

# **The Self and Society in Education: A Communitarian View**

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**Abstract:** This paper is an attempt to explore the educational meaning of the self and society from a communitarian perspective. To this end, I introduce the conception of communitarianism focusing on "high communitarianism", and outline the liberal-communitarian debate on the self and society matter. On the basis of this debate, I consider two possible communitarian interpretations of the social constitution of the self and also suggest the possible educational implications, both mild and strong. In the end, I take up the view that the self should be understood against the social background to which one belongs, and education should also be grasped in terms of which initiates people into a wide range of social practices.

**Keywords:** liberalism, communitarianism, self/autonomy, society/social practices, liberal education.

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## I. Introduction

It is more or less obvious that, no matter how we define education, it should be considered a matter of the self and society. However, the issue of how we can understand the relationship between the self and society is controversial. Regarding the relation of the self to society, liberals and communitarians have sporadically debated political philosophy since the 1980s.

In the educational context, early liberals of education, e.g. Dearden (1972; 1975) and White (1973; 1982), tend to address the promotion of personal autonomy rather than the flourishing society as a whole. For them, personal autonomy was regarded as something which is at least to some degree detached from society, although they later began to recognise and consider the importance of social context influenced by political liberals. For instance, White revised *from* the view that personal autonomy has a universal value in any society *to* the view that personal autonomy is valuable at least in a liberal democratic society. However, even if we accept that our society is a liberal democratic one, the following question still remains: why should autonomy be regarded as the supreme value rather than communal affairs? The communitarian view might give some clues to this question.

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the following issues: what exactly from the perspective of communitarianism are the shortcomings of liberal education as the promotion of personal autonomy, and in what way does communitarian thinking contribute to education in general? Here I shall outline overall communitarian claims and the liberal-communitarian debate on the relation between the self and society.

## II. What is Communitarianism?

It is quite clear that communitarianism, in contrast to liberalism, addresses "sociality" or "community" rather than "autonomy" or "individuality". However, what counts as communitarianism is often in dispute, since different communitarians have different views of what communitarianism is, of what society or community constitutes, and of in what way society or community is important. They would thus differ in their categorisation of communitarianism. For instance, Miller (1999) differentiates the three versions of communitarianism: "a communitarianism of the left" an egalitarian communitarianism defended by socialists and social democrats; "a communitarianism of the right", an authoritarian communitarianism embraced by conservatives; and "a communitarianism of the centre", a liberal version of communitarianism held by political liberals.

Having clarified the conception of communitarianism, it might be helpful to draw a distinction between "low" communitarianism and "high" communitarianism. The former refers to communitarianism as a "movement" at the practical level. Its main concern lies in making certain sociological claims, such as about political arrangements which Golby (1997) describes as a "political movement dedicated to spreading attitudes and policies for community feeling and social cohesion" (p. 125). This view may be found in currently well known exponents, Etzioni (1995; 1997) in the USA and Tam (1999) in the UK. Their common concern seems to lie in constructing a good society which is governed or realised by communitarian principles in practice. On the other hand, "high" communitarianism seems to be a kind of intellectual tradition which is mainly concerned with making certain claims about how we can offer sound philosophical grounds for the nature of human beings, or conditions, which are contrasted to liberalism, rather than with practising communitarianism as a practitioner. MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor and Walzer are, arguably, representatives of this type of communitarianism. I say "arguably", because they are hesitant themselves to be called "communitarians". Taylor (1991) and Walzer (1991) would think that their position does not necessarily reject a liberal position and therefore they are reluctant to declare for either side. MacIntyre (1994) wants to be dissociated from communitarians and would even manifest his position that "I am not a communitarian", because "I do not believe in ideals or forms of community as a nostrum for contemporary social ills" (G. Borradori, 1991, p. 151). Sandel (1984; 1996) wants to be called a "republican" rather than a communitarian. Whether or not they themselves agree that they are communitarians, it is more or less clear that their claims belong to communitarianism or, at least, involve communitarian factors.

For the "low" communitarians, as Tam puts it, communitarianism would be like this: "in order to build inclusive communities in every sphere, and at every level of social existence, communitarian politics requires the development of citizens who can take part

in co-operative enquiries determining a wide range of issues; who recognize that they share a respect for common values and accept the responsibilities these values imply; and who actively support the transformation of power relations for the common good" (Tam, 1998, p. 8). Such developments, presumably, involve the following: changes to the form of citizenship education, the motivation of citizens for engaging in productive work for their communities, and capacities for protecting themselves from the threats to their common values. According to Tam, communitarianism has something to do with providing "an alternative to both individualism and authoritarianism" and, thus, social practices can be changed "in relation to their contributions to the development of sustainable forms of community life" (p. 7). In summary, "low" communitarians' real concern is to apply the communitarian principles, i.e. cooperative enquiry, mutual responsibility and citizens' participation, to the practical problems of "how claims about what should be believed are to be judged, what common values should shape the responsibilities to be undertaken by all citizens, and how existing power relations are to be transformed" (pp. 12-13).

For the "high" communitarian, the conception of communitarianism is more difficult to grasp, since their assertions are quite different from each other. One obvious thing is that their assertions are associated with the rejection of liberalism, the central issue of which is the constitution of self. According to communitarians, in contrast to the liberals, the self is inevitably located in its social, cultural and historical contexts; that is, human beings are essentially social and, thus, their identities are shaped and revealed by the communities to which they belong. The issues of the relationship between personal autonomy and society are ongoing debates between communitarians and liberals. What I am concerned with here is pointing out the limits of liberalism in general and the weaknesses of the promotion of personal autonomy as an educational aim in particular from a (high) communitarian point of view. In order to do that, let us examine the liberal-communitarian debate in more detail.

### III. The Liberal-Communitarian Debate

The idea of communitarianism can be clearly understood *vis-a-vis* liberalism which is its conceptual counterpart, although we must admit that there are a number of cross-purposes and misconceptions in each<sup>1</sup>). The heart of the debate between them seems to depend on how we can understand individuality or autonomy and society or community, and the relationship between them. To put it crudely, liberals tend to emphasise personal autonomy, individual liberty, and rights, whereas they often marginalise the social nature of the person, the value of community, and historical surroundings. Liberals even tend to think the value of autonomy, explicitly or implicitly, is so obvious that it does not require any justification. Can liberalism that relies on a highly individualistic conception of the self be justified? If we adopt this position, the primary task of education would lie in the maximisation of personal autonomy resulting in "the eventual social benefit of all" (Jonathan, 1995, pp. 93-94). Is this liberal's assumption correct?

Although the answer to this question depends on the relationship between "society" and "individual", we might properly say that the logic that the development of social well-being follows that of personal well-being is a rather "naive illusion of romanticism", in the light of the analysis of liberal education history. This point is more clearly revealed by the high communitarians' counter-argument. Let me briefly look in turn at four communitarian arguments against liberalism's "self thesis": the embeddedness thesis, the narrative thesis, the social thesis, and the cultural options thesis<sup>2</sup>).

First of all, let us start with Sandel's "embeddedness thesis" that the self is fundamentally embedded in one's society. His attack focuses on Rawls' "metaphysical" conception of the person and a social individualism which might be called "the unencumbered self"<sup>3</sup>). Liberals, notably Rawls, have a strong tendency to address the conception of the person as an "autonomous chooser of ends" and "an antecedently individuated subject" (Mulhall and Swift, 1996, p. 47). For liberals, thus, "the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it" (Rawls, 1971, p. 560). According to Sandel, this Rawlsian position is basically anchored in "the individualist and a-social metaphysical foundations of liberal principles" (Mulhall and Swift, 1996, p. 55). For Sandel, however,

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1) See Taylor (1991). He tries to make this clear in terms of "ontological issues" and "advocacy issues".

2) Kymlicka critically examines the five arguments as to why the liberal view of the self is inadequate, although his position stands in the advocacy of liberalism. These are: 'the liberal view of the self i) is empty; ii) violates our self-perceptions; iii) ignores our embeddedness in communal practices; iv) ignores the necessity for social confirmation of our individual judgements; and v) pretends to have an impossible universality or objectivity'. For a detailed argument, see his (1989), chapter 4. And also see his (1990), chapter 6.

3) Rawls' this position is appropriated from his well-known book, *A Theory of Justice* (1971). However, his position was modified in his later paper, "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical" (1985). For the differences between "metaphysical" and "political" injustice as fairness, see Neal (1990).

the self is by no means prior to its ends, but rather the self is constituted by its ends and "embedded in some shared social context" (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 51). Sandel's argument goes like this: persons are fundamentally understood within substantial communities rather than in relation to a metaphysical conception of the person, since persons are embedded in (political) communities. Their identity is also constituted by their membership of community. Therefore, persons cannot be understood at a distance from their society and culture.

This argument, as Kymlicka showed, can be called into question in the following way: how can we prove to both positions that "we can't perceive a totally unencumbered self" and that "we can't perceive our self without some *specific* end or motivation" (p. 53). Indeed, this question shows a clear-cut philosophical difference between the liberal's and the communitarian's position. However, I must point out that Kymlicka's question is an extreme one, since any communitarian, however thick, to my view, would not hold that position. Rather, communitarians would insist that it is, in fact, impossible to think of the self or autonomous person without supposing a particular context at the practical level and, furthermore, even if it is possible, we can hardly find our just identity, which makes sense of our lives, at a philosophical level.

Secondly, in a similar vein, MacIntyre criticises liberalism on the one hand<sup>4</sup>, and advocates an "embedded self" thesis on the other. Why does he criticise liberalism and how does he conceive of liberalism? On what points does liberalism deserve to be criticised and what is his alternative? The conception of liberalism that MacIntyre criticises seems to be identified with "liberal individualism" which is associated with an emotivist view of the self that derives from the Enlightenment tradition. For him, this liberalism which has a Janus-faced character, i.e. a mistaken universal assumption, but, in reality, a subjective character and undermine social contexts is the main cause of the incommensurable fragments of moral languages which are seen as just another name for confusion and chaos, and so represent a great catastrophe in that they reflect echoes of "the Tower of Babel" (Stout, 1988, p. 191).

His "narrative thesis" that individuals can be fully understood within their narratives shows us the precise shortcomings of liberalism and, at the same time, what his solution is. He criticises and revises liberalism's errors and weaknesses on the one hand and stresses "the importance of communal life to the identity and integrity of the individual" on the other (Mulhall and Swift, 1996, p. 71). MacIntyre argues that one's narrative can be appreciated by looking at his or her own narratives of life. One's narrative in the end becomes a part of others' narratives, since my narrative is not independent of others' narratives, but rather intertwined with theirs. Therefore, a fuller understanding of the self can only be possible within one's history of narratives and, further, the contexts of his or her community (Avineri and de-Shalit, 1992, p. 3).

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4) His criticisms against liberalism, according to Horton and Mendus (1994), can be summarised in three points: "the liberal conception of the self", "liberalism's denial of a telos for man", and "liberalism's disregard of social context" (p. 8).

MacIntyre himself illustrates this:

we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles... the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity (1984, pp. 204-205).

For MacIntyre, the self is always embedded or situated in his or her society, whether he or she is conscious of that or not, and, further, the self comes to have meaning within his or her histories and communities. He tries to show this by deploying a triad of conceptions, i.e. the conception of a practice, that of the narrative unity of human life and that of a tradition. For him, individuals are located in an overarching and nested set of inherently social matrices including overlapping communal practices and historical traditions which lie deep within our culture and are embedded in our everyday life and institutions. The real understanding of the self, therefore, allows us to make reference to the engagement of individuals in social practices and traditions. In this sense, we might say that MacIntyre's "narrative thesis" is a tighter and more extended form of Sandel's "embeddedness thesis" and thus is more plausible than Sandel's.

The third communitarian response to liberalism's "self thesis" would be Taylor's "social thesis". His social thesis that human capacities could not develop outside society or outside a certain kind of society<sup>5</sup>), is contrasted with the "atomism" that "represents a view about human nature and the condition which makes a doctrine of the primacy of rights plausible" (1985, p. 189). Against atomism, Taylor argues that "since the free individual can only maintain his identity within society/culture of a certain kind, he has to be concerned about the shape of this society/culture as a whole". For him, the identity of the autonomous and self-determining individual requires a social matrix which enables us to recognise the individual's identity through a series of social practices (p. 207). If his social thesis is correct, the primacy of right, which atomists claimed, would be wrong.

Taylor's thesis seems to go further than "the embeddedness thesis" and "the narrative thesis" in that he, like Sandel and MacIntyre, not only rejects "the unencumbered self", but also insists that the development of liberal virtue, such as personal autonomy, can only be possible within a particular society. For Taylor, "even if liberals are right about our capacity for choice", they overlook the fact that the capacity for individual choice can only be developed and exercised in a certain sort of society, "in and through

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5) Liberal thinkers may not hold an extreme view that human capacities could develop outside human society. Nevertheless, it may be true that liberals' primacy of right thesis, at least implicitly, might involve that idea. See Nozick (1974).

relations and interactions with others" (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 74). What is more, for communitarians, the common good that is understood by liberals "as the result of a process of combining the preferences" is conceived of "as a substantive conception of the good which defines the community's way of life". For the communitarian, this common good provides "a standard by which those preferences are evaluated" rather than "adjusting itself to the pattern of people's preferences" (p. 77). According to Taylor (1985), people can "only develop their characteristically human capacities in society. That claim is that living in society is a necessary condition of the development of rationality, in some sense of this property, or of becoming a moral agent in the full sense of the term, or of becoming a fully responsible, autonomous being" (pp. 190-191).

The fourth attack against liberalism's self thesis can be found in Walzer's "cultural options thesis". His thesis assumes that "human society is a distributive community" which "people distribute goods to (other) people" or, more precisely, "people conceive and create goods, which they then distribute among themselves" (1983, p. 3; p. 6). Walzer's overall argument goes something like this: "that the principles of justice are themselves pluralistic in form; that the different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures, by different agents; and that all these differences derive from different understandings of the social goods themselves- the inevitable product of historical and cultural particularism" (p. 6). This involves two distinctive arguments: the "differentiated substance" thesis that "different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons"; and the "particularistic methodology" thesis that these differences derive from different "understandings of the social goods themselves" and that such understandings are "the inevitable product of historical cultural particularism".

With respect to the "differentiated substances", as Mulhall and Swift (1996, p. 128) put it, Walzer insists that "different goods constitute different distributional spheres within which specific distributive arrangements are appropriate". With respect to the "particularistic methodology", Walzer rejects Rawl's methodological abstraction by using two kinds of argument, the conceptual and democratic argument. According to Mulhall and Swift, Walzer defends the position that "the way to see how particular goods should be distributed is to look at how those goods are understood in the particular culture in question". Walzer's conceptual argument seems to be connected with the view that "all the goods with which distributive justice is concerned are social goods" (1983, p. 7). For him, the meaning or value of a particular good is not natural or individual, but it is necessarily derived from the societies to which individuals belong and, thus, it is a social one. His democratic argument seems to show us that distributive principles are good-specific and good-specific principles are also culture-specific. This means that both goods and their meanings and principles must be inherently social, namely, these are constructed and maintained "by the community and its practices and institutions rather than by the thoughts and deeds of any individual" (Mulhall and Swift, 1996, p. 155).

If these arguments are sound, goods may have different meanings in different societies and principles of justice are also different from society to society. What does this conclusion imply regarding the conception of the person and the relationship between autonomy and society? Walzer might say that cultural conditions are prerequisites of the exercise of autonomy and, thus, the exercise of autonomy is facilitated by a pluralistic culture. Hence, autonomy may require a social infrastructure involving a wider range of opportunities, the purpose of the infrastructure is to enable "the mass of citizens to participate in valued social activities" (1986, p. 137).

So far I have argued against liberalism's unencumbered self thesis from communitarian perspectives. To put it crudely, the communitarians share the view that the self is fundamentally social, which includes historical/cultural contexts, and that one's self is at least inevitably influenced by social practices to which one belongs. Being faced with these communitarian criticisms, what are liberals' responses? Communitarian attacks on liberalism, whether wittingly or unwittingly, have made liberals reconsider and modify their theory in order to withstand communitarian criticisms. Under this situation, it is natural that many liberals try to reconcile their more or less extreme views. Indeed, many liberals, explicitly or implicitly, seem to accept or even endorse the social embeddedness thesis. Let us briefly sketch their positions.

First of all, let me consider Rawls' response<sup>6</sup>). Rawls' response to communitarian attack is a key in understanding the overall liberal position, since his position is not only influential among liberals but also is the main target of communitarian's attacks on liberalism. Rawls' philosophical position, as we can see from "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical" (1985) and *Political Liberalism* (1993), has, to some extent, changed. In response to the objection that liberalism is premised on an overly individualistic theory of the person, Rawls himself denied that liberal justice appeals to that or any other metaphysical conception of human nature. For him, the conception of the person is seen as political, not "metaphysical". Justice as fairness, Rawls insists, is intended "as a political conception of justice" which works out in a "society's main political, social, and economic institutions, and how they fit together into one unified system of cooperation" (1985, pp. 224-225). This justice does not depend on philosophical "claims to universal truth, or claims about the essential nature and identity of persons" (p. 223). Rawls, like other liberals such as Kymlicka and Dworkin, no longer holds the view that liberalism has something to do with choosing our own life plans as if unencumbered by social ties and commitments. Rather, he thinks now that liberalism founded on the value of self-determination requires only that we are able critically to evaluate our ends; and so "no end or goal is exempt from possible re-examination" (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 52).

With respect to liberal universalism, Rawls has significantly modified his original

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6) My exposition of Rawls' revised version is, by and large, indebted to Bell's argument (1993, pp. 9-13). He argued Rawls' position under the following headings: the liberal self, liberal universalism and liberal atomism.

position that principles of justice are universally valid. He argues that the task of political philosophy is "to articulate and to make explicit those shared notions and principles thought to be latent in common sense". The liberal conception of justice may not be "suitable for all societies regardless of their particular social or historical circumstance" (1980, p. 518). This view is, in fact, not far from the communitarian view, as MacIntyre (1988; 1990) understood it, that conceptions of justice are results of social practices and traditions and, thus, may be different from society to society, from tradition to tradition. Both are concerned with interpreting the community's shared understandings, and their dispute would seem to turn on who provides a better account of them. Rawls' position seems to be a significantly "communitarianised" liberal position. We can find this tendency in other liberals, for example, Raz, Dworkin, Kymlicka, and so on.

Raz maintains that autonomy can be compatible with the social embeddedness thesis in that autonomy does not require a "perfect existentialist with no fixed biological or social nature who creates himself as he goes along" (1986, p. 155). For him, autonomous personality can only develop and flourish against a background of social constraints. Dworkin also recognises that personal autonomy cannot exist apart from a social context which provides meaningful choices and develops the capacity to choose options (1985, pp. 230-233). By the same token, Kymlicka makes it clear that the importance of the social thesis, which communitarians address, needs to be emphasised "for civic participation and political legitimacy" as well as "for the exercise of our capacities for choice" (1990, p. 229). Furthermore, liberalism is not necessarily incompatible with stressing community, but rather provides an interpretation of it. What does make a real difference between liberals and communitarians is, according to Kymlicka, the issue of what "the proper role of the state" is, that is, of whether society depends on the state, not of whether the individual depends on society (p. 230). Whatever their differences are, they all seem to agree on the communitarian claim that autonomy requires some instantiating forms of life.

Having sketched out political liberals' responses, we can identify political liberalism, unlike other liberalisms, as not so far from the communitarian position that the self is inevitably socially constituted. However, the question of whether the political liberal's conception of self can be equated with the communitarian's and if so, in what way and how far they are similar, would still be controversial<sup>7)</sup>. What recent debates between liberalism and communitarianism show us, for present purposes, may be that: being faced by the communitarian attack, liberals tend to accept the communitarian social thesis and this tendency seems to be more satisfactory than the original liberalism. From the communitarian perspective, nevertheless, the liberal's way of conceiving of the community would not be satisfactory in terms of the conception and role of society and

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7) For instance, Vokey (1993) discusses how far there are differences and similarities between communitarianism and liberalism in the light of a comparison of MacIntyre with Rawls.

community. Liberals would want to keep their basic premise that personal autonomy is important not only in choosing and evaluating one's own actions, but also in making judgements of social and communal interests. This conception of society and its status would be too thin, since communitarians assume that society or community "must be constitutive of the shared self-understandings of the participants and embodied in their institutional arrangements", and not be simply an attribute of certain of the participants' life plans (Sandel, 1984, p. 167). Furthermore, they criticise liberalism as being at least partly responsible for the "failure of a liberal society to foster a sense of community" (Hirsch, 1986, p. 423).

#### IV. Educational Implications

What I have argued so far by outlining the liberal-communitarian debate can be summarised thus: the self should be understood in the light of the social relations in which it is embedded, regardless of whether we call it "the embedded thesis" or "the narrative thesis" or "the social thesis", or "the cultural options thesis". This might be interpreted in two ways, mild and strong. Liberal communitarians like Raz and White seem to hold the mild position. They stress personal values and well-being as well as one's autonomous choices, although they believe that these are to be understood against the social background to which one belongs. The strong position, which sees from the social practices' point of view, concerns the reconstruction of the concept of autonomy as a social one. From the perspectives of social practices, autonomy can contribute to society in two ways: every practitioner who engages in the social practices "is granted equal respect and concern" and it may be possible for practitioners to "take a critical stance" against ongoing social practices in which they engage (Pendlebury, 1990, pp. 274-276). To engage in human practices means, in turn, to autonomously participate in ongoing traditions of social practices.

Educational implications of the communitarian view can also be derived from the above two positions. Regarding implications of the mild position, White's later view (1982; 1990; 1995) might be relevant. His later view of education, unlike his earlier view (1973) which emphasises rational autonomy, i.e. the role of knowledge and reflection in one's autonomous choices<sup>8)</sup>, addresses autonomous well-being which is based on one's needs and desires, whether "post-reflective desire-satisfaction" or "informed-desires"<sup>9)</sup>. His later view, unlike his earlier view which divorces "self" and "autonomous action" from "society" and "social activity", also assumes a particular framework, viz., a "liberal democratic society". He often explicitly mentions that framework: a liberal democratic society should promote "the personal autonomy of all its citizens" (1990, p. 27; p. 24); "personal autonomy... is a central value in a liberal democratic society" (p. 95). For White, education in a liberal society is connected with "the satisfaction of one's most important desires" through one's life as a whole. This includes equipping us with "desires we previously did not have", and helping us "to organize our burgeoning desires" (p. 31). It is thus safer to say that personal autonomy has not always a necessary value in any society, but rather its value can only be partly assured within a

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8) The best example of rational autonomy is shown by Dearden's classical definition: "A person is 'autonomous' to the degree that what he thinks and does cannot be explained without reference to his own activity of mind" (Dearden, 1972, p. 453, emphasis added).

9) We should not identify "autonomy" with the "satisfaction of one's informed desires or post-reflective desires", although I use it for explaining the concept of autonomy. In a strict sense, for White, 'informed desires' is part of his account of "personal well-being" rather than personal autonomy. In this respect, we rather say that personal well-being is desire-satisfaction and, in modern society, this has to be autonomous desire satisfaction. Hence, his recent view of autonomy may be called "autonomous personal well-being".

liberal democratic society which demands that people make their own choices. However, it is hard to say that White's later view suggest positive social values. It is one thing to say that promoting autonomy is a central value in a liberal society. It is quite another to say that education should create communal values. As Morgan says, "all truly educated people are autonomous, but not all autonomous people are educated" (1996, p. 251). Putting it in another way, autonomy is not a sufficient condition for the educated person, although it is a necessary condition. In this respect, we may say that an educated person is far more than an autonomous person. This leads us to consider the strong view of the social constitution of self.

Regarding the implications of the strong position, to consider the social practices view of education is presumably useful. According to the social practices view of education, reconstructing the concept of autonomy as socially located is required on the grounds that one's desires or preferences are not purely personal, but also autonomy itself is not innate but is exercised and developed through society. Hence, we cannot see it in isolation from society or society's values and thus the liberal education that stresses the promotion of personal autonomy needs to be reconnected with social theory and practice. If this claim is on the right lines, the essential tasks that we should tackle may lie in establishing what a communitarian view of education should be and how to integrate the liberal view of education and that of the communitarian. What kind of education would best realise this aim? This line of questioning is by no means easy to answer. One of the possible answers, for the present purpose, would be something like: education should be aiming at either "equipping students to become good citizens, capable of contributing meaningfully to public deliberations and pursuits" (Sandel, 1984, p. 6) or, to use MacIntyrean phrases, education should comprise "initiation into various social practices and traditions" beyond "equipping students to become autonomous individuals".

From the perspectives of social practices, education is fundamentally seen as initiating peoples into a range of social practices, although the details of it is slightly different according to authors<sup>10</sup>. MacIntyre (1984), addresses the achievement of the virtues and of internal goods to social practices by engaging in ongoing traditions of social practices, Hirst (1993; 1999) underlines engaging in rationally developed social practices in order to maximise the overall desire-satisfaction in the long run, and Langford (1985; 1989) emphasises becoming members of society, who are to assimilate social values as their own values and thus to acquire social ways of seeing and doing by initiating people into social practices. Social practices-based education seems to be, in short, defined as an active engagement or participation in social practices to which one belongs for the purpose of the flourishing of society and social practices themselves. In this view, education is regarded as part of the outcome of engaging in social practices to which one belongs. This view may be plausible in that it can give a stronger justification by being grounded in substantive human practices in which we participate,

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10) The details of it, see Yoo (1999).

and thus provide vivid education which does not separate theory from practice and which does not separate personal well-being from social well-being, because it deals with the real practices of human lives and societies.

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