation and socialisation among others.

In order to reconcile the above divisions and reach the integrated perspective envisioned by authenticity-based dialogical education (ADE), I shall present in outline form my own conception of the postconventional authentic relation-to-self<sup>10</sup> (PARTS). In presenting PARTS, I shall focus specifically on two central elements that are missing from most views of authenticity: postconventional critical judgment and the need to expand the possibilities-of-being. It is through these two elements that I believe it is possible to reconcile the three divisions exhibited through Taylor's division between active and passive aspects of authenticity.

#### IV INTRODUCING PARTS

PARTS is grounded on the intersubjective or dialogical view of authenticity presented above. According to this view, ego-identity is largely shaped within processes of socialisation through linguistically oriented interactions. Acknowledging the vulnerability of ego-identity and its dependency on processes of mutual recognition, the authentically acting individual clarifies to him or herself who he or she is and wants to be by engaging in dialogical practices with others with whom he or she shares a common social background. Within these ethical processes of self-clarification and self-understanding, the individual seeks recognition for the person he or she is and wants to be by presenting him or herself to others as a unique and irreplaceable being. However, unlike prominent views in the dialogical approach to authenticity, PARTS seeks to expand the perspective from which the person relates to him or herself. Whereas in Taylor's and also in Habermas's recent accounts,<sup>11</sup> the perspective from which the person returns to him or herself in order to reach self-clarification is defined mostly in *conventional* terms—i.e. from the generalised perspective of the social group to which he or she belongs (either within interactions with concrete or imagined 'others'), PARTS is concerned with broadening the perspective from which a person examines the value-orientations, social expectations and commitments that shape and define what matters for him or her.

In doing so, PARTS looks in two directions. On the one hand, it acknowledges the fact that a person's identity is shaped and defined within the context in which a person has undergone processes of socialisation (and thus individualisation<sup>12</sup>). Thus the '*where*' (e.g. given social-cultural context, family, climate), '*when*' (historical period) and '*how*' (under which ideology, educational practices etc.) of personal development have a profound impact on what matters or has value for the individual and largely shapes the kind of choices and actions a person makes. On the other hand, the postconventional self—presupposed in PARTS—continuously seeks to creatively interpret the commonly shared value-orientations and commitments of his or her social group from the perspective of *all* others. This bi-directional approach presents a new way of perceiving postconventional identity. While postconventionality is usually regarded as a perspective that is able to transcend a 'social type' and 'the here and now' of factual discourses (Habermas, 1992), according to PARTS, postconventionality is regarded as the *creative reinterpretation* and *critical examination* of the given social context that is gained by adopting the perspective of ever wider circles of addressees in relating to oneself. Postconventional identity can also be seen as making explicit or discovering the implicit possibilities of being that can *potentially* become legitimate within a given cultural community or identity group (cf. Aboulafia, 2001). Thus perceived, PARTS can be seen as an additional attempt among others to reconcile the dichotomous division between universalised and particularistic perspectives that lies at the heart of the current debate between liberals and communitarians (e.g. Walzer, 1990, 1994; Benhabib, 2002, 2004, and Bredo, 2007 in philosophy; McDonough and Feinberg, 2003 in educational theory). It is this enlarged

perspective, which continuously and creatively seeks to widen the perspective from which the self relates to itself that allows to overcome Taylor's analytic division between active and passive aspects of authenticity (and hence, also the three sub-divisions that have been discussed above). Allow me to clarify this postconventional view with two examples.

The Jewish conservative movement's JTS (Jewish Theological Seminary) has recently decided to allow the ordination of homosexuals and lesbians. A public letter published by Arnold Eisen,<sup>13</sup> the chancellor of the JTS, in which he defends the institute's decision, shows that this decision does not in any way compromise the institute's commitment and obligation to the Jewish law (*Halacha*). Eisen stresses that the decision was not simply grounded on universal moral norms such as 'have respect for the individual rights of others' or 'do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation'. These norms, which have gradually become accepted in the society in which the members of the JTS live and operate, *do not* replace the authority of the Jewish law in shaping and defining the conservative identity.<sup>14</sup> Rather, they serve for Eisen and his fellow associates as an external source of inspiration (an 'other') for expanding the interpretative horizon from which they re-evaluate their own *Jewish identity*. If the conservative movement is to remain a vibrant and living tradition, says Eisen, it must take into account changes in attitudes that have occurred in society towards homosexuality. Moreover, he points out that this decision does not threaten the integrity of the conservative identity any more than past decisions to grant women equal status or to permit driving on the Sabbath. Changing attitudes towards standard practices via interpretative endeavours as well as the openness to the discrimination of others should remain a defining feature of the conservative identity. However, the JTS's decision to lift the ban on homosexuals and lesbians can be seen to complement the movement's ideals and commitments insofar as the *Jewish law* remains the core of the Jewish conservative identity, and is continually reinterpreted by adopting the perspective of 'others'.

Consider also the controversy today in several EU states over the traditional Muslim dress code for women, the *hijab*. For some Westerners, the *hijab* symbolises a blatant denial of the modern way of life and according to high-ranking government officials in the UK, including ex-Foreign Minister Jack Straw, the full veil threatens social solidarity because it causes a distancing affect between people.<sup>15</sup> For Muslim women living in Europe, these debates are not simply over questions of legal and political arrangements, but are predominantly questions of personal identity. To a certain extent, the controversy over the *hijab* has recently become the forefront for questioning the integration of Muslims, and Muslim women in particular, into European states. For those women who are 'trapped', so to speak, between the two cultural worlds, these debates encourage them to rethink their alliances, to re-examine and re-evaluate their own identity. The public turmoil instigated by these debates summons them to consciously clarify and re-examine the grounds for leading the life they are leading. By returning to themselves from the perspective of their families and loved-ones, with whom they share a commitment to Islamic values and customs,

as well as from the perspective of those they have studied and worked with who hold either secular values or other religious faiths, they are able to expand the possibilities for self-expression and realisation. For instance, a Muslim woman may decide to wear the *hijab* only on certain occasions—thereby showing respect for her elders; she may express her uniqueness in the *way* she wears it—choosing to wear colourful designs as opposed to the traditional black; she could also decide to remove it completely and still abide to the religious values of modesty and chastity; she may decide to put it on again after distancing herself from any cultural emblems that reveal her original cultural background. What is important to see in all these cases is that by adopting the others' perspective she is able to *reinterpret* the value of wearing the *hijab*, and re-evaluate for herself the grounds for making her own decision. And the more diverse the perspectives are in her society, the wider the scope of possibilities and interpretations that are at her disposal. For example, she may decide to wear the *hijab* not because it is socially expected or obligating, but rather because it provides her with a sense of self-empowerment, a sense that she possesses the *right* to express herself culturally. The fact that her social environment is more hospitable to differences of expression and opinion makes it possible to transcend the social expectations of her own social group and make decisions that are *right for her*.

Both of these examples demonstrate the interrelation and even co-dependency of the passive and active aspects within PARTS. By seeking to widen the perspective from which a person relates to him or herself, the authentically acting person is able to creatively reinterpret the values, expectations and commitments that are considered legitimate within a given social context. Returning to Taylor's division between active and passive aspects, we can see that according to PARTS both 'openness to horizons of significance' and 'self-definition in dialogue' are fundamentally *active* in the sense that they promote creativity, originality, and even opposition to the conventional rules of society. Furthermore, the divisions between what is voluntary and involuntary and accordingly between 'caring for' and 'caring about' are reconciled within PARTS when the dichotomous boundaries between the individual and society collapse: the postconventional authentic relation-to-self involves 'caring about' what matters for each individual precisely through 'caring for' relations, i.e. adopting the other's perspective towards oneself.

## V CONCLUSION: SOME IMPLICATIONS OF PARTS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The two examples above provided a brief preview of the kind of perspective or attitude that is envisioned by PARTS when considering the relation between personal and group identity, freedom and rights, regularly discussed in the fields of moral and political theory. What I shall do now is offer some implications of PARTS for educational contexts, focusing on a dimension generally missing from most accounts of authenticity in the

educational literature. I refer to the ongoing aspiration to broaden the perspective from which a person returns to him or herself. This aspect concerns the ability to expand both the scope of evaluative judgments of one's choices and actions as well as the possibilities of self-realisation.

What kind of educational practices, then, can support the enlarged perspective envisioned by PARTS? To begin with, educational contexts that incorporate PARTS must first become 'ideologically transparent'. By this I mean, the ongoing *strategic* attempt to dialogically expose implicit ideological underpinnings that shape *how* we learn (i.e. teaching methods, learning styles etc.), *what* we learn (i.e. values, sets of beliefs, curriculum and learning contents within each subject matter), and *how* we evaluate learning processes and student achievement (i.e. what we deem as successful, calculable, productive, desirable, meaningful and so forth). To be sure, transparency is a matter of degree and will certainly vary depending on the educational level (school administration, teachers, and students) as well as the level of study. 'Ideological transparency' is required for two main reasons: 1) to strategically clarify the value-orientations, social expectations and commitments that inform our thoughts and actions and 2) to develop each individual's ability to creatively question certain aspects of the learning based on a deeper understanding of the reasons for how and what we learn. In other words, 'ideological transparency' is a necessary condition for increasing awareness of ourselves and for leading a consciously pursued way of life. I should point out that 'ideological transparency' does not necessarily impose a subversive attitude towards horizons of significance (such as that called for within the critical pedagogy advocated by Friere and his followers) but rather promotes a more intimate and informed understanding of them as well as the manner in which the ideological underpinnings, in fact, make up a major part of our own self-definition.

Authentic education based on PARTS also seeks to create dialogical encounters between learners, among themselves, and among those from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (whether they be *concrete*—physically present—or *hypothetical* partners<sup>16</sup>) and to promote awareness of the significance of taking the attitude of others (Mead, 1934). A possible occasion to promote such encounters and awareness can present itself in discussing the variety of meanings of (arguably) universally valued concepts such as 'autonomy', 'freedom', 'commitment', 'justice' (or the variety of attitudes towards simple objects in lower levels of study<sup>17</sup>), that are held by different individuals in different contexts and times (e.g. different areas of study, life-situations, historical periods, etc.).<sup>18</sup> For example, a discussion on what 'freedom' means for each individual can be an enlightening opportunity for young learners to explore variety of different perceptions of self-realisation and self-fulfilment and to compare these perception to one's own self-understanding. 'Taking the attitude of the other' in this context means to consider through role-playing or story-telling techniques how the adoption of another's perception of freedom impacts one's own current life-style and expands the possibilities of self-realisation that are at one's disposal. Or, conversely, in learning about the

American war of independence, learners will also learn about other national liberation movements (from the Exodus to Eastern European national movements after the fall of the Soviet Union) and discuss the similarities and differences of the meanings of national self-determination that unfold in each case. This learning process will expose students to the idea that freedom, while universally espoused, may take on different meanings depending on the given context. This bi-directional approach to learning stresses simultaneously the ability to cognitively as well as emotionally 'connect' to the perspective of others, while still remaining sensitive and respectful of one's own self-understanding (either individual or group).

Indeed, the ability to identify both differences and similarities in attitudes via simulations such as role-playing are frequently used techniques. The technique of role-playing is used to develop problem-solving skills, promote connectivity to real life situation (thus complementing one of the three central aspect of authentic education specified above), encourage active student participation and motivation, and also tend to be open-ended in the sense of providing creative and relatively unplanned environments to explore the complexity of a given problem (Pettenger and Young, 2008). Thus, role-playing can be seen as a dialogically-oriented technique that promotes key aspects of authenticity-based education not only in humanistic fields of study but also in Math and sciences (Cronin-Jones, 2000; Butler, 1989). These dialogical encounters can then provide an educational context is congenial to creative interplays between the various role-players.

However, in PARTS role-playing is not merely viewed as a technique but rather as a more profound process that taps into the social mechanism of thought (inner-dialogue) and personal development as well as an instigator—when properly applied—for the development of moral consciousness that is consistent with postconventional identity.<sup>19</sup> Taking the attitude of the other promotes the gradual developmental ability to recognise the worthiness of the 'other's' view. And this recognition serves as an important step in the ability to learn from others and critically engage in linguistic processes of mutual recognition. Rather than merely adopting the other's perspective, PARTS regards the dialogical encounter as an opportunity to expand the cognitive, emotional and cultural resources from which the authentically acting individual can draw from in clarifying what is right for him or her as a member of a given community or identity group.

To conclude, there are certainly countless dimensions of authentic education (based on PARTS) that have not been explored here that deserve further attention and development. My attempt was to demonstrate how PARTS is able to overcome key divisions in the field of authentic education, divisions that at times obstruct the understanding of its goals and vision.

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## NOTES

1. By 'absence' I mean the lack of explicit references to the notion of 'authenticity' as a basis for grounding a systematically worked out program or position. This is not to say that concepts having 'family resemblance' or those that have been historically and conceptually linked to the concept of authenticity have not been in use such as 'self-esteem', 'self-realisation', 'well-being', 'motivation' and others.
2. I point here to two interrelated, yet, conceptually different aspects. The developmental aspect involves an active creative *process* of identity-formation; the sustaining aspect refers to the ability to express the 'voice' (interests, opinions and so forth) that one already has. This division will shortly be addressed in Taylor's division between active and passive dimensions of authenticity.
3. It is interesting to compare this view with that of Jane Vella (1995).
4. A prominent example is Guignon: 'with respect to the self, what is inner is what is true, genuine, pure, and original, whereas what is outer is a mere shadow, something derived, adulterated and peripheral. In terms of this conceptual scaffolding, the concept of authenticity is defined by privileging the inner over the outer.' See Guignon, 2004, p. 81, see also p. 13.
5. See Walzer (1994) where he discusses two types of morality.
6. This demarcation is reminiscent of Berlin's famous distinction between positive and negative freedom. See Berlin, 1969.
7. Certainly, radical 'active' views question the very use of the notion of selfhood as referring to a stable centre of thought and action.
8. This objection is voiced against both Taylor's and Habermas' view of ethical validity. See Cooke, 1999.
9. Habermas reiterates Taylor's position in his relatively recent work by drawing a distinction between ethical and moral discourses. While ethical validity concerns authentic processes of self-realisation which are tied to evaluative standards that are context-dependent (the social background), moral discourse involve universal standards of evaluation that transcend the particular social context. See Habermas, 1994.
10. The term relation-to-self is taken from Habermas's framework and refers to the relation of the self to itself. Habermas differentiates between two central types of relations-to-self and the approach I am taking here pertains to the normative type as opposed to the epistemic type. For the distinction between the two types of relation to self, see Habermas, 1992.
11. In Habermas's framework I detect two different and inconsistent conceptions of self-realisation. While in his recent work (Habermas, 1994), Habermas speaks of *ethical* self-realisation which closely follows Taylor's position, in earlier accounts (Habermas, 1992) he speaks in terms of *postconventional* self-realisation which is grounded on universalised discourse. I claim that each account is unacceptable from the standpoint of postconventional authenticity and each presents its own problems (Sarid, 2008).
12. See Habermas's view—based on G. H. Mead—that socialisation and individuation are two sides of the same coin, or in other words, they are two interrelated processes (Habermas, 1992).
13. <http://www.jtsa.edu/cjls/eisenletter.shtml>
14. Eisen stresses that the core of the conservative identity involves reconciling between two 'goods': obedience to the Jewish law and a consideration of the ethical values of the society in which the members of the conservative movement operate. Eisen indicates that one of the defining features of the conservative movement is the ongoing reinterpretation of the Jewish law as a result of changes in the ethical commitments and attitudes of the society at large.
15. An article that ex-UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw published in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* awakened the public debate in the UK over the *hijab*. In the UK, arguments against wearing the *hijab* primarily target the problems of segregation and the violation of individual rights. In France, laws have been passed against the traditional Muslim dress code on the grounds of the protection of social equality.
16. I refer here to either dialogue with concrete partners or hypothetical partners, namely, the inner-dialogue that a person conducts with him or herself by taking the attitude of what G. H. Mead called 'significant others'. See Taylor, 1991, p. 26; Habermas, 1992.
17. See Splitter, 2008, on possible ramifications of applying 'authenticity' with regards to attitudes towards objects in authentic education.

18. This idea follows Walzer's 'reiterative universalism' that espouses universal values that find different meanings and varieties of concrete expressions in different cultures and historical periods. See Walzer, 1990.
19. See Mead, 1934, on the connection between thinking and the social mechanism of taking the attitude of the other.

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