
Beyond democratic citizenship education: making an argument for religious freedom through an extended ethic of care

Yusef Waghid and Paul Smeyers

Abstract

Religious freedom remains a complex and contested terrain, considering the status of religion in the world today. This article offers a revised account of a liberal democratic citizenship education that has the potential to engender and preserve religious freedom and more general pave the way for mutual acceptance of subgroups. Democratic citizenship education, if coupled with an ethic of care, can be more sensitive to religious freedom because deliberation, compassionate imagining and risk taking – all elements of democratic citizenship education – are not sufficient to ensure religious freedom. We argue that an extended ethic of care not only represents an elaboration of democratic citizenship education beyond mere deliberative encounters, but offers a means to build communities and effect a climate of open mindedness amongst them. Invariably it would mean that people should learn to forgive and forget; protect those who are helpless; and do the unexpected even though it goes against the grain of their convictions. If such an ethic of care were to permeate the practices of religious communities, less intolerance amongst them would perhaps be more realisable than what one would expect.

Introduction

Whilst reading Mark Rowlands's engrossing, thoughtful and moving book, *The philosopher and the wolf: Lessons from the wild on love, death and happiness*, one of us became enthralled by the author's deep reflections on what it means to be human. This moving account of a life he lived with an adopted wolf foregrounds his philosophical views on an ethic of care which prompts one to rethink one's moral responsibilities towards others. At the same time, while being fascinated and stimulated by the lives of a full-blooded wolf and a philosophy professor, one of us glanced with horror at the television in his TV room as Aljazeera News Network (located in Doha, Qatar) broadcasted the fatal, public attack on three members of the Ahmadiyah community in Cikuesik, south of Banten in Indonesia. A large group of people (between 1000 and 1500) attacked 25 Ahmadiyah members

who had refused to leave the house of a local group leader in Umbulan village. Three members of the minority Muslim group were killed and six others were injured. It was reported that the attackers came to a local centre of the Ahmadiyah Muslim Jamaat brandishing machetes, spears, knives and other weapons, despite the police being forewarned about an imminent attack on local Ahmadi Muslims.

Rowlands's ideas on what constitutes an ethic of care inspired us to write about what can ostensibly be perceived as religious intolerance towards a minority Muslim sect and what people ought to do to secure religious freedom in an increasingly intolerant world; moreover, we will focus on the contribution that we think education can make.

Religious freedom vs. religious intolerance

Islam is the dominant religion in Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population (about 280–300 million) in the world. The majority adhere to the Sunni tradition, whereas the Shi'i and Ahmadi sects constitute one million and 0.5 million respectively. The Ahmadiyah sect was founded in India at the end of the 19th century and originated in the life and teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), who claimed to be a divine reformer (*mujaddid*) and who championed the peaceful revival of Islam according to the life experiences of Prophet Muhammad. By far the majority of Sunni Muslims consider the religious views of the Ahmadi sect to be blasphemous for the reason that it is popularly believed that the founder of the Ahmadi Jamaat proclaimed himself heir to the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, the Ahmadi sect was officially declared non-Muslim by the Pakistani government in 1974, and this resulted in several reprisals against Ahmadi Muslims following the blasphemy law. Thus, the fatal attack on the Ahmadi Muslims in Indonesia should be seen against the background of religious intolerance towards what are perceived to be 'blasphemous' Muslims. Of course, condemnation of the attack (and rightfully so) came from political parties, social organisations and rights groups. But, once again, the ugly face of religious freedom versus religious intolerance has resurfaced. This brings us to a discussion of religious freedom vs. religious intolerance.

If one enjoys religious freedom then one has the opportunity to practise one's religion unconstrained by any other person who might practise a different

religion, or who practises the same religion differently. Following such a view of religious freedom, Ahmadi Muslims cannot be curtailed from understanding and practising Islam the way they see fit, and hence cannot be compelled to do as the Sunni majority. This would entail a violation of their right to religious freedom. Likewise, they also cannot be expected to practise their religious views in private, as expected by the Sunni majority, for that would not make them free. Moreover, loyalty to the Islamic faith does not mean that every Muslim has to do exactly the same thing or hold the same views about their religion. If so, the possibility of diverse interpretations (an idea commensurate with the legacy of Islam through the existence of diverse traditions) would not be a reality. On the contrary, loyalty to the Islamic faith demands that people enjoy the freedom to think and act differently for the sole reason that an interpretation of the primary sources of Islam (*Quran* and *Hadith*) cannot be the proprietorship of a single, homogenous group of people – as if all Muslims think alike. Such a practice in any case would stultify creative and imaginative views on the religion of Islam, as if Islam in itself is something static and not related to an ever-evolving, dynamic and flexible environment. Religious freedom opens the possibility for new ideas and thoughts, which can render a more justifiable view of the faith, rather than viewing it as being steeped in sometimes unhelpful medieval understandings.

Attempts at curbing and undermining people's religious freedom would invariably result in religious intolerance. Religious intolerance suggests that people are not at liberty to believe and do as they wish, and are more often than not subjected to deliberate exclusions and marginalisations and acts of aggression and brutality, mostly by religious bigots. This has been the case in Egypt, where some Muslims burnt a church of Coptic Christians, in Nigeria, where some Christians burnt a mosque, in South Africa, where Shi'i Muslims are at times ostracised, and now in Indonesia, where deadly attacks are waged against Ahmadis. The upshot of the aforementioned is that religious intolerance would be rife when religious freedom is violated. If one is not free to think and act as one deems fit, then the possibility of intolerance and recriminations would be heightened. Intolerance towards people means that one does not consider the point of view of the other as worthy of consideration and that one actually uses any means at one's disposal to silence, exclude and even annihilate the other. Rather, a solution to the continuous religious intolerance and violation of religious liberties of people resides in an extended ethic of care. By drawing on Rowlands's *The philosopher and the wolf* we use the relationship between Rowlands and the

wolf as a metaphor to develop an extended idea of an ethic of care. It is to such a discussion that we now turn.

Towards an extended notion of an ethic of care

Before we consider metaphorically the relationship between Rowlands and his wolf in order to develop an extended notion of an ethic of care, we shall firstly give an account of what an ethic of care entails. Theorising about an ethic of care has extended the concept over the years. Smith (1998, 2000) enunciates an ethic of care beyond the notion of ‘caring about others’ (that is, the desire to do good or the expression of sympathy and concern about others), to ‘caring for others’ (that is, showing active kindness and providing emotional and physical support for people’s needs). Moreover, an ethic of care has also been extended from individual duty to social responsibility (Tronto, 1993). There is a vast amount of literature in philosophy and in the philosophy of education dealing with (aspects of) the ‘ethics of care’, following the seminal work by Noddings, *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education* (1984 – now more than 25 years ago), and continued by many more publications from this author, such as *The challenge to care in schools. An alternative approach to education* (1992). Central issues are that an ethic of caring is partialistic, stresses the reciprocity involved in good relationships of caring, and involves a ‘displacement’ of ordinary self-interest or engrossment in the other person. Evidently it will come as no surprise that the general criticism has focused on the (presumed) naturalism that is embraced by this position, and, more particularly, that it is lacking in terms of being able to offer a viable ground for a theory of justice, that is, an impartial morality. In his recent book, *The ethics of care and empathy* (2007), Slote again focuses on this debate. He starts to address the importance of empathy playing a crucial enabling role in the development of genuinely altruistic concern or caring for others. This will make it possible for the (normal) child to adopt the point of view of others deliberately. The child is helped by the intervention of parents and others making use of ‘induction’, which, different from training a child or attempting to inculcate moral thought, motivation and behaviour, makes the child vividly aware of the harm that he or she has done. If one accepts for a moment that, in this case and through other arguments and examples, Slote may have established the relevance of empathy to explain why people would want to be moral, it remains to be shown that he can answer the critics who find such a position

lacking in terms of a theory of justice and the impartiality that is supposed to go with it. Now this is exactly what he offers in his 2007 book. Starting from autonomy as constitutively relational he argues that distinctions of empathy characterised by the relevance of immediacy mark or correspond to moral distinctions more robustly occupied with questions of justice and right action. Returning then to the issue of how far an ethic of care can go, it becomes apparent that this is not simply an issue of norms and values (that is, the moral problem of others), but of power relations and privilege (Zembylas, 2010). It is for this reason, that is, an ethic of care beyond self-interest in the other and empathy, that we draw metaphorically on Rowlands's ethic of care, which depicts caring as a relational activity constituted by power and privilege.

We now introduce a metaphor for caring based on a relationship between Rowlands and his wolf which would help in developing an extended notion of caring. Rowlands offers a moving, profound and vivid memoir of his relationship with Brenin, a wolf, that lasted for 11 years until her death from cancer. In a way he recounts the story of his relationship with this wolf that he cared for. Brenin showed through her actions what Rowlands considered to be apposite for him to enhance his humanity. This implies that Rowlands's sense of humanity was enhanced by his observations of Brenin. To begin with, firstly, Rowlands depicts the wolf as someone that will 'quickly forgive and forget', as has been evidenced by Brenin's playfulness with a pit-bull terrier named Rugger (Rowlands, 2008). For him, the wolf does not bear malice and never acts mercilessly, which makes the wolf quite sensitive to the possibility of conciliation and the need for justice (Rowlands, 2008). This observance of Brenin's 'playfulness' provides a powerful metaphor in terms of which one should not act inhumanely. If people viciously and indiscriminately attack others – such as what one witnessed in the malicious onslaught against a minority religious group in Indonesia, the more insensitive others become towards the possibility of forgiveness. The possibility of reconciliation amongst different people would be thwarted if some people (a minority in this instance) are tormented, insulted, terrorised and brutally killed for holding different religious beliefs. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa came up with several suggestions that reconciliation is possible only if both perpetrators and victims of atrocities are willing to start afresh – that is, both give up their feelings of anger and resentment. But then, if conciliation were to be a condition that a community ought to aspire to attain, then hatred and revulsion should not become the order of the day. This is more easily said than done. How does one forgive and forget the person who kills the other just because (s)he practices his or her religion differently? How can one

expect the victims of aggression, violence and abuse to simply forgive if their fellow members have been reviled, humiliated, tortured, maimed and even killed? Yet, if one truly cares about the good of society and the need for people to co-exist, there is no other option but to start anew – that is, forgive and forget. Perhaps this is why some Palestinians and Jews find it difficult to live side by side, or some Nigerian tribal communities cannot tolerate one another. Of course one cannot just forgive and forget without the other's willingness to do likewise. Religious freedom cannot be enjoyed if the possibility of mutual acceptance is not cultivated and people's different, contending views duly are not recognised – that is, people's right to be different and to hold contradictory points of view. Here, we agree with Rowlands "that most of the evil produced by humans [and killing someone else for holding different religious views is one such evil] is not the result of malicious intentions but of the unwillingness to do one's moral and epistemic duty" (Rowlands, 2008, p.101). Thus, the unwillingness to engage the other with her contending views, would make the possibility of conciliation amongst different people very unlikely. This holds equally for religious minorities and religious majorities.

Our second argument in defence of an extended ethic of care is one that relates to performing both a moral and epistemic duty. A moral duty is one that involves protecting those who are defenceless against those who deem them inferior (Rowlands, 2008, p.98). Rowlands recounts the story of Brenin who was lightly electrocuted when a shock passed through his arm to Brenin when he (Rowlands) touched an electric fence. This caused Brenin to run off for a couple of miles before she stopped. When he eventually found Brenin she had the look in her eyes of having experienced severe pain and suffering without being protected by someone. Similarly, Brenin would always treat dogs that were demonstrably weaker than her "either with indifference or with a peculiar sort of kindness" (Rowlands, 2008, p.103). Metaphorically speaking, it seems that the wolf (Brenin) never took delight and pleasure in pain or suffering inflicted by her or others. The police's failure to protect a defenceless religious minority brings into question their willingness to do their moral duty. If by moral duty is meant that one protects the helpless and one does not do so, it follows from this that one has not necessarily performed one's moral duty. And the crowd that cheered and clapped while three people were being tortured not only took delight in the pain and suffering of someone else, but actually failed in their duty to protect the helpless. Moreover, the crowd and police also failed in exercising what Rowlands would refer to as their epistemic duty, that is, "the duty to subject one's beliefs to the

appropriate amount of critical scrutiny: to examine whether they are warranted by the available evidence and to at least attempt to ascertain whether there exists any countervailing evidence” (Rowlands, 2008, p.98). Metaphorically speaking (because I do not wish to invoke a debate about human and non-human interaction and what humans apparently can learn from non-humans in reference to Alasdair MacIntyre’s 1999 account of humans’ caring relationship with dolphins and vice a versa), unlike Brenin, who was reluctant to maliciously attack a provocative Labrador dog due to having judged that she (Brenin) might be superior in the fight, the crowd and police not only failed to empathise with a religious minority that was brutally attacked. Instead, the crowd also demonstrated their unwillingness to subject their beliefs and values (about Ahmadi Muslims) to the required scrutiny. If religious freedom cannot be unconstrained, then one can no longer be said to be free or have the freedom to believe and act as one deems fit. If some people can act so violently towards others, irrespective of their particular version of a faith, it does begin to question how their own religious convictions stimulate them to act in such an evil (indecent, disrespectful and undignified) way towards others. Performing one’s epistemic duty requires that one acquires sufficient evidence and arguments with the possibility to inform, alter or extend one’s views. And, if such critical scrutiny is performed, then at least the possibility is there to share our evidences in an open, willing, deliberative and dignified manner. Such an approach to exercising our epistemic and moral duty is far more favourable for the good of society than violence which in many instances gets us nowhere. Violence merely causes more antagonism, hatred and indifference amongst people, making it highly unlikely for them to reconcile. Of course sometimes violence is necessary. A point in case is the violence perpetrated by some Serbs against Bosnians and NATO’s violent military response to curb Serbian aggression. However, persisting with violence can lead only to more violence as has been the case in Iraq when the US military invaded the country to remove the dictator Saddam Hussain, yet insurgency and counter-insurgency prevail which corroborate the point that violence escalates with violence. There must come a time when violence should be disrupted by deliberation in order to curb violence because deliberation lends itself towards communication and engagement rather than violence which at times seems to remain disconnected from establishing peaceful co-existence.

Our third argument for an extended ethic of care involves the love (*philia*) Rowlands had for Brenin – considered as a member of his (Rowlands’s) ‘pack’. Rowlands recounts the time he had to care for Brenin on hearing that

the latter had cancer and was about to die. His caring involved cleaning Brenin's "smelly, suppurating, disease-ridden arse every two hours for well over a month" (Rowlands, 2008, p.181). Much of the time Rowlands did not want to attend to Brenin, but he was driven to do so, mostly by his love for the wolf. According to Rowlands, "even though you desperately don't want to do it, even though it horrifies and sickens you. . .", attending to the ill-fated Brenin was his biggest priority at the time (Rowlands, 2008, p.183). Again, metaphorically speaking, this notion of love for Brenin brings to the fore an important dimension of caring: one does something for one's group ('pack') even though it might horrify one. It seemingly could horrify (distress) what might be dominant religious groups to engage minorities, because their hegemony (as is the case in Cikuesik) usually causes them to oppress a religious minority. But if they are really Muslims (and I believe this is what they claim to be), the religious majority should at least have concern for their fellow Muslims – after all, Muslims are considered as belonging to a community in unity and diversity.

Thus, an extended ethic of care based on a metaphorical interpretation of Rowlands's relationship with the wolf Brenin involves at least three things: to learn to forgive and forget; to protect those who are helpless, both morally and epistemically; and to do the unexpected, even though it goes against the grain of one's beliefs actions. If such an extended ethic of care were to permeate the practices of religious communities, less intolerance amongst them would perhaps be more realisable than one could imagine. Why? Learning to forgive and forget will engender opportunities for people to begin anew – they might not want to cast blame because, in most cases, blame hinders rather than advances engagement. This person would then want to explain herself through reasons I might not find acceptable or agree with. And, instead of moving on both parties will be curbed by an encounter that might even lead them to discontinue their engagement. We are not suggesting that people should not listen to the explanations of others. However, if justifications persist on the basis of blaming someone for acts perpetrated against me, I also remind him of such acts which might rule out the possibility of some rebeginning. In a way, people become more open minded when they are willing to listen to others. Also, developing a sense of caring towards the helpless would curtail aggression towards them, which would also diminish levels of intolerance amongst people who might be deeply resentful towards one another. Mutual acceptance would then also gain momentum if people became more willing to do things they otherwise might not have been willing to do.

This brings us to a discussion of how the aforementioned metaphorical extension of an ethic of care impacts on a notion of democratic citizenship education.

An extended version of an ethic of care and democratic citizenship education

Dominant discourses on democratic citizenship education have been confined mostly to practices of deliberation, freedom, and rights – both individual and social (Knight Abowitz and Harnish, 2006). Callan (1997) makes a cogent case for democratic citizenship education as being constituted by at least the following aspects: cohesive identity, public deliberation and responsibility for the rights of others. For Nussbaum, democratic citizenship education involves the cultivation of critical argumentation, reasoning and narrative imagination, that is, to imagine what it would be to be in the position of someone different from oneself (Nussbaum, 2002). Benhabib (2002) enunciates democratic citizenship education as a form of ‘intercultural dialogue’ whereby people can enact what they have in common and, at the same time, make public their competing narratives and significations with a real opportunity to co-exist. They not only establish a community of conversation and interdependence (that is, they share commonalities), but also one of disagreement (that is, they do not share commonalities) without disrespecting others’ life-worlds (Benhabib, 2002). In all the aforementioned discourses of democratic citizenship education, deliberative engagement, freedoms of articulation and people’s individual and social rights are foregrounded. Our aim in the last part of this article is, firstly, to couple and elaborate a deliberative discourse on democratic citizenship education with an extended ethic of care and, secondly, to explore the implications of such a discourse for religious freedom.

In our ongoing work on democratic citizenship education we argue for a position that can engender opportunities for the achievement of democratic educational justice, in particular by making a case for deliberative engagement, compassionate imagining, and connecting with the other and its otherness, whether locally (through *ubuntu*), globally and/or sceptically (through cosmopolitanism) (Waghid, 2010). Whereas most of the dominant theoretical accounts of democratic citizenship education seem to be somewhat biased towards the significance of deliberation and connecting with the other,

our view is that democratic citizenship education also has to consider the connecting with the other in a compassionate way, (albeit) sceptically – invariably then, the possibility for democratic educational justice might become a reality (Waghid, 2010). We use sceptical in the sense used by Cavell (1979), that is, I can at times be attached to a view but other times I might find the view less desirable – a matter of detaching oneself from such a view. In other words, I can agree with someone’s stance on war because it disrupts continuous oppression of a particular community. Other times I disagree with someone’s views on war because innocent bystanders are killed in the acts of aggression. Although, in a way, such a notion of democratic citizenship does point towards an ethic of care, it does not sufficiently extend the discourse beyond mere opportunities for risk taking in relation to the other – that is, opening up the possibility of talking about democratic citizenship education as a sceptical encounter with the other. This implies that democratic citizenship should primarily be about being responsible towards the other, recognising the other’s humanity, and connecting with the other with a readiness for departure (Waghid, 2010). Now, if one considers that an extended ethic of care involves learning to forgive and forget, protecting those who are helpless, and doing the unexpected even though it goes against the grain of one’s beliefs, then it follows that democratic citizenship education would no longer be confined to deliberative engagement, compassionate imagining and risk taking, but rather be extended to doing the improbable and unexpected – that is, doing something which is not usually expected of one to do with reference to forgetting past injustices. Such an account of democratic citizenship education – one coupled with an extended ethic of care, provides a promising alternative to existing rights, deliberative and empathetic discourses on liberal democratic citizenship education. As has been alluded to earlier, doing the unexpected is somehow connected with forgiving and forgetting. Arguing in favour of ‘forgetting’ elicits all kinds of emotions. Surely, as Krondorfer argues: “To speak about forgetting in the context of the Holocaust, or of any genocidal atrocity for that matter, is an act bordering on immorality or, in any case, on callousness, for it seems to refuse empathy to, and acknowledgment of, the suffering of the victims. To advocate forgetting, it seems, moves dangerously close to denying the historical events and to erasing memory itself” (Krondorfer, 2008, p.234). But it is also the case, as he develops in his in-depth study dealing with Holocaust remembrance and the task of oblivion, that “. . . scholars recognise that memory and remembrance are not uncomplicated processes but are formed and informed by individual styles, personal trauma, narrative choices, cultural forces, political agendas, and national interests” (2008, p.238). He does not

pair forgetting with denial and amnesia, but suggests the more neutral term of ‘oblivion’ distinguishing between wilful acts of neglect and denial (which constitute political or psychological forms of forgetting) and “unavoidable modes of memory production based on sedimenting, condensing, suppressing, and expunging lived experiences of the past” (2008, p.242) which he labels ‘oblivion’. By suppressing and expunging lived experiences of the past, ‘forgetting’ assumes a different meaning. And arguing for ‘forgetting’ is to do the unexpected – that is, going against one’s wishes (not to actually forget). If I suppress my feelings of resentment towards others and momentarily expunge bad memories I do the unexpected. This is so because I wilfully suppress thoughts of something horrible that had been perpetrated before. Thus, forgetting something which I otherwise would not have done if I were not suppressing my bad memories of an event, amounts to doing something ‘improbable’.

This brings us to a discussion of how would such a discourse on democratic citizenship education – one elaborated on by an extended ethic of care – have an impact on religious freedom? We started by referring to the situation of the Ahmadi Muslims of Umbulan village and mentioned the injustice that was done to them by a mob of religious bigots. Our argument for democratic citizenship education should not be seen as a new kind of universalism, which defines how the other should live not only now but in the future as well. It should rather be read as an amended version of the position of dominant liberal discourses – one which draws our attention to an extended ethic of care. In the main, our argument in defence of democratic citizenship education is now constituted by three moral positions: forgiveness, protecting the helpless and doing something that goes against the grain.

Firstly, Derrida (1997, p.33) argues for a view of forgiveness that builds on the premise “that forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself . . . (and that) it can only be possible in doing the impossible”. For Derrida (1997), ‘doing the impossible’ implies forgiving the ‘unforgivable’. In his words, ‘forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable’ – that is, atrocious and monstrous crimes against humanity that might not be conceived as possible to forgive (Derrida, 1997, p.32). Derrida (1997, p.44) explicates forgiveness as “a gracious gift without exchange and without condition”. Amongst crimes against humanity, Derrida (1997) includes genocide, torture and terrorism. This notion of forgiving the ‘unforgivable’ is spawned by the view that forgiveness is an act without finality – that is, the fault and the guilty (the one who perpetrates the evil) are considered as being capable of repeating the

crime without repentance or promise that he or she will be transformed. And, forgiving the 'unforgivable' takes into consideration that the crime might be repeated, which makes forgiveness an act of (madness) of the impossible (Derrida, 1997). Now a conception of forgiveness that makes possible the act of forgiving the 'unforgivable' makes sense, because if a religious minority is not going to venture into forgiving the 'unforgivable' and barbaric acts of a religious majority, and vice a versa, these two different sects of the same community might not begin to connect with one another. And then the process of trying to induce transformation in Indonesian society might not even begin to take place. Such a Derridian view of forgiveness is grounded in an understanding that 'nothing is impardonable' (Derrida, 1997), and that 'grand beginnings' are often celebrated and redirected through amnesia of the most atrocious happenings. A case in point is South Africa's democracy, which grew out of forgiving those 'unforgivable' racial bigots who committed heinous crimes against those who opposed the racist state.

Secondly, about protecting the helpless, we once again draw on Derrida (1997), who argues that every person has a right to universal hospitality without limits. Derrida limits such a right to innocent and helpless people (perhaps not guilty of a major crime) who seek refuge or asylum in another country and who want to escape 'bloody vengeance'. Surely, innocent Ahmadi Muslims who are subjected to torture and killing have the right to be protected. Following Derrida, members of a religious minority cannot be victimised and their protection is possible on the grounds that every person is endowed with a status of "common possession of the earth" (Derrida, 1997, p.20).

Thirdly, doing something improbable or going against the grain can be linked to the fact that we are interconnected with others and sometimes have to do things that perhaps strengthen our relations. Cavell's remark that 'we are alone, and we are never alone', is a clear indication that one belongs to a particular group (being alone with others, that is, 'we') and that, by virtue of being human, one bears an internal relation to all other human beings – especially those who do not belong to the same group and even those whom we might revile. This internal relation with my fellow citizens does not ignore my answerability to/responsibility for what happens to them, despite us not belonging to the same group. As a member of a particular cultural group in society I cannot simply impose my views (whether religious or political) on others. If I do so, I might be coercing others to do things that I advance. And, when I impose my views on others with different positions (say with different

cultural orientations) than mine, and insist that others have to accept my views I do so with some form of coercion. Doing so would be doing an injustice to the others. But being answerable to/responsible for what happens to them means that their views are acknowledged, even though I might not be in agreement with them. Rather, one conceives the other from the other's point of view, with which one has to engage afresh (Cavell, 1979). Everything we say and do says something about ourselves as well; so there is a reason here (of an epistemological nature) that forbids me not to question my own beliefs and presuppositions (and thus to impose them on others); seriously engaging with others presupposes a willingness to question my own beliefs.

As a person who belongs to a minority ethnic group in society, I should acknowledge the majority ethnic group's views, even though I might be in stark disagreement with their views. By so doing I do not compromise my relations with the others, for that would mean a complete breakdown of society. From my own cultural vantage point I might find another group's views undesirable, but this does not mean that I view this group as being outcast and unworthy of any form of engagement. That would be an abdication of my responsibility. The point we are making is that, as a human being, I can clearly distinguish the values that constitute the practices of the cultural group to which I belong from the values that inform social practices other than mine. But this does not mean that I compromise my humanitarianism to others – a matter of exercising my responsibility to them. And, at times, it means that I have to do things I would otherwise not have done, such as engaging with others who might hold starkly different religious views to my own, and not disrespecting them if I consider my views to be superior to theirs. If some of our fellow citizens question our observance of certain religious practices, we ought to find ways to engage with them with the intention of creating an understanding in them of what we passionately adhere to; or if we find their ignorance about our practices shameful, we should make known to them what seemingly is unknown in a responsible manner. For this, an ethic of care in terms of which we connect with others, even though we do not wish to do so, will extend our actions beyond our own private idiosyncrasies. Cavell (1979, p.463) claims that “human beings do not necessarily desire isolation and incomprehension, but union or reunion, call it community”. Our private actions may lead to a betterment of our communal actions. We might privately contemplate doing something about improving security in our neighbourhood, but doing so autonomously without penetrating the thoughts of other community members (with whom one might strongly disagree or whom one may even resent) may not necessarily

contribute towards the desired action. If one's privacy remains restricted to one with the intention not to exercise one's responsibility to others, one's practices would remain unshared and separated from the people with whom one happens to live. So, one's privacy opens a door through which someone else may tap into one's thoughts, which might be of benefit to society. But if one's privacy is construed by narcissism, the possibility that others might gain something valuable for society could be limited. This brings us to a discussion of some of the implications of such an extended ethic of care for cultivating democratic citizenship education.

Firstly, if university students are initiated into deliberations of what it means to be democratic citizens they should be taught not only what it means to be deliberative and compassionate but also to be exposed to an extended ethic of care which introduces them to meanings of forgiving and forgetting even if such practices are perceived to be 'improbable' to achieve. We specifically think of some African communities that can use their educational institutions to cultivate an extended ethic of care in their democratic citizenship education discourses.

Secondly, schools in Africa can create pedagogical opportunities for learners to become more concerned with the helpless in order to build better communities. Such communities would not be concerned only with recognising the impoverished conditions of others but also effect changes that can engender meaningful change.

Thirdly, Islamic *madrasas* can do much to initiate educators and learners into discourses of recognition and acceptance of the other on the basis of cultivating an extended ethic of care which has the possibility of establishing greater tolerance from the dominant religious community towards minority religious communities. It may also lead to acts which go against the grain and we are prepared to face what we seemingly dislike.

Conclusion

What we have been arguing for is that our human (social) practices should in some way transcend the private concerns of individuals. Instead, our private actions should create conditions for something worthwhile to come to the fore that is consistent with an extended ethic of care. What follows from this is

that one's private actions should be justifiable, with reasons being evident to other individuals with whom one engages in public (worldly) relations. So, if one privately condemns the atrocious crimes perpetrated by a religious majority against a religious minority, one's idiosyncratic expressions or private thoughts should at least open the door for some form of collective action with others, which could potentially lead to morally worthwhile actions that prevent and eradicate inhumane acts against any civilian population. We have argued for an elaboration of democratic citizenship aspirations beyond discourses of deliberation, compassion and risk taking, to an extended ethic of care that connects with forgiving the improbable, protecting the helpless, and performing the unexpected and even 'horrific'. Only then might religious freedom become a reality.

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Yusef Waghid
Stellenbosch University

yw@sun.ac.za

Paul Smeyers
Ghent University and K.U. Leuven

paul.smeyers@ped.kuleuven.be