THE INTRODUCTION OF 'BRITISH VALUES' INTO SCHOOLS – WHY NOW?

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ABSTRACT

In the UK in 2014, the government introduced a directive that 'British Values' were to be made a compulsory aspect of all State-funded education. This was mainly seen as a response to the controversial 'Trojan Horse' affair, whereby a number of Islamic schools in Birmingham were purported to be implementing a plan to systematically 'radicalise' their students. While a public inquiry found no evidence of such radicalisation, the accusation and the subsequent British Values directive sparked a number of debates in the media and in the public sphere on the place of religion and the role of the State in the formation of citizens and their identities. This paper argues that the media representations of these debates have been insufficiently penetrating, and the issue exposes deeper systemic problems in the history of the liberal democratic State and contemporary moral discourse. A historical investigation of how the British Values directive came to be introduced into schools is therefore provided, in order to expose why it came to be seen as a legitimate and necessary action. The paper has three objectives. First, it will outline the philosophical and conceptual approach taken to the historical investigation, building on a set of ideas introduced by Alistair MacIntyre concerning the loss of moral coherence in modern liberal democracies. Second, it will examine what light this philosophical approach throws on the contexts and conditions out of which the 2014 British Values initiative was born. Third, it will focus on two other discourses in British political theory, Realism and Multiculturalism, that appear to have emanated from those same contexts and conditions, and which attempt (with varying degrees of success) to move the situation forward. The paper will end with an open question about whether the teaching of British Values in schools is really the best forward.

Keywords: Emotivism; Islamism; Religious Education; Citizenship; Trojan Horse Affair; British Values in Schools; Multiculturalism; Realism.

INTRODUCTION

In early 2014, a number of schools in Birmingham were purported to be coming under the control of governors and head-teachers with a shared project to systematically "Islamise" students within the state school sector (Shackle, 2017). Broadly speaking, the case has been contested on a number of grounds in the media, which range from arguments based around the idea of a state-sponsored 'witch-hunt' against Islam and faith schools in Britain (Shackle, 2017) to the reinforcement of beliefs regarding 'parallel lives' (Cantle, 2001) in an increasingly segregated British society (Cantle, 2014). Nevertheless, the subsequent report to the government by Clarke (2014) concluded that there was 'no evidence to suggest that there is a problem with governance generally', nor any 'evidence of terrorism, radicalisation or violent extremism in the schools of concern in Birmingham...'. However, Clarke (2014)

maintained that there was 'evidence that there are a number of people, associated with each other and in positions of influence in schools and governing bodies, who espouse, sympathise with or fail to challenge extremist views' (Clarke, 2014: 12). It is not the concern of this paper to detail the case of the so-called 'Trojan Horse' affair. Rather it is the *effects* of the case, given that it led to the Conservative government's response of the compulsory teaching of 'British Values' in all state schools. Subsequently, in the *Schools Inspection Handbook* of September 2015, Ofsted defined British Values as:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

Similarly, in the document "*Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) in schools – Departmental advice for maintained schools*" (Ofsted, 2014), the section entitled "*Fundamental British Values"* states on page five that, "Actively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values. Attempts to promote systems that undermine fundamental British values would be completely at odds with schools' duty to provide SMSC" (Ofsted, 2014:5).

Writing in *The Daily Telegraph* in June 2014, the conservative commentator, Janet Daley, discussed the problem of how teachers may be expected to teach British Values in that, at the heart of the 'multiculturalism' project, is the issue, not of ethnic variety, but of moral relativism. This in turn brings us to the question of how a tolerant society should deal with intolerance. Daley's (2014) answer to this is that the British government is entitled to demand that "ethnic communities not only obey the law, but also integrate with the mainstream society…"

Amanda Spielman (the Ofsted Chief Inspector for Schools), interviewed in *The Times* newspaper in December 2017, detailed how she had been the target of a number of threats against her life from what she described as "a mixture of Islamic extremists and the hard left...". A central contention of Spielman (2017) was that, "If you don't have a set of values that people respect, you've got a much greater likelihood of a deeply divided society" (Sylvester and Thompson, 2017).

Writing on the academic website, *The Conversation*, in February 2018, Carol Vincent and Myriam Hunter-Henin argue that, instead of resorting to broad accusations of "extremists" undermining "our" values, schools should be encouraged to develop political literacy and citizen engagement in all young people. Vincent and Hunter-Henin (2018) further contend that it is important for schools to foster in their students a willingness to engage in important moral questions via a process of wide ranging debate in order to encourage genuine commitment to fundamental democratic values. Additionally, the assertion of a particular set of values as national values is argued as being an expansion of State power in the face of increasing diversity and, as such, a consideration of the context of such an assertion is vital in asking why it is being made at this particular moment in time (Vincent & Hunter-Henin, 2018). While the Ofsted document outlines what they expect students and staff to understand via the promotion of British Values, there is a lack of any explanation or supporting argumentation, as if such a formulation is absolutely and self-evidently unproblematic. In

short, we need to answer the question, “why now?” (Vincent and Hunter-Henin, 2018) before we set about considering whether we should, and how we might begin to, better inculcate future citizens with such values.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a historical interrogation of how the British values directive came to be introduced into the school context. In short, I am looking to address the above-mentioned “why now?” question. In doing so, I have three objectives. First, to outline the philosophical and conceptual approach I will take to interrogating the history leading up to the 2014 British Values directive: specifically, I will discuss a set of ideas introduced by Alistair MacIntyre (1981) concerned with the loss of moral coherence in modern liberal democracies. Second, I will examine what light this philosophical approach throws on the contexts and conditions out of which the 2014 British Values initiative was born. Third, I will broadly outline two discourses in British political theory that I believe have emanated from those same contexts and conditions, and which attempt to move the situation forward. Together, these three objectives will ultimately serve to answer the question of ‘why now?’ when it comes to the 2014 British Values directive.

PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

I ground my approach in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997). There are two particular aspects to MacIntyre’s intellectual project that I want to keep firmly in mind for the shape of this paper. The first is his characterisation of the present condition of modern moral discourse as strongly fragmented; and the second is his reading of the nature of the Western State as the dominant form of political currency since the Enlightenment. With regard to my method of analysis, I am more concerned with MacIntyre’s (1981, 1988, 1997) characterisations of these two phenomena, as opposed to critiquing his suggestions for how they may or may not be remedied.

The reason why I think the intellectual project of MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) is relevant to this paper and subsequent study is that his work neatly spans across the disciplines of politics, philosophy and theology, in their broadest possible conceptions. This is of particular interest with regard to the 2014 British Values directive, in the sense that the crisis of legitimacy of the introduction of British values into schools has been argued to have roots in a newly assertive religious identity politics that has gained visibility through waves of immigration from the former colonies and elsewhere since 1945 (Parekh, 2000; Cantle, 2001; El Fadl 2005; Hallaq, 2013). The introduction of British values could be seen as just the latest manifestation of what MacIntyre (1981) describes as the fragmentation of moral frameworks in liberal democracies. However, I will argue that this rise in assertive religious identity politics is far from exogenous to British liberal democracy, or indeed liberal democracies generally – it is not just an inconvenience associated with immigration from ‘outside’. Rather, it is instead a deeply inherent tension in the continual quest of liberal democratic politics for self-justification that has been exported and expanded via the colonial, postcolonial and globalisation encounters of recent history, creating problems which have recently come home to roost. It is in this way that I attempt to answer the “why now?” question posed by Vincent and Hunter-Henin (2018).

MACINTYRE AND MODERN MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Garcia (2003) rightly situates MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1997) project as a continuation of the problems illustrated by G.E.M Anscombe in her 1958 paper, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, in which she defended three principle theses. First, she entreated philosophers to abandon the exploration of moral philosophy until philosophy was possessed of an adequate moral psychology. Second, philosophers, and the rest of society, should abstain from conducting moral discussion under the discourse of 'morally right/wrong' or 'moral obligation', and so forth, because such terms mean nothing substantive in the present age, merely maintaining what Anscombe (1958) referred to as 'mesmeric force'. Third, the differences between modern moral philosophers are, in fact, superficial, masking agreements that, though deeper and more significant than their overblown disputes, had largely gone neglected, unacknowledged and undefended (Garcia, 2003: 94).

However, Garcia (2003) holds that, for all the striking similarities to Anscombe (1958), MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) does not merely recount her theses. Rather, MacIntyre's criticisms are much more detailed and deeply informed by a wide reading in subjects ranging from Sociology, Psychology and Economics through to History and Political Philosophy. This is not to say that Anscombe (1958) was not similarly inquisitive, but the depth and breadth of analysis in MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1997) project is much greater. At the centre of MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1997) overall philosophy is the failure of what he calls the 'Enlightenment Project' (MacIntyre, 1981: 36 - 52) to justify, in a secular way, the retention of a moral code similar to that of the Christian tradition in its emphasis on benevolence and mercy. The enlightenment project rooted morality either in human practical rationality, which it understood as largely instrumental or as autonomously legislative; or in human nature, which was conceived as thoroughly non-teleological (in the sense of moral discourses being extracted from their respective moral traditions and contested in relation to other such discourses, which is an approach that relativizes any claims to intrinsic human purposes).

MacIntyre (1981) believes that the Enlightenment project was doomed to fail because of this rejection of teleological ends. He describes "an ineradicable discrepancy between their [Enlightenment philosophers'] shared conception of moral rules and precepts on the one hand, and what was shared – despite much larger divergences – in their conception of human rights on the other" (MacIntyre, 1981:62). With each of these conceptions there is a specific history and their relationship can only be made intelligible in light of that history. This becomes a crucial factor in understanding why the Enlightenment failed to realise a universal and definitive secular ethical theory. The moral canvass on which this thought was sketched had a structure which, according to MacIntyre (1981), required three elements: untutored human nature, man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realised-his-telos and the moral precepts which enable him to pass from one state to the other" (MacIntyre, 1981:65). Given that the whole point of ethics in this respect, in both theory and in practice, is to enable humankind to pass from its present state to its true end, "the elimination of any notion of essential human nature and with it the abandonment of any notion of a telos leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two elements [moral precepts and human rights] whose relationship becomes quite unclear" (MacIntyre, 1981:65). These elements are a morality which has been robbed of its original teleological context and a particular view of untutored-human-nature-as-it-is. As the moral injunctions were within the context of a teleology that had been designed to correct, educate and improve human nature, then it made no sense to depend on human nature to provide these moral injunctions, as this was something that it could not do. As a result, moral judgements that are based around Christian ethics are taken out of context, reducing them to "forms of expression for an emotivist self which, lacking the guidance of the context in which

they were originally at home, has lost its linguistic as well its practical way in the world” (MacIntyre, 1981:61-74).

Whilst, for MacIntyre (1981), many of the Enlightenment philosophers were undoubtedly right to welcome such a shift as liberation from notions of theism and burdensome teleological thought, the problem arises when many who came after began to divide their understanding of the Enlightenment as a historical social movement from their understanding of the theories produced during that period. MacIntyre’s (1981) assessment is that, within and without academia, the historical and particular events of the Enlightenment are read with an understanding that history requires interpretation, and that interpretation is dependent on context, but the philosophical ideas associated with the Enlightenment are read as *ahistorical* and universal. A good example of this is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which, since its inception, has been a subject of much controversy, precisely because of claims to universality when many would say that any definition of human rights has to be historically contingent (Lockwood O’Donovan, 1996; Mayer, 1999; Tabandeh, 1966; Oh, 2008; Hogan 2015).

Out of the failure of such a project, MacIntyre (1981) holds that we face two choices. On the one hand we can either reject morality altogether by appealing instead only to natural drives and passions, with some being idiosyncratic and capricious, and with others being social or universal but wild. On the other hand, we can undertake the painful and laborious task of re-evaluating and modifying the modern turn away from teleology and attempt to reconceive morality along similar lines to Aristotlelian (349 B.C.) ethics. This will be difficult, he claims, because many believe modern moral discourse, despite the need for a few superficial reforms, to be in good working order and without any need for fundamental reconstruction. MacIntyre (1981) thinks that those who wish to engage in the second line of moral discourse will largely need to do their thinking within groups sharing the same fundamental standards and aims, while reading more widely beyond those traditions of enquiry.

There are five claims which MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) makes against the forms of moral philosophy that have dominated Western thought since the time that the medieval epoch began to pass into the modern, via the Enlightenment (Garcia, 2003). The first claim is that modern moral philosophy ignores the dependence of both justice and moral reasoning on fairly specific standards, and thus on group traditions. Furthermore, because no individual lives their life completely within the confines of any one practice, then practices and their goods also need to be harmonised to yield coherent and fulfilling lives for those participating in them. Finally, such a fulfilment needs to be understood as such by some tradition of moral enquiry into human flourishing, which, as a tradition, has established itself as superior to its rivals in the mind of the individual (Garcia, 2003: 96-98).

A good example of what is meant by the above Is when MacIntyre (1981) contrasts the brute, untethered moral ‘ought’ that characterises the ‘is/ought gap’ since Hume (1751) with the ‘ought’ judgements of the Homeric and medieval conceptions, wherein anyone could normally tell what a person ought to do in relation to their roles in society (such as a warrior, a Greek or a Christian). However, this is not to say that there could be no conflicts of interest; even Aeschylus (458 B.C.) knew that Agamemnon owed it to his brother Menelaus, a fellow king and Greek, to help him regain his wife, while at the same time seeking to protect his wife and daughter despite the tension between these two socially recognised debts. This is because such debts were not merely recognised by society, but largely created by its structure and practices, which themselves provided the moral vocabulary necessary to give the responsibilities telos, content and specificity. For Garcia (2003), this is the principal reason why MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) thinks that much of our normative discourse, especially in

morality, operates emotively (with reference only to subjective emotional commitment rather than inter-subjective reasoning): we no longer have coherent moral vocabularies with which to reason. As in the Homeric past, to be legitimate, our ‘ought’ judgements need backing by reasons and subsequently practical rationality. Yet, unlike some epochs in history, MacIntyre (1981) claims that, in liberal democracy, our rationality cannot get the grip it needs to supply fully defensible grounds. This is because it lacks the social context needed to provide moral judgements with clear and determinate content and provide adequate standards for their rational assessment (Garcia, 2003: 98-99).

A second claim that MacIntyre (1981) makes against modern moral philosophy, following from the first, is the divorce of ‘facts’ from ‘values’ in such a way that our moral discourse becomes operationally emotivist, with different factions within society arguing against others in ways that tend to become both desperate and self-righteous. The arguments become desperate in that each party senses that they cannot conclusively demonstrate their position’s correctness, although they do not know *why*; and they are self-righteous in that each party knows that the other’s position cannot be conclusively exposed as incorrect, yet again they don’t know why this is the case. For MacIntyre (1981), facts and values, as we presently understand them, are Enlightenment constructions, designed specifically to contrast with each other in such a way as to cleave a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Unlike some emotivists/noncognitivists, MacIntyre (1981) does not believe the gap to be inevitable, but instead it is a historical peculiarity of the present age. In this sense, morality and moral concepts are historical artefacts which require a particular social context for people to recognise and employ the relevant concepts in a clear, determinate way that is rationally defensible according to accepted standards (Macintyre, 1981: 18-19).

The third of the five claims is that modern moral philosophy promotes and acquiesces in the fragmentation of the modern individual into disparate, and often conflicting, roles without providing any basis or method for reunification, coherence or integrity. Here, MacIntyre (1981) means that the modern individual in Western liberal democracy often recognises elements of our plight, yet this recognition is excluded from our theories of practical rationality. The breakdown of the modern individual is then accommodated in our moral discourse, and less controversial responsibilities within the roles we occupy are unified under general, seemingly clear managerial concepts like ‘pragmatism’. However, the claim to utility of such concepts should be dismissed because they only make sense if we assume that our fragmentation is natural and inevitable, so all we can do is make emotive, pragmatic judgements in local contexts – and such an assumption needs a justification that cannot be provided (Garcia, 2003: 100).

The fourth claim is that modern moral philosophy permits and even encourages the subject to view their private self-interest in opposition to the good of other individuals; and more importantly, the good of the larger political community. MacIntyre (1997) argues that we can resolve, or at least reduce, the scope of the familiar tension between the competing goods of the individual and the community only when the private, the group, and the larger political community’s goods are objectively and properly understood as interdependent, both in principle and in fact. When each person decides what is good for him or herself, without understanding the place of the individual in the collective, then there is the possibility of wide and deep conflict. This, for Garcia (2003), is both a theoretical and existential concern in that, theoretically, we cannot precisely understand someone’s welfare except as constituted by flourishing as a member of some community; and existentially, we cannot live fulfilled lives in the context of the atomised and radical alienation that characterises Western liberal democracy.

The fifth and final claim of MacIntyre’s (1981, 1988, 1997) is that much of the celebrated rationality and freedom on which liberal thinkers have based their cultures and society since the Enlightenment actually masks particular interests that some groups have in dominating or exploiting others. Garcia (2003) attributes MacIntyre’s belief in this to his early commitment to Marxism. Often much of what is presented as a feature of universal reason, or as uncontroversial values such as ‘individual liberty’, in fact function to serve and conceal exploitative interests by delegitimising any opposition as irrational, illiberal, unjustified, unscientific, and so forth. However, unlike postmodernists such as Foucault and Derrida, Garcia (2003) holds that MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) never dispenses with the ideals of rationality, objectivity, justification, or even ordered liberty, but rather critiques the identification of such concepts with their recent post-Enlightenment social manifestations and theoretical conceptualisations. Challenge and pluralism, in this regard, are but stages on the way to reconceived reason and truth which, whilst never fully attained, may be better approximated (Garcia, 2003: 100-101).

MACINTYRE AND POLITICAL THEORY

MacIntyre (1981) says that the central task of moral philosophy is to account for the rational authority of morals, with the failure of the Enlightenment being the failure to exhibit such an authority. In parallel to this, MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) takes the central task of political theory to be accounting for the authority of political institutions. Political theory is centrally concerned with *political justifications,* which are the arguments advanced to demonstrate why members of a particular political society should or should not accept as legitimate commands that are the utterances of someone claiming executive authority in that society. Or political theory many concern justifications for or against the laws which are similarly claiming legislative authority (MacIntyre, 1997: 241).

Murphy (2003) tells us that, whilst there is a consensus within political theory that the central issue is that of political authority, there remains a similar consensus that no satisfactory account of that authority can be given. This has led to a number of writers, such as Stuart Hampshire (1989), Bernard Williams (1985, 2007), Raymond Geuss (2008) and Matt Sleat (2013), abandoning questions relating to authority and whether and why political institutions have the power to give binding edicts. They focus instead on the question of legitimacy: that is to say, whether and why political institutions have the right to impose upon or coerce citizens within their respective domains. For MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997), the failure of contemporary philosophy to provide a compelling solution to the question of political authority, and the turn from questions of authority to questions of legitimate coercion, has come about because political philosophers have framed their enquiries in terms of the modern State, which is an insufficiently broad understanding of the relevant relationships and discourses within society that need to be considered. The modern State, for MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997), refers to a highly particular form of political organisation that exhibits territorial governance and has a centralised and hierarchical organisation of that governance with a rule of their citizenry that is direct and pervasive. The allegiance of the State’s citizens is expected to take precedence over that which was formerly owed to family, clan, bishop, pope or caliph (Murphy, 2003:152-153).

MacIntyre’s (1981, 1988, 1997) key critique of the modern State concerns it’s supposedly ‘neutralist’ stance. A State may be referred to as ‘neutralist’ when its claims to authority and legitimacy are based upon only those extremely thin conceptions of the good that are shared by all minimally rational members of that political society. For MacIntyre (1981, 1988,

1997), such political justifications ultimately fail, and subsequently receive the allegiance of citizens only as a result of errors of thinking on the part of those citizens. Thus, neutralist States can only expect the support of citizens while they remain deceived.

The difficulty for MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) is not so much that we are unable to formulate plausible principles of justice; but rather, we are able to come up with far too many, which are the results of various different justificatory procedures that we have no ultimate way of choosing between. Indeed, if different theories of justice make contradictory claims to universality, then we are without any way to decide on the principles as well as the procedures of justice (MacIntyre, 1981: 244-255). This does not mean that one conception of justice cannot emerge victorious over another, but there remains to be seen any progress at all in this regard (Murphy, 2003:153-156).

As such, the neutralist State must appeal either to a conception of the good that is thin enough to be accepted by citizens who have their own different and substantive conceptions of the good; or, if the State rejects neutralism, it must align itself in a relatively arbitrary manner (on emotivist grounds) with one amongst the competing substantive conceptions of the good. However, for MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997), neither of these approaches is satisfactory. This is because the neutralist State continuously becomes enmeshed in conflict between competing claims to justice, as discussed earlier: a thin conception of the good never appears adequate in comparison with deeper but conflicting understandings of it, and the State ends up relying for the allegiance of its citizens on errors of judgement or deception. Alternatively, if the State adopts one of the competing substantive conceptions of the good, it then has to enforce it through totalitarian action against those who disagree with it. For MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997), this is also objectionable because the State's decision-making processes are isolated from procedures of rational inquiry into the good, and decision-making proceeds hierarchically. Thus, a conception of the good is imposed from above without rational inquiry into whether it is defensible, and without adequate participation in decision-making by those whose lives will be governed in accordance with that conception (Murphy, 2003: 156-159).

CONTEXTUALISING THE 2014 BRITISH VALUES DIRECTIVE: WHY NOW?

What I would like to argue now is that the Enlightenment project and its concomitant conception of the liberal democratic State, as characterised by MacIntyre (1981), has been exported and transmitted via various colonial, postcolonial and globalisation encounters.

MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1997) critique of the Enlightenment project has had a profound effect on the discipline of Theology, both inside and outside of the Christian traditions, alongside the study of the broader category of religion in general (Hauerwas, 1981, 1983; Hallaq, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2000; Cavanaugh, 2009). The motivation behind the 2014 British Values directive emerged from the aforementioned 'Trojan Horse' affair, which highlighted the underlying tensions in public discourse on how to foster a sense of civic unity in an era characterised by moral diversity and often conflicting worldviews, as the introduction to this paper attests. Moreover, I would argue that, for many such as Cantle (2016), Daley (2014) and Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman (2017), there is an underlying implication that the government articulation of British values is particularly focused on the rise of a new 'visible', assertive Islamic identity in British society (Meer, 2010; Field, 2011; Michael, 2011) that is part of a broader debate over the place of religion in public life (Williams, 2008; Welby, 2018). Moreover, it is more centrally focused on the rise of 'Islamist' discourses that have been seen as having driven a number of high-profile terrorist attacks by British-born citizens, with the most notable being the 2005 London bombings.

Khaled Abou El Fadl (2005) provides a concise account of what I mean by ’Islamist’ discourses: he describes the systematic dismantling of the jurist tradition within Islam in the post-colonial period when colonial powers sought to create, foster and install States of a similar fashion to that characterised by MacIntyre (1981). This, in turn, created a fragmented moral discourse within the Islamic tradition – again, in a manner similar to that characterised by MacIntyre (1981). Additionally, for El Fadl (2005), this has helped to create the conditions out of which ‘Islamist’ discourses (constructing interpretations of Islam that have been used to justify terrorism, which the 2014 British Values directive was designed to counter) could grow, and in a manner that could be described as emotivist in the MacIntyrean (1981) sense.

With regard to the aforementioned debate concerning the role of religion in public life, Wael B. Hallaq (2013), in exploring the concept of the liberal democratic State in relation to the Islamic tradition, has described the processes and the tensions which he believes often arise within many Muslim (and other) citizens. Specifically, these tensions are between what the State demands of them as citizens and what their religion demands of them as adherents. Hallaq (2013) discusses the underlying metaphysical assumptions of the liberal democratic State (most notably the primacy of individual rights) that, for Hallaq (2013), are in opposition to the underlying metaphysical assumptions of the Islamic tradition (which gives primacy to the duties of the individual to serve the wider community before God).

However, as we shall shortly see, such ‘unitary’ or ‘homogenising’ interpretations of the Islamic tradition, Muslims (and indeed other religious traditions and their respective adherents) can be problematic given the diversity of understandings of any faith.

RELIGION, POSTMODERNITY AND POSTCOLONIALISM: THE LAW, THE ARM, AND THE HAND

Various critiques of modernity from thinkers such as Michel Foucault (1980, 1984), Alasdair MacIntyre (1981, 1988, 1997) and Jacques Derrida (1974, 1980, 1997) have paved the way to what is commonly known as ‘postmodernity’. Seyyed Hossein Nasser (2002, 2008) argues that postmodernity is the current condition of society: the dominant logic and rationalism that has for so long been at the centre of Western Enlightenment thought has been replaced with any number of ‘anti-rational’ philosophies of the present day. Abdelwahab Elmessiri (2006) views postmodernity as modernity in its ‘liquid stage’, which is a stage of materialist irrationalism and anti-heroism in a world devoid of a single, coherent, shared moral framework. Whilst modernity renounced the authority of religion, replacing it with reason, postmodernity no longer appeals to any form of authority and instead dismisses all legitimating discourses, such as Christianity, Islam, Marxism and even Reason as examples of ‘grand narratives’.

Thinkers such as Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi (2006) argue that postmodernity has consequently created the space whereby a resurgence of religion in both industrial and peasant societies has become possible, as the new philosophy has failed to provide a firm alternative worldview to modernity – the fragmented and contradictory values that exist in our postmodern condition are insufficiently coherent for many people looking for commitment to a whole, integrated way of life with meaning. Consequently, the rise of Islamism is seen, in part, as a product of the frustrations of the failed promises of modernity, yet with fundamental differences to postmodernism. This is because, for Abu-Rabi (2006), many Islamist thinkers regard postmodernism as a ‘commercial paganism’ that transforms religions into playthings and subsequently can never be an ally to Islam (Farouk-Alli in Abu-Rabi, 2006: 288-298).

EMOTIVISM EXPORTED? POSTCOLONIALISM AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE JURISTIC TRADITION

El Fadl (2005) tells us that, prior to the advent of modernity, Islamic jurists were amongst the most well trained members of Muslim society, and they enjoyed many of the highest status positions in civil society. For instance, the State could not produce Shari’a law, only jurists could, and State laws were consequently regarded as regulatory rules without a divine mandate. Also, due to the diversity of the classical Islamic empire, the Shari’a became the transcendent symbol of common interest and unity within the Islamic identity, and the jurists were seen as the guardians of the Shari’a. Nevertheless, this whole complex system that was the source of religious authority in Islam could not survive the colonial encounter that brought about modernity (El Fadl, 2005: 33-44).

Colonialism and the subsequent modernisation project brought with it new elites of Western-educated, secular professionals, and Shari’a law was replaced with Western legal systems and concepts that in turn brought a new class of Western lawyers. However, El Fadl (2005) states that the real damage was to come from the native rulers who were installed by colonial powers in the period of de-colonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. These rulers were usually military men who El Fadl (2005) describes as Western-educated, secular and nationalistic. Private endowments that traditionally funded the Shari’a schools were nationalised, becoming State property. In many countries, the role of Shari’a was scaled back to be gradually swallowed by Western secular State legal systems, with many of the Shari’a schools being closed down or left to linger as tourist attractions. In most Muslim countries, the State now did everything possible to curtail the powers and intellectual heritage of the Islamic juristic tradition, with training limited to functions such as leading prayers, Friday sermons and, at best, serving as judges in personal law courts, on the margins of society away from any real sphere of political influence (El Fadl, 2005: 34-37).

For El Fadl (2005), this process resulted in a vacuum in religious authority in Modern Islam, which brought into question the mechanisms for defining Islamic authenticity. Consequently, the vacuum increasingly became filled by popular movements led by men who lacked the training and education of the more liberal jurists. As a result, the problem for El Fadl (2005) was not so much that *no one* could authoritatively speak for Islam, but rather that practically *every* Muslim with the slightest knowledge of the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet was all of a sudden qualified to speak and act on behalf of the Islamic tradition and Shari’a law. Often these were Muslims who were themselves unfamiliar with the precedents and accomplishments of past traditions; they were Western-educated engineers, business graduates, medical doctors and physical scientists who proclaimed their own authority. El Fadl (2005) says that the leaders and ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaida are typical examples, alongside the so-called Islamic State. As a result of their lack of deep immersion in the history and traditions of Islam, these self-taught ‘jurists’ reduced Islamic heritage to the lowest common denominator, bringing about an unprecedented deterioration in Islamic intellectual culture. Ultimately, for El Fadl (2005), they reduced modern Islamic law and theology to “the extracurricular hobby of pamphlet readers and writers” (El Fadl, 2005: 39). Due to its marginalised and displaced position in the modern world, Islamic law was now an area that was ripe for “pietistic fictions and crass generalisations” (El Fadl, 2005: 33-44) as opposed to the highly technical and sophisticated discipline of social and textual analysis combined with complex interpretive practices that preceded colonialism.

El Fadl (2005) informs us that the Salafi ideologue, Sayyid Qutb (1964), after being tortured on the command of the Egyptian leader, Nasser, turned to militancy, and became attracted to writers such as Mawdudi (1932, 1950, 1972, 1976), who was the founder of the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami Party. Mawdudi would shape Zia's Islamisation program of the late 1970s and early 80s. Qutb's (1964) thought also drew on the writings of Western philosophers, such as Carl Schmitt (1922), Oswald Spengler (1918) and Georges Sorel (1908). Qutb's (1964) *Milestones on the Road* is widely regarded as his key work of influence, and El Fadl (2005) describes his extremism as being the classic blend of influences and contradictions that come from puritanical Islam being mixed with Salafism, Wahabism and Western thought. Whilst Qutb's book attempted to depict the perfect Islamic society, El Fadl (2005) claims that, in actuality, it did little more than add an Islamic flavour to a thoroughly fascist ideological construct. Qutb divided society into two: the truly faithful against those who are living in the age of *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic ignorance), and he claimed it was obligatory for the faithful to migrate to the land of pure Islam. Those who refused to do so were labelled as apostates or infidels. Qutb's insistence was that the Qur'an is the only constitution for all Muslims, and the land needs to be governed in every area by Islamic law.

It is here that El Fadl (2005) points to Qutb's (1964) ideas on Shari'a law as being symptomatic of the aforementioned vacuum of authority in the Islamic tradition: Qutb was a schools inspector and Mawdudi a journalist. Neither were trained jurists, and their knowledge of the jurist tradition, as evidenced in their writings, was limited to broad conjecture and caricature. Both, along with the many others who agreed with them or they inspired, relied on the construct that Shari'a law is a set of inflexible, clear cut and strict positive commands covering and regulating all areas of human life and society; a cure-all, as it were. For both Mawdudi and Qutb, the implementation of their particular definition of Shari'a law meant that God's perfect justice was being manifested (El Fadl, 2005: 82-83).

RESIDENT ALIENS: ISLAM AND THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC STATE

Giving some historical perspective to modern Islamist discourse, Wael B. Hallaq (2013) argues that the degradation of the jurist tradition has led to a view that the modern State is merely a neutral tool of governance to be adapted to perform certain functions according to the dictates of its leaders and their ideology. The machinery of the State can either be used for oppression or it can be used by its leaders to represent the people's will. Thus, the particular creed of the State could be liberal democratic, socialist, or indeed an Islamic State.

The idea that the 'neutral' State can be imbued with Islamic principles has been bolstered by Islamist interpretations of late 20th Century examples: the simultaneous rise of Zia Ul Haq in Pakistan and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran at the close of the 1970s, along with the rise of various Islamist movements in the Middle East since the 1980s (Hallaq, 2013). However, such examples draw our attention to the role of Western liberal democracies and their allies in supporting or undermining particular 'Islamic' regimes, and highlight the importance of understanding the fragmentation within the Umma (the Islamic community) and the complexity of the geo-political context within which competing Islamist interpretations play out (Coll, 2004)

Hallaq (2013) holds that the liberal democratic State is far from neutral: it functions with its own metaphysical assumptions that are incommensurate with Islamic tradition and inherently produce political, economic, social, cultural, epistemological and psychological outcomes that are in tension with it. Indeed, Hallaq's (2013) view is that the State, which much Islamist discourse seeks to 'Islamise', is, in fact, a paradigm of governance that evolved in Europe and

that flourished in Euro-America before being exported to the colonies and the rest of the world. Of course, this does not mean that the liberal democratic State is completely unable to change and adapt to new contexts. However, as Hallaq (2013) sees it, none of these changes, and none of the more permanent structures of the State that have been transferred into other countries, have ever proven themselves to be compatible with even the most basic requirements of Islamic governance, and they therefore provoke dissonance in Muslims (Hallaq, 2013:155 – 156).

Hallaq (2013) discusses how tensions between the State and the Mosque arise when differing assumptions are at least potentially (if not actually) contradictory. Such clashes of assumptions may have contributed to Mosques being seen as 'seditious spaces' by some sections of non-Muslim British society (Michael, 2011: 210).

To relate this back to MacIntyre's account of the collapse of coherence in modern moral discourse, and El Fadl's (2005) account of the effects of liberal democracy on the Islamic juristic tradition, I would argue that those who experience the dissonance to which Hallaq (2013) refers, suffer from reading both the accounts of historical and particular events at the time of the Prophet in the same ahistorical manner which MacIntyre (1981) contends that the Enlightenment and Christian philosophers have been read within many quarters of liberal democracy since the Enlightenment. In short, without an understanding that history requires interpretation, and that interpretation is dependent on context, there is a tendency for people to fall into uncritically accepted narratives of both the Mosque and State, giving rise to the dissonance that Hallaq (2013) believes to be present. This stands in contrast with the highly trained jurists that El Fadl (2005) refers to, who were, in fact, well equipped to develop appropriate and contextually aligned interpretations.

For Hallaq (2013), then, many Muslims must live with the dissonance, but it is not of their own creation. In contrast, the West lives more comfortably with the assumptions of the liberal democratic State because the latter have been self-created within a historical process that has been infused by Enlightenment thought, the industrial and technological revolutions, modern science, nationalism, capitalism and the American-French constitutional tradition. All of these have grown internally and organically in the West, and the rest of the world has followed – or, if it has not followed, it has felt an intense pressure to 'catch-up'. This means that there is, in effect, no widely-discussed history in the Islamic world other than that of Euro-America; not even that of pre-Enlightenment Europe, let alone the traditions of Islamic civilizations. Via the post-colonial period and globalization, we find that many non-Western cultures have lost their history and their organic ways of existing (Hallaq, 2013:3-4). In such circumstances, it is easy for the tensions to lead to destructive conflicts, which Hallaq claims is exactly what we find in many areas of Africa, South Asia and the Middle East.

Hallaq (2013) takes a Foucaldian (1980) and MacIntyrean (1981) view that, if the liberal democratic State was a uniquely European phenomenon, then so too was its progeny, the citizen. With the industrial revolution and the colonial encounter came increasing levels of social division (both in Western liberal democracies, and in relation to many governments that were formed in the post-colonial period), which the liberal democratic State sought to contain via the creation of institutions such as the police, the prison service, schools and hospitals. In a thoroughly capitalist society, citizens needed to be educated in good conduct that fostered a social order, and this was largely conceived as the ability to work and produce. Discipline was thereby translated into a site whereby the citizen would be enrolled into a system of order and instrumental utility, and for Hallaq the institution of the school was exactly such a system (Hallaq, 2013: 98-101). In this sense, it is not coincidental that the

2014 British Values directive was introduced into schools: schools have long been ‘factories’ in which Western citizens are ‘manufactured’ (Postman and Weingartner, 1969).

Hallaq (2013) regards it as noteworthy that the institutional, epistemic and bureaucratic forms of producing the subject of the State first preceded and then coincided in their operation with the rise of nationalism. Whilst, as a manufacturer of identities, nationalism is never fixed, it nevertheless remains a constant paradigm constructing citizens on behalf of the State: subjects who perceive themselves and their world in highly particular ways. Moreover, these are *politically integrated* subjects; integrated, not into a metaphysical or cosmic-moral order, but into the metaphysics of the State and its nation. Nationalism, therefore, is perhaps the most significant source and groundwork of meaning to its subjects. Nationalism engulfs both the individual and the collective, producing the ‘I’ and the ‘We’ dialectically and separately. Not only does nationalism produce the community and its realised individual members, *it is itself* the community and its realised individual members, for without these there is no nationalism (Hallaq, 2013: 105-106).

Hallaq’s (2013) point regarding the process of creating the liberal democratic citizen within the Nation State framework brings us back to the original domain of the 2014 British Values directive, that of education. Putting this into the context of MacIntyre’s (1981) account of modern moral discourse and its concomitant conception of the liberal democratic social order, we can then ask the question: how has the education system in the UK been used to create the citizens to whom Hallaq (2013) refers?

THE ETERNAL BRIDESMAIDS: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

I now wish to very briefly sketch a picture of how, since 1945, the teaching of Religion has been used as the main vehicle for consciously shaping citizens within British State education. Indeed, I suggest that religious education uses the techniques described by Hallaq (2013) and thereby seeks to inculcate students into a liberal democratic social order.

Brown (2001) notes that, both during and after the 2nd World War, the tradition of organised religious instruction (RI) enjoyed a revival. White (2004) informs us that, in 1944, whilst upholding the right to withdrawal at parental request, Religious Instruction (RI), along with a daily act of collective worship, was made compulsory in every State school.

In the wake of the Munich Agreement in 1938, official British thinking was shaken by the German experience of the idealisation of the Aryan race via National Socialism, in that such a belief had, in many ways, helped to unify and mobilise a country that some ten years previously had been to the very edge of political, social and economic implosion. Consequently, there was a real and justified fear of the rise of totalitarian idealism in England, and so the political climate of the time demanded a moral and metaphysical legitimation of the democracy that they were about to defend. The Spens Report on grammar and technical high schools of 1938 argued that a remedy was to be found in religious education, and this was a notion that was readily embraced and developed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1941. Thus, when the 1944 Education Bill, which was to introduce compulsory religious instruction, came up for debate in parliament, there was now a strong link between the cause of democracy and Christianity.

In addition to the alliance between Church and State, there were other factors that influenced the compulsory introduction of religious instruction (RI), such as the desire to move away from ‘denominational particularism’ (feuds between Christian denominations), alongside

high levels of support for RI from teachers within State schools (White, 2004). For example, in 1944, Mass Observation found that 90% of teachers were in favour of the Bill (Niblett, 1966). Overall though, the principle reason for the installation of RI as a compulsory subject in State schools was to foster a deeper sense of civic unity via a move towards interdenominational religious education at a time when British society was in a very real fight for its existence.

However, White (2004) argues that, once the war was over and the threat of totalitarianism receded into history, the original justification for the installation of RI waned, and it took on a new civic dimension: it was replaced by a non-confessional, more phenomenological approach, renamed Religious Education (RE), that looked to emphasise an understanding of religion as a subject removed from tradition. The exclusively Christian content that had figured in the original desire for the compulsory status of RI was now supplanted by a pluralistic, multi-faith perspective reflecting the myriad religions now found in post-colonial British society. Since this time, the primary objective of RE has been to encourage students to understand and respect the practices and beliefs of citizens from various faith communities (White, 2004: 152-154).

One of the key advocates for the phenomenological approach, and the move from Religious Instruction to Religious Education in England, was Ninian Smart. Smart (1975) argued that the classification of ‘Religious Instruction’ was problematic, in that it assumed that there was an agreement regarding the content of belief that was to be passed on, and he said that such a view was largely out of favour. This was because it was out of touch with the increasingly plural and more open-minded society that had grown out of the 1960s, alongside the academic trends towards exploration and away from passive instruction (e.g., Postman and Weingartner, 1969) that had brought about a new classification of ‘Religious Education’.

Smart (1975) attributes a clinging on to ‘instruction’ (as opposed to ‘education’) as tied to the assumption that Christianity could be taught as a State religion as opposed to being seen as but one tradition amongst many. Furthermore, rather than viewing religion as a field of human experience to be explored, instruction had reduced it to merely a list of doctrinal and ethical beliefs to be instilled in its students. Smart’s (1975) view regarding the verb ‘*to teach’* was that there was a need to provide a detached account of the history, ethics, rituals, influences and developments, and so forth, within *various* religious traditions, and not the teaching of dogma. Religion should not be viewed as the ‘handmaid of British Citizenship’, in that moral education is the job of the school as a whole alongside the family and society at large (Smart, 1975: 1-8).

Three scholars in particular, Macintyre (1981, 1988), Hauerwas (1981, 2006) and Wells (2006), all regard the phenomenology of Smart (1969, 1975) from a ‘postliberal’ theological stance, in the sense that they all reject an Enlightenment appeal to a ‘universal rationality’ along with the liberal assumption of an immediate religious experience common to all humanity. Arguing that all thought and experience is historically and socially mediated, postliberal theorists base their theological program upon a return to religious traditions whose values are inwardly appropriated by individuals immersed in a culture. Postliberalism rejects the notion of a universal foundation of knowledge, and instead appeals to the roles of values, experiences and language as constructing shared perspectives, insisting on the importance of traditions and their associated historical communities in the shaping of experience and thought. As a result, the *particularity* of Christianity is emphasised in a reaction to the homogenising tendencies of liberalism in its attempts to make observations and theory coincide (McGrath, 2001:119).

Hallaq’s (2013) description of education as the machinery for citizen formation in liberal democratic society, discussed earlier, is supported by White’s (2004) account of the situation in 1941, when Church and State aligned to introduce compulsory RI. Smart’s (1975) introduction of RE and his attack on the use of religion as a vehicle to shape the value judgements of future citizens would appear, at first sight, to be a departure from this agenda. However, the critiques of MacIntyre (1981), Fitzgerald (2000), Hauerwas (1981) and Hallaq (2013) suggest that it reduces Religious Education from a vehicle for forming value judgements to one that merely catalogues religions as lifestyle options, and thereby encourages moral relativism. This is arguably a natural extension of the increasingly pluralist nature of liberal democracy as characterised by MacIntyre’s (1981) account of the nature of modern moral discourse and political authority.

Furthermore, in the phenomenological approach to Religious Education, there is a danger of creating an over-simplistic, homogeneous understanding of Muslims in the non-Muslim population via a process that Farid Panjwani (2014) describes as ‘religiofication’. This is when day-to-day, mundane matters and tasks of the Muslim become read as religious causes. ‘Religiofication’ is exacerbated by the tendency in many school textbooks and discussions of Islam to primarily focus on the religious aspects of the tradition as opposed to acknowledging that any tradition comprises vast swathes of competing *cultural* interpretations of what that tradition is and means to its many adherents.

Having said this, Panjwani (2014) nevertheless maintains that the ‘Trojan Horse affair’ may well be the catalyst that heralds a turning point in the way that Islam (and even Religion) is taught in schools, bringing a new opportunity to offer a deeper understanding of the complex intersection of the secular and the religious in public and private lives (Panjwani, 2014: 10). Similarly, Matthew L. N. Wilkinson (2015) argues for the broadening of curricular historiography so that it is more inclusive of the role that Islamic civilisations have played in shaping the political and intellectual development of modern Europe. I would add that, with Panjwani’s (2014) account of the ‘religiofication’ of Islam in mind, the inclusion of discussions of Islam into other areas of the curriculum outside of Religious Education would help to better inform students’ understandings of the subtleties of Islamic law, cultures and civilisations in ways that would hopefully avoid the creation of simplistic binaries and degraded conceptions of Islamic law. It would appear that this is essential if we are to avoid simplistic interpretations of a homogenous ‘Islam’ being imposed on whole communities of people (or worse, privilege constructions of ‘Islamism’ such as those propagated by politically motivated groups such as Daesh).

BRITISH VALUES AND COMPETING POLITICAL DISCOURSES

It is here that we turn our attention to how MacIntyre’s (1981) thinking might relate to current political theory in British liberal democracy. This is because it is out of the problems regarding the nature of modern moral discourse and the liberal democratic State, as characterised by MacIntyre (1981), and combined with the problems relating to the postcolonial encounter as discussed by El Fadl (2005) and Hallaq (2013), that two key discourses have emerged within political theory. Both are concerned with how we integrate citizens into the existing liberal democratic social order (as described by MacIntyre, 1981), and they focus specifically on the British context within which the 2014 British Values directive was launched, taking into account the issues that have been described by both El Fadl (2005) and Hallaq (2013) in this paper. However, the two discourses differ in their

diagnoses of the problems that they see as needing to be addressed, and also on how they should be resolved.

The first discourse is the Realist movement, as exemplified by Matt Sleat (2013; 2018). In many ways this begins with what David Cameron referred to in a 2011 speech at the Munich Security Conference as a 'muscular' reading of liberal democracy that looks to *transform* the citizen, via the educative process (similar to that described by Hallaq, 2013), into one that becomes representative and constitutive of that particular reading of liberal democracy in terms of the citizen's civic commitments and dealings with the State and society. This is what Macedo (1995) describes as *Transformative Constitutionalism*.

The second discourse is Multiculturalism, typified by the work of Bhikhu Parekh (2000; 2005; 2012). Parekh's (2000; 2005; 2012) conception of multiculturalism begins from the idea of multiculturalism *as a perspective* (Parekh, 2000) on political theory in particular and liberal democracy in general. It is a perspective that seeks to inform and develop liberal democracy by recognising that the legitimacy of the culturally embedded nature of pluralism comes from it being a means to temper seemingly narrow or excessive conceptions of liberal democracy by subjecting it to regulative principles.

The reason for highlighting these two discourses is that David Cameron's 2011 speech also argued that "under the doctrine of State multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives…" (Cameron, 2011). I would argue that the 'Realist' discourses of thinkers such as Sleat (2013) are reflective, if not informative, of the 2014 British Values directive, and part of a wider movement against the multiculturalist discourses of thinkers such as Parekh (2000, 2005, 2012) in some areas of political theory and political practice.

Realism

Sleat (2018) claims that realist political theory emerged in the form of a critique of dominant ideas in contemporary liberal theory, such as found in the work of John Rawls (1971), and this makes it similar to other developments such as communitarianism, global justice, multiculturalism and so forth. Yet, for Sleat (2018), because realism doesn't claim to offer an alternative normative theory, unlike these other developments (Geuss, 2008), there developed the sense that realist political theory's only reason for being was to curb what thinkers such as Raymond Geuss (2008) and Matt Sleat (2013) viewed as the neo-Kantian excesses of theorists such as Rawls (1971). As such, it could never step beyond a purely critical mode of analysis. However, Sleat (2018) argues that realism, properly understood, means working within the traditions of political thought exemplified by thinkers such as Augustine (426), Machiavelli (1532), Hobbes (1651), and, more recently, Carl Schmitt (1922), Isaiah Berlin (1958) and Michael Oakeshott (1975) (Sleat, 2018: 9-11).

In regard to the relationship between morality, philosophy and politics, Sleat (2018) says that it is common in realist theories to take issues of power, conflict and disagreement to be ineradicable and constitutive features of political life. Consequently, there is an abiding scepticism, not about whether we can produce answers to moral and philosophical questions about how we should live together, but concerning whether politics can ever be fully governed by reason or morality as opposed to the exercise of power. This is because we are unable to agree on what morality demands and reason dictates, so we have to be sceptical of the possibility of grounding politics in some pre-political or hypothetical consensus on justice, certainty on morality or standards of deliberation. This may lead some to argue that there is a danger of losing politics to irrationalism or amorality. While Sleat (2018) agrees that realists need to rule out the idea that politics can be understood and practiced via the application of abstract moral or rational principles that claim to authoritatively settle what we

ought or ought not to do, he contends that this is because politics is always historically located, and any proper understanding of politics and the actions of political agents must reflect this (Sleat, 2018: 11-13).

Liberal Realism as Moderate Hegemony

In *Liberal Realism*, Sleat (2013) poses a key question: how should liberal regimes treat those members of their citizenry who reject the idea that liberalism grants the optimum amount of freedom and equality, and who are clearly being forced to obey laws and principles that have normative ends which they do not share? Sleat (2013) suggests that Macedo’s (1995) conception of ‘moderate hegemony’ in liberalism offers a plausible and promising response to this question: we need to retain the commitment to treating others, including enemies, as free and equal whilst being cognisant of the fact of pluralism and the role that coercion necessarily plays in enabling and maintaining liberal politics (Sleat, 2013:157).

Liberalism, for Macedo (1995), is ‘hegemonic’ in the sense that it is honest regarding the pervasive effects and influences of liberal political practices. It is ‘moderate’ because transformative constitutionalism confines itself to political virtues, seeks to respect freedom and, where possible, exploits indirect and non-oppressive means to meet these ends. For Macedo (1995), however, there is a problem with the idea that the role of the constitution is to provide a rubric of rules and regulations that apportion an equal sphere of freedom to individuals to pursue whatever ends they choose so long as they do not impinge on the ability of others to exercise the same freedom: this misses the radically transformative nature of liberal constitutionalism. Consequently, it is liable to obscure the fact that the liberal democratic order needs to be a pervasively educative one: a liberal regime needs to *engage in the formation* of liberal citizens (Macedo, 1995: 304-314).

As there are many ways in which the State can exert influence over its citizenry, Macedo (1995) focuses on how public schools in the USA, throughout the mid-nineteenth century, were engaged in a direct attempt to exercise political leverage over the intellectual development and moral substance of the country’s future citizens. For Macedo (1995), as with Hallaq (2013), schooling is a particularly important resource in forming citizens, in that it has the potential to reinforce the basic beliefs and commitments that need to be held by all citizens, and it can reshape and supplant certain moral, cultural and religious identities that deny such beliefs. What Macedo (1995) claims was happening in 19th Century America, and this is regarded as plausible by Sleat (2013), was the wilful exercise of political power to foster and create the willingness of individuals from particular religous groups to live in peace with those they believed to be damned (Macedo, 1995, 304-314; Sleat, 2013, 157-158).

Following Macedo (1995), Sleat (2013) contends that, while not all liberal regimes will pursue the same means in the creation of liberal citizens, the point remains that the mechanisms, practices and expectations of ‘transformative constitutionalism’ that have the effect of forming our commitments and habits are not something which should be eliminated, regretted or apologised for. Instead, Sleat (2013) views it as a correct political aim to try to foster convergence on what Realist discourses on liberal democracy take to be the right beliefs, since liberalism, as with any form of political order, needs the support of private practices that are at least compatible with liberal politics. A commonly-held yet mistaken belief, for both Sleat (2013) and Macedo (1995), is that liberal citizens who are committed to self-restraint, moderation and reasonableness will naturally arise within a liberal democratic regime. This is because many liberals make the erroneous assumption that simply securing a rigid public/private divide via the rule of law is sufficient grounds to secure a commitment to

liberalism when, in fact, such allegiance is actually a herculean achievement (Sleat, 2013: 157-160).

Multiculturalism

Having explained the Realist stance, we can now move on to the second discourse offering a way forward: Multiculturalism.

Bhikhu Parekh (2000) argues that Political Theory is best seen, not so much as a discipline but as a discourse. That is, a critical conversation can be maintained between its different forms with each nurturing a different moral sensibility, bringing to bear a distinct perspective on political life. Thereby, discourses correct each other’s biases and excesses. Whilst Parekh (2000) concedes that this may be vague, it nevertheless gives some idea of how one might pluralise a certain view of political theory and subject it to regulative principles (Parekh, 2000:249-250).

Parekh (2000) highlights a liberal bias in much of political theory and argues instead for a multiculturalist approach, which is best seen, not so much as a political doctrine with a programmatic content or as a philosophical school with its own theory of humanity, but rather as a perspective on human life. Parekh (2000) contends that such a perspective offers three central insights, each of which are often misinterpreted by its advocates and consequently need to be explained carefully if they are to be persuasive. These are the cultural embeddedness of humanity, the inescapability and desirability of cultural diversity, and the internal plurality in each culture. Such insights, for Parekh (2000), are crucial to the development of a political philosophy that is capable of meeting the challenges of the present age, in that they alert political theorists to the complex and subtle ways in which their culture, their modes of thought, limit their imaginative capacity and critical powers. Parekh asks theorists to guard against the all-too-present tendency to universalise the local. Simultaneously, a multicultural perspective offers the opportunity to overcome individual cultural limitations and, although the political theorist is devoid of an Archimedean standpoint, there are various angles of perspective in the form of other cultures through which the individual can interrogate the hidden assumptions and biases of their own thinking. Furthermore, dialogue between different cultural perspectives can be harnessed by illuminating the insights and exposing the limitations in each, with the aim of arriving at a less culture-bound vision of human life and a more comprehensive and critical political theory.

Since the concepts and values of such a philosophy are interculturally derived and grounded, they provide a language in which different cultures can conduct a dialogue; each bringing their own moral principles to criticise and evaluate each other. For Parekh (2000), only such a multiculturally constructed political theory can hope to move towards realising the legitimate traditional ambition of politics as a discipline to develop a rigorously self-critical body of thought capable of transcending and challenging the dominant ideologies and sensibilities of its society and age (Parekh, 2000: 249-257).

Liberal Hegemony

Parekh (2006) has highlighted a number of common characteristics of liberalism that have served to restrict liberals in their efforts to formulate a cohesive and persuasive response to cultural and moral diversity.

One characteristic is the inability of liberalism to appreciate the culturally embedded nature of human beings: liberals tend to have a trans-cultural view of humanity, with people

perceived as individual rational moral agents. Whilst many liberals actually appreciate the deep ways in which culture shapes, structures, reconstitutes and channels human desires and capacities, they nevertheless still remain deeply committed to the views of thinkers such as Hobbes (1651), Locke (1689) and Mill (1859, 1861), who claimed that human beings are naturally endowed with wants, needs and capacities, and social life is the means by which they realise these or develop and add new ones. Parekh (2006) argues that this is a flawed reading of the relationship between the individual and culture in that, although human beings are not fully determined by their cultures (so they are able to take a critical view of them by appreciating and learning from others), they are nevertheless not transcendental beings that are contingently and externally related to them either. Culture shapes people in myriad ways, forming individuals into particular types of personality via the cultivation of certain attachments, affections and moral and psychological dispositions, along with certain types of reasoning processes. Instead of being a purely formal and culturally neutral being, the human capacity for autonomy is structured in certain ways that function within a flexible yet determinate limit that defines and assesses options in manners that are highly particular. In short, liberals cannot expect culture to be subordinated to a trans-cultural conception of human capacity (Parekh, 2006: 109-111).

Another feature Parekh (2006) highlights is the tendency for liberals, either overtly or covertly, to take an absolutist view of liberalism. This comes via the persistent reflex of making it the central frame of reference by which all other models of State are measured. Thus it is common to divide all ways of life into liberal and non-liberal, with any form of the latter being viewed as *illiberal*. Talk of tolerating rather than respecting non-liberal perspectives betrays the limited view of pluralism that liberals embrace. Parekh (2006) illustrates this point with an analogy: if someone was to divide all religions into a Christianity/non-Christianity binary, and then was to equate the latter with anti-Christianity, this would be a jump in logic that betrays a lack of respect for anyone with a different religious perspective. Consequently, if liberals are to do justice to the reality of moral and cultural pluralism, then the crude binary between liberalism and non-liberalism needs to be jettisoned along with the absolutist conception of liberalism that is their central point of reference. This, in turn, requires the acceptance of the full flow of moral and cultural plurality and the acknowledgement that the good life can be lived in any number of ways, where aspects of some might be argued to be better than aspects of others with regard to any particular criterion of judgement, but no one outlook is unquestionably the best. While this would put paid to absolutism, it would not relativize liberal outlooks and practices, but rather enhance their critical faculties and generate deeper sympathy and empathy for ways of life that are currently regarded only with grudging tolerance. These ways of life could become true conversational partners (Parekh, 2006: 109-111).

A further problematic characteristic of liberalism can be seen when we look at liberal discussions of how to respond to and treat so-called non-liberal ways of life. Here, liberal thinkers tend to adopt one of two strategies. The first is the tendency to confront non-liberals with a full-blooded or ‘pure’ reading of liberalism that indicts the accused for failing to measure up to such standards. Macedo (1995), Geuss (2008) and Sleat (2013) are said to take this approach. The second strategy is that of a deontological liberalism, where liberal principles are scaled back to a ‘minimal content’, thus making tolerance of non-liberal cultures dependent on their acceptance of that minimum. The first strategy, for Parekh (2006), is a circular chauvinism that is ultimately emotivistic, incoherent and violent; and, whilst the second is more conciliatory, it is likewise flawed. If the minimum that is expected by the liberal is conformity to rules that are still essentially liberal in nature, then this cannot be seen as morally binding as it would represent a transgression of the very individual

autonomy that liberalism is supposed to protect. If this liberal minimum is regarded as universally binding anyway, then there is nothing particularly liberal about it. In short, there is the need to rise to a higher level of abstraction, and also undertake a more historical reading of the Enlightenment than has so far been achieved by liberals: liberals need a deeper understanding of their own historically inherited cultural character and outlook (Parekh, 2006: 109-111).

REFLECTIONS

It seems hard not to read the Realist political theory described by Sleat (2013; 2018) above as being precisely the kind of normative theory that it purports not to be. Whilst it may indeed reflect the concerns emanating from MacIntyre's (1981) conception of modern moral discourse and the liberal democratic State, it nevertheless seems to swap an ethical normativity of a Kantian variety (concerned with Reason and Morality) for one that is based on a Hobbesian (1651) conception of power; that is to say, the absolute sovereignty of the offices of State as the best means yet available to mediate humanity's (seemingly) natural state of conflict. Is this not just another kind of ethical justification with a normative vision of the good society as controlled by the State? Furthermore, Macedo's (1995) conception of 'liberal hegemony', as read by Sleat (2013), that seeks to use education as a means to produce the liberal citizen, merely reinforces Hallaq's (2013) critique of the formation of the moral fabric of liberal citizens discussed earlier in this paper, thereby lending further weight to what is already a compelling critique amongst many British citizens, Muslim or otherwise, who feel alienated by the liberal democratic order and the fragmented nature of moral discourse within that order (as characterised by MacIntyre, 1981).

Similarly, Parekh's (2000) contention that multiculturalism can help us to arrive at a less culture-bound vision of human life, despite his disavowal of an Archimedian perspective, seems to suggest the swapping of a universalist reading of liberalism for a universalist reading of multiculturalism, with a soteriological faith in its abilities to realise a civil order in which the mass moral diversity characterised by MacIntyre (1981) and the tensions described by Hallaq (2013) and El Fadl (2005) can be resolved via the political process.

It would seem then that, between these two competing discourses, the Realist retreat to 'transformative constitutionalism' leaves the door open to a narrow and brute form of liberalism that is bound to alienate a dangerously large section of the populace; whereas the embracing of multiculturalism runs a similar risk in diluting any form of political legitimacy through a belief that cross-cultural dialogue can enable the quasi-transcendence of culture, which is a smuggled-in universalism that contradicts belief in the value of diversity.

Concerning El Fadl's (2005) account of the collapse of the jurist tradition, and the subsequent rise of Islamist ideologues, I would argue that thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb (1964) and Abul A'la Mawdudi (1932, 1950, 1972, 1976) should not be ignored because of their degraded version of Islam. On the contrary, because of their influence on extremist movements, they must be engaged with in similar ways to how we engage with Lenin, Che Guevara and even Ghandi in Western political theory – with a critical attitude that emphasises the historical context in which their work came to prominence. However, we must be mindful of the descent into pantomime caricatures that so often dogs studies of such figures. I would also argue that, in many areas of British society (most notably in the comments of Daley, 2014, Cantle, 2014, and even Spielman, 2017, discussed in the introduction to this paper), there is a risk that the ideas of Qutb (1964) (as described by El Fadl, 2005, particularly in relation to the 'Islamist' interpretation of Sharia law) are being mistakenly universalised as an

authoritative account of the Islamic tradition. This mistaken universalisation has led to a pronounced preoccupation with a perceived threat to the British liberal democratic conception of law in many areas of British society and political life (Bowen, 2012), upon which the British Values directive was particularly focused (Oftsed, 2014:5).

Hallaq’s (2013) account of the metaphysical tensions between some Muslim institutions and the liberal democratic State, whilst insightful, nevertheless makes some very broad claims, including generalisations that may risk creating the very image of homogenous Islam that I warned against earlier in this paper. Specifically, Hallaq (2013) runs the risk of painting a picture of a Muslim subculture that is universally and intrinsically at odds with liberal democracy in terms of its metaphysical assumptions. Yet many Muslims are also supporters of local football teams, work as public servants, are holders of public offices, and engage in other diverse everyday activities that are commonly associated with a wider British identity – as well as being sincere adherents to their religious and cultural traditions. Consequently, there is a difference between the *institutional* ideal and the (sometimes diverse) thinking of *citizens* that is in danger of being fudged. Vincett and Woodhead (2009) argue that many religious traditions in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have witnessed a turn to the self that highlights the different and highly individual ways that religions can be, and indeed are, practiced. So, while institutional analyses of religions tend to favour the authority of leaders, sacred texts, symbols and sacraments over the individual, and thereby give rise to generalisations, since the 1960s there has been an increasing shift *in religious practice* to the authority of individual experience (Vincett & Woodhead, 2009:321). With this in mind, I would argue that it appears to be increasingly difficult to discuss Islam, either from inside or outside of the Islamic tradition, without appearing to be either an assailant or an apologist, precisely because anything that is said is assumed to be either about a universal ‘Islamism’ or a monolithic ‘Islam’ rather than the more nuanced and heterogeneous versions of Islam that are actually shared much more widely in British-Islamic society. This heterogeneity is important to recognise, and whilst MacIntyre (1981), Hauerwas (1981), and Hallaq (2013) would no doubt argue that the turn to individual religious experience described by Vincett and Woodhead (2009) merely represents a further entrenchment of emotivism, the centrality of personal religious interpretation is a reality for many people within liberal democracy, and for most this is unproblematic. In thinking about worldviews and morality, binary narratives (e.g., Islam versus liberal democracy) are rarely helpful. As an analogy, it is fatally simplistic to speak of one Christianity, or even of two Christianities (if we make the distinction between Catholic and Protestant), so why would we not assume that the same is true of Islam? This highlights the difficulties that the aspiring scholar, journalist, politician and citizen face when discussing Islam and Muslims *en masse*.

WHY NOW? WHERE NEXT?

To conclude, in order to answer the question (posed by Vincent and Hunter-Henin, 2018) about why the government decided to issue a compulsory directive to teach ‘British Values’ in schools in 2014, there are underlying issues that stretch much further back and run much deeper than the ‘Trojan Horse Affair’ that require consideration. MacIntyre’s (1981) characterisation of the fragmented nature of modern moral discourse, along with his reading of the liberal democratic State, can be seen to provide a context out of which several issues pertinent to this paper have emerged: notably, El Fadl’s (2005) discussion of the vacuum in moral authority in the Islamic tradition, and Hallaq’s (2013) observation of the metaphysical tensions between the liberal democratic State and the religious adherent. The corrosive effects of the colonial and postcolonial encounters on Islamic legal and moral discourse, and

the alienating effects of the often contradictory and competing claims of the State and religious traditions, can push many towards what Hugh Urban (2000), when writing about Marshall Applewhite (the Heaven’s Gate Cult leader) , described as “the intense alienation and ambivalence shared by many individuals lost in late-twentieth century capitalism” (Urban, 2000: 270) . Urban’s (2000) comments serve as a reminder that such ambivalence and alienation is by no means particular to Islam.

As we have seen from the work of Hallaq (2013), Macedo (1995) and Sleat (2013), the use of education as the means to embed key metaphysical assumptions in the individual via a process of active citizen formation is no secret. White’s (2004) description of the use by the British State of Religious Instruction, and more latterly Religious Education, as a key discipline through which a specific moral fabric of the individual citizen can be woven is perhaps the most visible illustration of Hallaq’s (2013) and Macedo’s (1995) arguments. As such, Smart’s (1975) insistence that Religious Education should not be seen as ‘the handmaid of British citizenship’ still resonates some four decades later, as RE and citizenship are still conjoined.

The discourses of the Realism of Sleat (2013; 2018) and the Multiculturalism of Parekh (2000; 2005; 2012) are partially concerned with what kinds of citizens we ought to foster, and are more generally focused on the perennial question in political theory of how best to integrate citizens within a non-coercive national framework in an era that is characterised by mass moral diversity. However, read in the context of the 2014 British Values directive, these two particular discourses not only serve to illuminate some of the thinking and discussion behind the policy, but also point towards some problems emanating from the use of RE as the means to effectively fashion the metaphysics of the British citizen. The risk is that, using RE in this way, we will merely entrench an already emotivist discourse in liberal democratic society, as characterised by MacIntyre (1981) when he describes the use of RE as a means of cataloguing moral relativisms.

According to MacIntyre (1981), modern moral discourse is meaningless because it lacks any organising vision of the good for human action which could give it sense or support meaningful argument within it. His description of twentieth century emotivism is a description of the disaster he believes to have befallen modern ethical discourse, in that uses of ethical terms are confined to mere expressions of personal preference. This is to say that, in the post-Enlightenment era, emotivism is *true*; but in the pre-Enlightenment era, where much of the moral language and many of its precepts were originally formulated, emotivism was derided, and people could actually engage in meaningful and conclusive moral debates. In this sense, MacIntyre’s (1981) account of modern moral philosophy is historical: it seeks to contradict ahistorical readings of conventional moral philosophy and expose the conditions that have produced emotivism. Similarly, El Fadl’s (2005) and Hallaq’s (2013) accounts of the effects of the exportation of the Enlightenment project and its concomitant imposition of a ‘neutralist’ model of State on the Islamic tradition has created a similar collapse. Indeed, the Islamist ideas of Sayyid Qutb (1964) could actually be interpreted as emotivist, in that they are an ahistorical reading of a set of moral precepts that are irredeemably historical in nature, even if Qutb (1964) doesn’t realise that this is the case.

In many ways, it is the result of one set of ‘British Values’ being exported and imposed via colonialism and post-colonialism that has given rise to the conditions in which the 2014 British Values directive was issued. The irony is that British values are seen as a solution to a problem caused by an earlier imposition of British values!

Furthermore, Qutb's (1964) ideas confirm MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1997) and Hallaq's (2013) charge that the modern liberal State is far from 'neutralist', but is instead a highly particular and historically dependent phenomenon that has thus far been unable to provide a comprehensive ethical justification for its existence, resulting in a perpetual crisis of power, authority and legitimacy in relation to the presently atomised nature of its citizenry. Indeed, as I argued at the start of the paper, it is this continual liberal democratic quest for an ethical justification, which, I believe, shows that questions regarding the place of religion in public life are very much endogenous to liberal democracy; and they stem from the Christian heritage of modern moral discourse as outlined by MacIntyre (1981).

While the voices asking these questions were temporarily silenced by the myth of 'progress' that shaped the Cold War, the re-emergence of religion as a focus of political legitimacy since the late 1970s has only served to make the coherence and sustainability of highly pluralist liberal democracies an issue of contention. This is what makes MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1997) project so broad in its scope and influence.

Despite the highlighted shortcomings of the phenomenological model of Religious Education in schools, Smart's (1975) contention that religion should not be seen as 'the handmaid of British citizenship' still carries substantial weight. If we follow Smart (1975), however, then the question remains: should British Values be inculcated into future citizens, and if so, how?

Vincent and Hunter-Henin (2018) argue that, rather than reinforcing present binary conceptions of 'others' (Muslims or otherwise) as 'extremists' undermining 'our' values, schools should instead be encouraged to develop political literacy and a 'thicker', more active sense of citizenship in all students. Furthermore, Vincent and Hunter-Henin (2018) say that it is vital for schools to foster in their students the ability, and the willingness, to engage with important moral questions via a process of wide-ranging debate. They suggest that it is only through such debate that a genuine commitment to democratic values can be fostered. The question remains whether the 2014 British Values directive, with its brief statement of the values in a manner that suggests its authors see them as unproblematic, is realistically able to form a launch pad for such a broad and ambitious project.

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