The *Eudaimonian* Question: On the Tragedy of Humanism (Education, Ethics and the Common Good)

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1

This paper will offer a number of critical reflections on various ways of understanding the common good: first, by offering a critique of a number of well-known definitions of, and objections to, the concept, and pursuit of, the common good, specifically in the light of *eudaimonian* ends (that is ends which promote *human flourishing* understood as a state, not just an end, or *telos*, which is produced by rational deliberation, contemplation, certain dispositions or traits of character, virtues, and concordant activities, over the whole course of a human life); second, by highlighting some of the salient failures or problems with humanism (and its relation to individualism), broadly conceived; and third, by concluding with some reflections on the way in which higher education might help us to respond meaningfully and coherently to such challenges in the 21st century.

Jacques Maritain makes a number of broad points which open up reflection on the question of the common good to a very considerable degree, for example, points about the relation between a commonwealth and a "society of human persons", between persons and "mastery of self" or independence, and between the work of a society and the work of the persons who constitute it, before arguing that the good and "this work are and must be essentially human and consequently become perverted if they do not *contribute to the development and improvement of human persons*" (1958, p.8; emphasis added). The "common good", he argued, in *The Person and the Common Good* is *ethically* good (that is, not just "good" in a legal or humanitarian or civic sense) and its essential element is maximal development of the

persons who comprise the "united multitude to the end of forming a people", organized in relation to things like justice (rather than brute force or power) (1947, pp. 34-62).

He set out three "essential characteristics" of the "common good":

> Thus we perceive a first essential characteristic of the common good: it implies a <u>redistribution</u>, it must be redistributed among the persons, and it must aid their development.
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> A second characteristic relates to authority in society. The common good is the foundation of authority; for indeed leading a community of human persons towards their common good, towards the good of the whole as such, requires that certain individuals be charged with this guidance, and that the directions which they determine, the decisions which they make to this end, be followed or obeyed by the other members of the community. Such an authority, aimed at the good of the whole, applies to free men, in utter contrast to the dominion wielded by a master over human beings for the particular good of this master himself.
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> A third characteristic has to do with the intrinsic morality of the common good, which is not merely a set of advantages and conveniences, but essentially integrity of life, the good and righteous human life of the multitude. Justice and moral righteousness are thus essential to the common good. That is why the common good requires the development of the virtues in the mass of citizens, and that is why every unjust and immoral political act is in itself harmful to the common good and politically bad. Thereby we see what is the root error of Machiavellianism. We also see how, because of the very fact that the common good is the basis of authority, authority, when it is unjust, betrays its own political essence.
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> An unjust law is not a law. (1958, pp.9-10)

These will provide a basis for extended reflection on the question of the common good, on some contemporary challenges and on some important questions concerning education in the 21st century.

2

There are numerous ways of understanding the common good, as "good" that we strive for as rational beings, and "good" that we "hold in common" (Annett, 2017, p.42). John Finnis affirms the connection between the common good and education (as a human right). He writes:

> governments do have a primary role in cultivating some elements of civic virtue —those that pertain to the performance of political roles and responsibilities, such as fair competition in elections for public offices, doing one's duty if called for service on a jury, refusing bribes, as a citizen, to vote for certain candidates or, as a legislator, for certain bills, etc. As to the many other important elements of civic virtue, however, government can and must support but should not supplant the ongoing educative project of the civic institutions (families, schools, churches, etc.) which rightly have primary responsibility for inculcating these elements. (2011, p.115)

The common good on this reading is concerned with the *performance of certain acts*, the *inculcation or attainment of certain traits* (or dispositions), and the *delivery of certain fundamental human entitlements,* such as education, which can produce those traits and dispositions (such as *being just*) which are indicative of civic virtue. He names a number of these traits or dispositions: the common good concerns education which is directed at schooling "children in truth, honesty, generosity, courage, respect for others as individuals, and concern for wider circles including, but in a subsidiary way, the state, its government, and its political, legal, and international life" (2011, p.115).

Simon Marginson understands the common good also in terms of *human sociability* in which a balance is found between personal good and societal good, in the sense set out in Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), which he quotes approvingly:

> All members of human society stand in need of each other's assistance. "Humanity, justice, generosity and public spirit are the qualities most useful to others," said Smith. "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it." (2017, n.p.; see also 2016)

"We prefer to nest our self-interest in the common good", according to Smith (and Marginson). And the common good allows us to emphasise the integral place and importance of

> the systems and structures that encourage and enable equitable opportunity, tolerance and civility, and respect for the rights, capability

and agency of individuals. Higher education, with its broad social coverage, its formative influence on individuals and its cross-border role as one of the most internationalised of social sectors, should have a talent for producing common goods of the social kind. (2017, n.p.)

Hollenbach, Gill, Clark, Hauerwas and Lovin (2002) distinguish between public goods and

the common good:

> The concept of public goods, however, lacks an important element present in earlier conceptions of the common good. These public goods are largely seen as extrinsic or external to the relationships that exist among those who form the community or society in question. This is easiest to see when the community is an intimate one like a family. The goods shared in a family include the house they live in and the income they share. In a family that is functioning well, these goods are non-rivalrous in consumption and non-excludible. But there is more to a good family or friendship than the sharing in such extrinsic goods. The relationships of concern or affection among siblings and friends go deeper than the sharing of such goods. These positive relationships are, in fact, preconditions for such sharing. There are analogies to relationships of this sort in less intimate societies like cities or states, where the relationships are better characterized by the presence or absence of mutual respect. The quality of such relationships among a society's members is itself part of the good that is, or is not, achieved in it. One of the key elements in the common good of a community or society, therefore, is the good of being a community or society at all. This shared good is immanent within the relationships that bring this community or society into being. (2002, pp.8-9)

The point is well made: public goods, like housing or income, are extrinsic (to relations that

one finds within a community or society); the common good is intrinsic to those relations,

that is, it relates directly to things like mutual respect or affection between persons –

immanent aspects of the good, which in turn make possible a cohesive community or society

of human beings. They note also that the *idea* of the common good is

> in trouble. John Rawls speaks for many observers in the West today when he says that the pluralism of the contemporary landscape makes it impossible to envision a social good on which all can agree. This is the intellectual and theoretical challenge to the common good today: diversity of visions of the good life makes it difficult or even impossible to attain a shared vision of the common good. Such a shared vision cannot survive as an intellectual goal if all ideas of the good are acknowledged to be partial, incomplete, and incompatible. This pluralism also makes it impossible to achieve a strong form of social unity in practice without repression or tyranny. This is the practical challenge: pursuit of a common good as

envisioned by Aristotle, Aquinas, and Ignatius must be abandoned as a practical social objective incompatible with modern freedoms. Thus Rawls asserts that the Aristotelian, Thomistic, and Ignatian vision of the common good "is no longer a political possibility for those who accept the constraints of liberty and toleration of democratic institutions." (2002, p.10)

But the argument here, after Rawls, is fallacious: the reasoning is that there is a "diversity of visions of the good life"; this fact "makes it difficult, or even impossible, to "attain a shared *vision* of the common good" (emphasis added); so such a *vision* cannot survive "as an *intellectual* goal" (emphasis added) especially if (and only if , one might add) all *ideas* of the "good are acknowledged to be partial, incomplete, and incompatible" (emphasis added). Therefore, "pursuit of a common good as envisioned by Aristotle, Aquinas, and Ignatius *must be abandoned* as a practical social objective" (emphasis added). This is what one might call the *problem of pluralism.*

However, there are salient objections to the reasoning and to the claims which are made here. First, the claim that there is a "diversity of visions" is true but trivial. One can grant this premise and yet nothing follows from it necessarily about the *possibility* of pursuing and attaining the common good on the ground, so to speak, at least in many parts of the world; in many communities and societies. There is an important distinction to be made between *visions* of the common good, and the possibility of attaining a shared *vision*, on the one hand, and *good* that is bound to actual universal rights and entitlements, on the other hand, regardless of what one's, or one community's, preferred *vision* is.

The point can be illustrated in the following way: if a particular community or a particular person has a *vision* that denies children of primary school age a human good and a right, like primary education, then that *vision* has no transformational impact on the overarching fabric of the good, laws and norms, and associated goods, which extend locally, nationally and internationally in political, social, legal, juridical and ethical modes. To put it bluntly, no *vision* of the common good upheld by a certain community, invalidates or trumps the

international, even global, modality of the fabric that binds the pursuit and the attainment of the common good, in this case, primary education for children, to universal human good, rights and entitlements.

In this sense, it cannot be validly or conclusively argued that just because there is a *diversity of visions*, the *"pursuit of a common good* as envisioned by Aristotle, Aquinas, and Ignatius *must be* abandoned as a practical social objective" (emphasis added; 2002, p.10), for that common good which was envisioned by Aristotle, for example, does not require a *universally* shared vision of the common good. The question of a universally shared vision concerns a way of seeing and thinking and feeling, and so on; the question of the pursuit of the common good is not the same thing, for it concerns a way of doing, a way of acting, a way of making progress in practical terms, also, to put the distinction somewhat starkly. It is important to avoid category errors here. So, the pursuit of the common good, for example, of education, in this context, is at its most efficacious when it permeates the sphere not just of seeing, thinking, feeling and envisioning, and so on, but also of rationally considering and choosing, and doing.

The other distinction that is not observed in the argument outlined above is the distinction between an *intellectual goal* and a merely *envisioned, or visionary,* one. There is no necessary logical connection between the latter (which can be quite irrational, wilful and dangerous, and in that sense, the basis of a social or communal *evil*, like wilful discrimination or blind prejudice) and the former, which is based on the work of the intellect which includes ideas, reason, concepts, relations between concepts, inference and some rigour, amongst other things (as many goods like education are, particularly in the sense that they are formalised in the body, so to speak, of a universal human right). So, it is entirely possible to argue that one can have different *visions* of the common good, and that some can have *plural visions* of the common good, and debate these in a healthy way, without necessarily rendering

impossible the *actual pursuit of beneficial practical social objectives* such as primary education for young children in many parts of the world.

In principle, it is entirely possible to debate different visions and ideas, whilst going about the task of making necessary or important practical changes, for example, in terms of expanding educational access for young girls, in many communities and societies. Furthermore, insofar as there is a logical connection between education and the common good – since education promotes a common good like learning (one need only think, for example, of acquiring knowledge on the one hand, and remaining in a state of ignorance on the other hand) – and a logical and formal connection between the common good of education and human rights, even in an environment in which different *visions* of the common good are entertained, then clearly, there is no necessary or evident impossibility in relation to the pursuit of *practical social objectives, on the ground*. Therefore it is a fallacy to conclude that the "pursuit of a common good as envisioned by Aristotle, Aquinas, and Ignatius must be abandoned as a practical social objective incompatible with modern freedoms". It is a fallacy also because "modern freedoms" (which it has to be said, remains a little vague in meaning here) extend not just to *visions* and differences in *ideas,* which may or may not be consequential in the actual world, but also to dispositions, traits, choices, activities, rational deliberation and practical change, with widespread, if not universal, human benefit.

As stated earlier, we can continue to have, and debate, different visions of the common good, for example at a philosophical or political level, whilst at the same time working to increase access to primary education for children in various parts of the world. Indeed, in a fundamental sense, that is what has been happening for the best part of the last century, at least. If this is correct, then it is also possible to continue to debate the question of *the vision of the common good,* in the words of Rawls, as a "political possibility", or not, "for those who

accept the constraints of liberty and toleration of democratic institutions" (2002, p.10) without necessarily ceasing to make progress in the name of the common good, and in the name of the pursuit of the common good, for example, at the level of primary education, as mentioned earlier, in many communities around the world.

It has to be said also that Maritain's own account has three limits, at least. Certainly the pursuit of the common good, in areas like education and human dignity (for example in relation to slavery and human trafficking in the world today), does imply a redistribution, and certainly, human goods like education and safety and security (in a socio-political context) ought to be redistributed among persons, and aid their development, but it is also necessary for its sphere of action to include *all* human beings. At times, Maritain suggests otherwise, perhaps accidentally. The risk here is that the redistributive aspect of the common good which he rightly highlights, could be rendered incoherent if its possible range of applications is proscribed or limited, arbitrarily, either implicitly or explicitly.

It is true in a sense, also, as he argued, that the common good is the *foundation of authority*, but the claim needs a little clarification. It is a *foundation* in the sense that it provides a platform for authority to act upon systematically, perhaps; it is a *foundation* also in the sense that it constitutes an underlying principle or justification for that form of authority. Moreover, there are forms of authority which can be used to promote the common good and there are forms which are not used for such purposes or cannot and will not be used for such purposes. One might think of authority that is used for absolute power and control ("dominion", Maritain calls it) or for tyrannical or despotic purposes. Or one might think of forms of authority which deny, negate and violate human rights, and by implication, or by extension, the concept of the common good, and the associated pursuit of the common good, that lies at the foundation, or at the roots, of these.

A more nuanced account of authority and its possible forms is needed here. What is also needed is a more nuanced account of how "certain individuals" (which is a little vague it has to be said) are to be "charged with this guidance", and how "the directions which they determine, the decisions which they make to this end, [are to] be followed or obeyed by the other members of the community" (1958, pp.9-10). (The important question of the relation between an "individual" and "other members of the community" is not addressed sufficiently here, it must be said.) But such an authority, if it is concerned systematically with the pursuit of the common good, ought to be directed at all human beings, not just "free men" (though this point would no doubt be granted by Maritain; it seems to be a matter of expression rather than a matter of substantive disagreement).

Third, the *intrinsic morality of the common good*, which Maritain linked to "a set of advantages and conveniences", but also "essentially", to "integrity of life, the good and righteous human life of the multitude" (1958, p.10), ought to be clarified and expanded, significantly. For example, it is not entirely clear just what constitutes the "good" and "righteous human life" when related to "the multitude", as he called it. But this much can be said here at least (it is admittedly brief due to necessary demands on space, but is certainly worthy of further consideration): there is no good reason to suppose, whatever it means, that it is not related at all to learning, education and questions of character, dispositions, activities and *eudaimonian* modalities and ends (for example, enlightenment in an educational sense, well-being, due recognition and mindfulness).

Certainly, it would be possible to link such modalities and ends with the actualisation of just dispositions (for example, in communities in which primary education for the young is denied, or prohibited) or with the promotion of just and courageous activities such as the unmasking and prosecution of regimes and governments which deny rights and entitlements to genuine refugees. In the words of MacIntrye:

> The virtues … are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good. (1981, p.204)

3

So what then of the "tragedy of humanism"? Many thinkers have reflected on the relationship between humanism, individualism, collectivism and/or community (see for example, Callero 2018; Baiasu 2016 and 2010; Cox 2016; Wendland 2016; Buchanan and Yoon 2016; Gergen 2015; Bowring 2014; Hatzimoysis 2014; Bauman 2013; Churchill and Jack Reynolds 2013; Mészáros 2012; Rae 2011; Morris 2010; Daigle and Golom 2009; Webber 2009; Younis, 2009; Levy 2003; Fourny and Minahen 1997; Schmitt 1995; McCulloch 1994; Daly 1994; Dobson 1993; Howells 1992; Crittenden 1992; Bell 1989; Aboulafia 1986; Carrithers, Collins and Lukes 1985; Schroeder 1984; Theunissen 1984; Morris 1976; Sutton 1976; King 1974; Marcel 1973; 1967; 1966; 1965; 1963; 1962, 1952; 1951 and 1949; Natanson, 1973; Brée 1972; McMahon 1971; Smyth-Kok 1970; Aron 1969; Laing and Cooper 1964; Salvan 1962; Grene 1959; Russell 1949; among many others).

Maritain offers an original and thought provoking reflection on humanism and the common good in the closing chapter of *The Person and the Common Good*:

> every materialistic philosophy of man and society is drawn, in spite of itself (in virtue of the real aspirations of its followers who, after all, are men), by the values and goods proper to personality. Even when ignoring them, such doctrines obscurely desire these values and goods so that in practice they can act upon men only by invoking justice, liberty, the goods of the person. (1947, p. 63)

It is notable that he takes aim at such philosophies "of man and society" but does not follow the critique to one of its logical conclusions. If every such "philosophy" is drawn "in spite of itself" by the values and goods mentioned above, then materialist philosophies of the human being which encompass Existentialist Humanism (a term Sartre preferred: see for example, 2007; but also 2004, 1996, 1992, 1978,1974, 1968, 1967, 1966 and 1956; see also, Baiasu

2016; Churchill and Jack Reynolds 2013; Webber 2009; Sprintzen and van den Hoven 2004; Bowring 2000; Dobson 1993; Howells 1992; Theunissen 1984; Aronson 1980; Natanson 1973; Brée 1972; McMahon 1971; Grene 1959; among many others), for example, are drawn in spite of themselves by those values and goods, also. It would be productive to set out the numerous analogies between materialistic philosophies "of man and society" and Existentialist Humanism, and its radical affirmation of *individualism* (whereby the most important or sole measure of value or authenticity in a human life is anchored in the human *individual alone* and his/her will, freedom and choices, *as such*). But that will have to wait for another occasion.

Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that such radical affirmations neither cohere necessarily with shared values and goods such as justice and community, nor necessarily with the development of common interpersonal virtues such as justice, nor for that matter, the shared pursuit of *eudaimonian* ends. Existentialist humanism, in one important sense, asserts that "man" is a lawmaker *for himself alone, in anguish*, and rejects binding imperatives (of the Kantian kind in particular), so it is difficult, as many of the critics of such thinking have pointed out, to see how such a radically individualised position can systematically promote goods like social cohesion or interpersonal harmony. MacIntyre put it memorably: "authentic existence is to be found only in a self-conscious awareness of an absolute freedom of choice… Sartre located the basis of his moral view in a metaphysics of human nature…" (1968, p.269).

Such radicalised humanist individualist positions, one could argue, by extension (and many have such as Buber, Marcel, Jaspers and Maritain) are more likely to stir alienation, division, isolation, enmity or conflict, or as some have put it famously, manifold and varied expressions of the individualised will to power, or the will to overcome conventional codes of morality, including, by implication, communitarian and ethical systems and codes (like

deontology, virtue ethics or natural law ethics, which promote human goods like happiness, justice and psychological well-being).

Maritain also accuses such materialistic philosophies of elevating matter over spirit, thereby becoming blind to a number of other significant things:

> But what do they express, considered as doctrines? Blind to the realities of the spirit, responsive only to what belongs to the world of matter, they see in man no more than the shadow of true personality, his material individuality. This alone in man are they able to express. Actually, they jeopardize the person either by dissolving it in anarchy or, as inexorably happens under the pressure of political necessities, by subjecting it to the social body as Number, economic community, national or racial state. (1947, pp.63-64; see also Maritain, 1970; 1961; 1956a; 1956b; 1953; 1947; 1946; 1932, among others)

Maritain captures something important here, whether or not one agrees with his substantive position. It is difficult to see how radically individualised affirmations of freedom, anchored in the energy of the will and the impetus to surmount and overcome, over and over again, sometimes in relation to insufficiently differentiated moral targets, can cohere with a fully materialist conception of "man" and "woman", for freedom itself, if we assume that it is a given (for the purposes of the argument here) is not a material or physical thing.

"Materialists" is understood here in two senses that A.J. Ayer captures: first, the "thesis of physicalism", or materialism, states that "statements about experiences are transformable into statements *about physical occurrences*" (emphasis added, 1963, p.89); second "materialists" "deny the existence of mental as opposed to physical events. They do not of course deny that people think and feel and act and perceive things through their senses, but they believe that all these processes can be described in *purely physical terms*" (emphasis added; 1973, p.126; see also Ayer, 1982, pp.170-190; 1971, pp.191-193 and 1956, pp.209-214). Ayer defines humanism and humanists in two ways also: *humanism* refers to "any system of thought or action which is concerned with merely human interests" (1990, p.172); *humanists*

refers to "adherents who put their trust in scientific method, with its implication that every theory is liable to revision" (1990, p.173). So, we have an ostensibly materialist or an uncompromising humanist position, which rests on a materialist conception of humanity, on the one hand, and a non-material or non-physical mode or state of being, not itself reducible in any empirically given or logically self-evident way, which is supposed to anchor the position to some kind of authentic becoming, in the world.

Maritain, it needs to be noted, did not go this far, but it is possible to do so. "Material individuality" does not explain the non-material phenomena of the human being satisfactorily or fully, then (that is, seemingly integral human phenomena like "freedom", the consciousness of freedom, "will", and consciousness of the will, among others, which these philosophers evidently take to be *real*, in some sense). One can see Maritain's point: such tensions and possible incoherence would conceivably have the effect of "jeopardising" the person's being, taken as a whole that is comprised of material and non-material elements, states, modes and relations, not just by "dissolving it in anarchy or, as inexorably happens under the pressure of political necessities, by subjecting it to the social body as Number, economic community, national or racial state" (1947, p.64), but also, ironically, by *dehumanising* the person, in the sense of rendering what is human into something less than it is, as a whole – or to put it another way, removing from the picture of what it means to be a human being, a number of elements, states, modes and relations, which not only seem to belong integrally to the category of human being, but also seem to be of critical importance in terms of a human being's desire for, pursuit and attainment of shared rights, justice, identity, community, recognition and ultimately, flourishing, as a human being among other human beings in the world.

The *tragedy of humanism* is fundamentally one in which a human being, as a whole, is reduced – without full justification – to a set of material or physical characteristics,

structures, desires, vectors and forces, and often, to a radically individualised mode of being in the world, which actually or potentially negates, overlooks or ignores the importance of connections with, and relations to, others, such as those that exist between the individual and persons, between the individual and family, between the individual and community, between the individual and other citizens, between the values of the individual and shared ethical codes and values within and between communities, and citizens, and so on. The mode of being, as well as the conceivable effects, are not just logically, epistemically and biologically questionable; they are potentially catastrophic (especially if one thinks of the well-being not just of an individual, but also of a community, in particular one which values the common good and relates goods to rights in the context of the existence of human beings, in general). Certainly, it is possible, in theory, to link such modes, especially in terms of radicalised forms of individuality, to the fragmentation or dissolution, even the destruction, of communities and, in particular, their *eudaimonian* and deontic foundations, reasons, structures, values, modes and ends (and so on and so forth).

So, Maritain stops short of *appropriate criticism:*

> Here, we can only indicate the appropriate criticism of the materialistic philosophy of society in its three principal forms; bourgeois individualism, communistic anti-individualism, totalitarian or dictatorial anti-communism and anti-individualism. All three disregard the human person in one way or another, and, in its place, consider, willingly or not, the material individual alone. (1947, p.64)

But it is not necessary to stop there. Radical individualism, which seems to be embedded in some modern educational institutions in western liberal democracies, it could be argued, also disregards the human person *in one way or another*, not just by affirming, exclusively or generally, without a sufficient foundation, the material and physical constituents of being, but also by rendering the picture of what it means to be human incomplete, under-determined or incoherent. This is the "tragedy of humanism" also. Since false education is part of the cause, in at least one sense, it stands to reason that informed education ought to

be part of the solution. (Another way of putting it: if reductive ideology is part of the aetiology, then, informed education needs to be part of the diagnosis, therapy and cure.) As MacIntyre put it:

> in a community which shares this conception of accountability in enquiry, education is first of all an initiation into the practices within which dialectical… interrogation and self-interrogation are institutionalized. And that initiation has to take the form of a reappropriation by each individual of the history of the formation and transformations of belief through those practices so that the history of thought and practice is re-enacted and the novice learns from that re-enactment not only what the best theses, arguments, and doctrines to emerge so far have been, but also how to scrutinize them so that they become genuinely his or hers and how to extend them further in ways which will expose him or her further to those interrogations through which accountability is realized. (1990, p.201)

4

The tragedy of humanism, the pursuit of the common good and the aims of education

So what should the major aims of education be now? Four broad directions that flow from this analysis should suffice, for now, hopefully.

If Finnis is correct, then governments ought to support but *not supplant* the continuing educational project that is pursued by civic institutions such as schools and families, which have a fundamental responsibility for *inculcating* elements of civic virtue (2011, p.115). Educational institutions, especially those which are funded by governments, ought to make the teaching of these elements part of the fabric of a modern educational system, though this is a little vague, admittedly. What it means more particularly, is the systematic teaching of the meaning, relevance and importance of attaining and developing certain traits or dispositions which are associated with the pursuit of the common good, not just locally but internationally - namely, honesty, courage, compassion, respect for others as human beings, not mere individuals, as well as a respect for (possibly, a love of) knowledge and truth; an understanding of, and commitment to, democratic institutions, critical reflection and more generally, those civic, legal, deontic and *eudaimonian* aspects of being a citizen, and so on.

This may sound like an ideal, but some institutions are already pursuing such educational approaches successfully.

Second, if Marginson is correct and *members of human society stand in need of each other's assistance*, as indeed they do, generally speaking, then certain qualities affirmed by Adam Smith, such as justice and generosity, which are helpful to ourselves and others, and our flourishing, ought to be promoted in educative practises. In this way, students can be taught, at almost all levels, about the integral place and importance of "systems and structures that encourage and enable equitable opportunity, tolerance and civility, and respect for… rights, capability and agency" (2017, n.p.) of human beings in general. And one might add: within the bounds of civic virtue. In this sense, education, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, can exercise a greater formative influence on human beings (not just individuals) *especially in terms of its cross-border role as one of the most internationalised of social sectors* (2017, n.p.); in this way, it can arguably fulfil its own immanent potential for explaining, defending and promoting the pursuit of the common good, and *the good* of the common good, so to speak, regardless of ongoing debates about the most attainable vision of the common good in the 21st century.

If MacIntyre is correct, and the virtues which promote the pursuit of the common good are dispositions which sustain worthwhile practices (like the promotion of education and peace worldwide, especially in today's fractious and challenging geopolitical environment) and the achievement of goods which are inherent in such practices also sustain us in an ongoing "quest" for the common good, for example by empowering us "to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter, and… furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good (1981, p.204), then they should be integral parts of a modern education. If he is correct, and there are good reasons to suppose that he is (a fuller elucidation and evaluation of his developed position on this question is

beyond the scope of this paper, of course), then it becomes difficult to imagine a comprehensive primary system of education which is geared towards a heightened awareness, and development, of the understanding of the pursuit of the common good and the good of that pursuit, so to speak, without such dispositions as integral components.

But it is important to go further than MacIntyre, also: if education is "first of all an initiation into the practices within which dialectical… interrogation and self-interrogation are institutionalized" (1990, p.201), and if education is also an initiation into critical thinking and reflection, then it is also necessary to help to develop within students critical modes of thinking and reflection which will allow them to see clearly the limits of *dialectical interrogation* and *self-interrogation;* indeed, it will be necessary to extend the initiation to a critical learning experience in which modes of dialectical and non-dialectical (self-)interrogation are revealed in order to open up, more fully, *eudaimonian* possibilities of (self-)development.

Finally, if Maritain is correct, and it has been argued that much of what he claims is defensible, it is incumbent upon educational institutions, especially within democratic states, to open the eyes (and the minds) of students to the limits and excesses of individualism, particularly as an ideology in which egoistic or unfettered self-interest is affirmed, for example, without sufficient foundation or justification, *at the expense of* human goods (such as education, mindfulness and social justice), and the broader pursuit of the common good; to reductionist, materialist or physicalist systems and their limits (and to the doctrines and teachings that are inferred from such systems); to fallacious arguments which are responsive

> only to what belongs to the world of matter… they see in man no more
> than the shadow of true personality, his material individuality. This alone
> in man are they able to express. Actually, they jeopardize the person either
> by dissolving it in anarchy or, as inexorably happens under the pressure of
> political necessities, by subjecting it to the social body as Number,
> economic community, national or racial state (1947, pp.63-64).

It is difficult to think of a more powerful instrument than education – conceived of as a global human good and as an integral element within the immanent development of the pursuit of the common good – in the attempt to unmask, analyse, evaluate and critique, thoughtfully and rigorously, various emergent or modish ideologies and rhetorical strategies which, under the nascent guise of enlightenment or progress, only serve to "jeopardize" the human being, as a whole being, and the pursuit of those goods which conceivably make a whole human life more, and more fully, expansive, informed, reflective, just and free, as an integral whole.

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